cuc - H04235-4-P038651

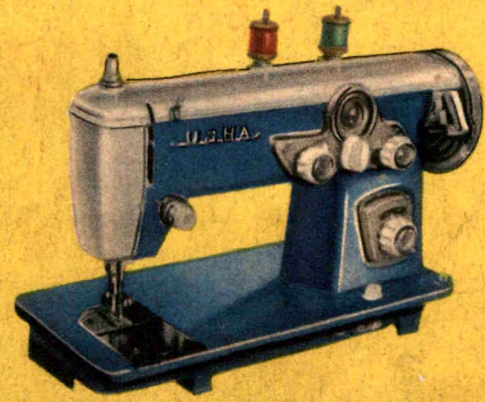
Amrita Bazar Patrika

PUJA NUMBER 1963

4

USHA ZIG-ZAG AUTOMATIC

E LATEST...
THE FINEST

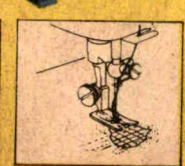


ON HOLE &
N STITCHING

AG STITCHING

HEMMING

FANCY PATTERNS



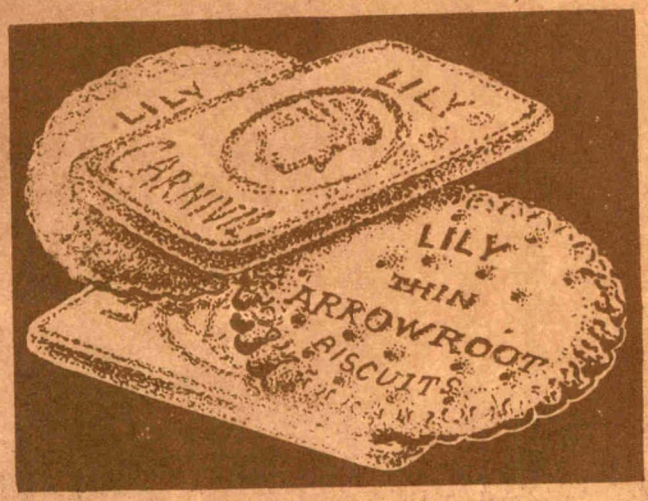
THE PATCH DARNER

APPLIQUE WORK

E MOST VERSATILE SEWING MACHINE

JAY ENGINEERING WORKS LTD.,
CALCUTTA-31

Sweet home Sweeter



On festive days

LILY BISCUITS

make every home sweeter

TWO WELL-KNOWN BRANDS

CARNIVAL THIN ARROWROOT

IS·1011

LILY BISCUIT CO.
PRIVATE LTD.
CALCUTTA - 4

LB 1/49

Contents

Page

TANTRIC ELEMENTS IN BENGALI DURGA PUJA
By K. M. Purkayastha 117

DR. GOPESWAR BANERJEE AND VISHNUPUR GHARANA
By Birendra Kishore Roy Chowdhury 119

SPICE
By Asude 121

DURGA PUJA OF SANTALS
By Charulal Mukherjee 123

AYURVEDA: ITS EVOLUTION AND DECLINE
By Japesh Das Gupta 125

THE PROBLEM OF CALCUTTA AND A SOLUTION
By Bhaskar Mukherji 127

CROSS CURRENTS
By Major T. C. Ghosh 129

MAHESH
By Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay 135

MY DAD'S DENTAL ADVENTURE
By T. Lewis 141

INDIAN DANCES
By Hiranmay Banerjee 143

LOST CAUSES & GREAT FIGHTERS
By Pramatha Chaudhuri 145

BUSINESS CONCEPT

HONESTY
HONOUR ON DUE DATE
HARMONY

.....SUDHIR CHATTERJEE

SUDHIR CHATTERJEE & CO. PRIVATE LTD.
10, GANESH CHANDRA AVENUE. CALCUTTA-13.

Contents

	Page
VIVEKANANDA AND SWADESHI MOVEMENT By K. P. Biswas	147
SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S MESSAGE TO THE WORLD By Swami Sambuddhananda	151
A SOCIETY IN THE SERVICE OF INDIAN AGRICULTURE By T. K. Bose	155
FOLK SONGS ON MARRIED LIFE By Hem Barua	157
THE HOLY LAKE & A HEAVENLY GARDEN By Bireswar Prasad Banerjee	161
NEW VOICES IN BENGALI WRITING By Krishna Dhar	167
WOMEN IN PAST PARLIAMENT By Ekayray	169
A FEW GEMS FROM TAGORE'S SHORT STORIES By Keshab Lal Day	171
THE OLD HOUSING PROBLEM By A. N. Kerr	173
EFFICACY OF BIOLOGICAL MOVEMENT By Dr. Sivatosh Mookerjee	175
RELICS OF A COPPER AGE IN BENGAL By Paresh Chandra Dasgupta	179
SCULPTURES OF KORANGANATHA By S. R. Balasubrahmanyam	185
POWER OF 20 MILLION HORSES IN HARNESS By Tarun Chatterjee	189
CHINESE AGGRESSION AND A PAIR OF BANGLES By Tarasankar Bandopadhyay	193
ORCHID By Subodh Ghosh	197
THE MAN AND THE MAID By Sushil Jana	203
THE ANGEL-CHILD By Christel Das	207
YOUNG MOTHERS' QUESTIONS By Peg	209
REMINISCENCES OF THE CHITTAGONG REVOLT By Sachin Dutt	211
WHEN THE GODS COME By Padmalaya Das	215
NINE MONTHS IN A SOUTH INDIAN PRISON By Birendra Chandra Sen	217

(Continued on next page)

WITH HAIR LIKE THIS,

YOU'LL HEAR

HELLO HANDSOME

KEO-KARPIN is famous for taming wild, unruly hair. It leaves hair well-groomed and lustrous without making greasy—helps give you that prosperous, successful look.

Keo-Karpin

ACTIVE HERBAL HAIR OIL

DEY'S MEDICAL STORES PRIVATE LTD. Calcutta. Bombay. Delhi. Madras. Patna. Gauhati. Cuttack.

HOW
CAN
I FORGET
MY SKIN CREAM

Boroline DURING

THE Pujas

the glorious views of Swami Vivekananda whose holy birth-centenary we are celebrating joyfully, gratefully in India and abroad. As one of the greatest exponents of this sublime Mother-Doctrine of India, he has brought out its real implications, for the benefit of all, in a manner at once unique and inspiring, logical and lofty, scientific and sweet.

For example, take one of his magnificent descriptions of the Divine Mother thus :—

"The sea calm is the Absolute; the same sea in waves is Divine Mother". (VII, 25).

Of course, the example of the sea and the waves is a common one in the Vedanta Philosophy, used by almost all its Schools. By means of this ordinary well-known, easily intelligible example, the Vedantists try to make clear to all the most difficult problem of Philosophy, viz. that of Creation.

Creation, indeed, is an eternal, insoluble, intriguing enigma, yet an entirely unavoidable one. For, who can ever escape this difficulty, the questioner himself being a created one, at least an apparently created one? In fact, we all feel that we have been created — if that be a fact, let us explain it; if not, then, too, or rather, then more, let us explain it away. But what explanation is possible here, at all, from any point of view whatsoever?

The crux of the question, the core of the inherent difficulty is this:

Brahman or Isvara, the Absolute or God, call Him by any name, is, according to all Indian accounts, "Nirvikara" or Changeless; this being taken to be one of His most fundamental characteristics. Why? Because, according to all accounts, the Absolute or God is "Nitya-Suddha" or ever-perfect. For, who can ever conceive of an imperfect God? Imperfect are we all, imperfect is the Universe. So, why should we need one more imperfect being to be added unnecessarily to this whole existing lot of imperfect beings and things? Hence, the very first condition of Godhead is its eternal, essential, ever-full perfection.

Now, such an All-Perfect Being cannot, evidently, be subject to changes. For, all changes must be either changes for the better, or changes for the worse. Thus, first, an All-Perfect Being, like God, cannot evidently change for the better; for, is He not fully perfect from all eternity? So, how can He, again, become still better, still higher, still purer, still more perfect? Then, secondly an All-Perfect Being, like God, cannot, still more evidently, change for the worse, for, is He not eternally perfect to all eternity? Thus no changes are at all possible on the part of an All-perfect Being, like God.

But a question remains as to whether any change from an already existing perfect state to another equally perfect state is at all possible or not. For example, cannot a blooming flower have a change of hues; or a humming bird of tunes; or a flowing stream, of courses? Certainly, these can: But every change, undoubtedly, if it be a real change, must involve a change of the present state of the object or the person; and, so, we inevitably, come back to the very same conclusion that every change is necessarily either a change for the better, or a change for the worse, so that by it the flower become brighter or duller, the bird, more sweet-sounding or less; the stream, more rushing or less. Thus an All-Perfect Being can have no changes at all. That is why, according to our Indian view, a "Nitya-purna", or an eternally perfect Being is also, at the same time, a Nitya-nirvikara or an eternally unchangeable One.

So, what happens to creation? Are we not created at all? Is the world not created at all? How very strange, how very absurd; how very impossible! For, what are we then? What is the world?

STRANGER THAN FICTION

But truth is stranger than fiction, at least, according to wise philosophers! So, let us face Truth bravely, even if it means our own annihilation, the annihilation of all we know and feel and value, the annihilation of this vast and variegated, loved and longed for, apparently ever-lasting and ever-active Universe of ours.

But what is the Truth here? The Truth, indeed is one; yet what prevents it from being differently interpreted? Accordingly, we have two main views here, of two main Schools of the Vedanta: Monistic (of Samkara and others), and Monotheistic (of Ramanuja and others). The common example of the sea and the waves is used by both; but naturally, in altogether different ways.

Now, what is the sea, what the waves? As stated, here the very same example of the sea and the waves has been cited by both the monistic and monotheistic Vedanta for proving their cases.

The crux of the whole matter is this:
Are the sea and the waves wholly identical, or wholly different or partly identical and partly different?

According to the strictly monistic views of Samkara and others, the sea and the waves are wholly identical. For, both are water in essence and though their forms are different, yet such a difference in forms does not count here at all, as, after all, it is the essence alone that counts. For example Devadatta, with stretched out hands and legs, and again with contracted hand and legs, is the same—because of these different forms, he himself does not become different.

According to the strictly dualistic views of Madhva and others, the sea and the waves are wholly different. For, the sea is one thing, the wave quite another; and no one would mistake a sea for a wave, or vice versa.

According to the intermediate dualistic-non-dualistic views of Ramanuja and others, the sea and the wave are neither wholly identical, nor wholly different, but something in-between; that is, partly identical and partly different, identical in essense, and different in forms. For, both are water in essence, yet possess different forms, which, also cannot be ignored.

The strictly dualistic view cannot, evidently, be accepted. For, this, really, involves the fundamental philosophical question of the relation between the cause and the effect; and, the cause and the effect cannot, evidently, be entirely different, as it is the cause itself that is transformed into the form of the effect. Can a clay-jar e.g. be entirely different from a lump of clay? Absurd and impossible!

So, we have to choose between the first and the last views. The first is the celebrated Doctrine of

(Continued on Page 12)

THE MOTHER

(Continued from page 10)

"Vivarta" or "Vivartavada"; the second, the equally celebrated Doctrine of "Parinama", or "Parinama-Vada". According to the first view, there is no such thing as an effect, the so called effect being "Maya-Mithya", an illusion and a delusion. According to the second, the effect is real, very real, being, as already, pointed out, an actual transformation, or form of the cause itself. But mysteriously enough, the cause is not changed, although it is transformed.

Now, what is Swami Vivekananda's view here? Is he a "Vivartavadi", or a "Parinama-Vadi?"

He is really neither; for, as usual, he is unique and incomparable in this respect, no less. Thus, he is not a Parinama-Vadi, as he does not believe in creation at all. Compare:—

"There is neither existence, nor non-existence. Shake off all ideas of relativity; shake off all superstitions; yet caste and birth and Devas and all else vanish. Why talk of being and becoming? Give up talking of Dualism and Advaitism. When were you two that you talk of two or one? The Universe is this Holy One, and He alone. Talk not of Yoga to make you pure: You are pure by your very nature. None can teach you" (VIII 71).

"No one was ever bound, none was ever free. There is none but me. I am the Infinite, the ever-free. Talk not to me! Who can change me, the essence of knowledge. 'Who can teach, who can be taught.' " (VII 7).

Again, although in a few passages, he seems to propound "Vivartavada", ultimately, he is not a Vivarta-Vadin in the strict "Advaita" sense. For, according to him, the Universe of souls and matter is not ultimately "Maya-Mithya", not false, but Brahman or the Absolute Itself. So, do not deny the world, but deify it; do not reject it, but realise its real nature; do not look down upon it, but look upon it as God Himself.

"Deify it, it is God alone . . . . . The whole world is full of the Lord. Open your eyes and see Him. This is what the Vedanta teaches" (II. 146).

Thus, Swamiji is a strict "Advaitin," but not a Vivartavadin or Maya-Mithya-Vadin in the ordinary senses of the terms. In fact, Advaita-Vada may be arrived at by two ways — positive, and negative. Thus, we may arrive at the solitary existence or strict Oneness of Brahman positively, by taking the Universe of souls and matter to be Brahman, and nothing but Brahman; or negatively by taking the Universe of souls and matter to be Mithya or false, a mere appearance, with no reality behind. But the traditional Advaita-Vadins all adopt the negative method, laying the whole stress on the falsity of the Jiva-Jagat, rather on their divinity

But not so Swamiji, as we have seen above. And, here lies his wonderful uniqueness as an Advaita-Vadin.

And, herein lies, also, his wonderful uniqueness as a "Matri-Sevaka" or Mother-Worshipper. For, to a traditional Advaitin, there is no question of any "Mother", his only concern being "Brahman a neutral "It", with whom no personal relation of love and reverence is at all possible. But Swamiji's Brahman is Mother Herself, the Sakti. The sea calm is the same as the sea in waves, for whether it is calm, or disturbed, it is, after all, the very same sea.

Such are Brahman and Mother,—only in the worldly example of the sea and its waves, there is a real change from one state to the other; here there is not, for, as pointed out above, Brahman is Nirvikara or changeless.

SWEET PARADOX

But, then, why call them two? And, is, also, the Mother a mere false appearance of Brahman? No, definitely not, and herein lies, as pointed out above, the wonderful uniqueness of Swamiji's Doctrine of Mother. For, according to him, Brahman and Mother are one, yet there is no falsity, at all, in conceiving them as two. What a great paradox, but what a sweet one! We repeat: Brahman and Mother are one, yet there is no falsity, at all, in conceiving them as two. For, such is the way to Self-realisation: Self—Mother—Brahman. Actually, all are one, all are Brahman; and the fact need be realised from our point of view, from the worldly point of view, from the "Vyavaharika" or empirical point of view.

But how do these arise? Only because of this—the Divine Mother is "Lilamayi" and "Mayamayi." Because of the first, that is, because the Mother is Lilamoyi, playful in nature, She plays, so to speak, hide and seek with Herself; dividing Herself into two, so to speak; hiding Herself from Herself, by Her Maya, so to speak, this being creation or the state of so-called Bondage; re-uniting Herself with Herself, so to speak, this being the so-called state of "Moksa."

Thus, the world is a Lila or Divine Play. So, it is not false, as stated above, yet it is not separate or different for the Mother, from Brahman. And, so Sadhanas or our spiritual strivings, our attempts to know the Mother, worship Her, act according to Her injunctions, are not false, but essentially necessary for realising that Jiva-Jagat are but Her Lila, so one with Her.

Hence, the Mother is everything, everything is the Mother. What truer definition of the Mother can there be, what sweeter description? No need, then, to search for Her in the far off Heavens; no need, then, to nullify the world to reach Her holy feet; no need, then, to transcend the self to ascend the "Brahma-Loka." But, only find Her in the world, find Her in the self, and nowhere else, nowhere else. Only look around and see; see for yourself, see joyfully, see lovingly, see gratefully; see, see, see with all your heart and soul, with all your love and longing, with all your hope and happiness. Won't you see that in every blade of grass She smiles, in every drop of water She shines, in every grain of dust She plays, in every molecule of atoms, She stays?

What higher realisation can there be,
what fuller fulfilment?

"The Deity who is present in all

In the form of loving Mother
Obeisance to Her Obeisance to Her.

Obeisance, again, to Her."
(Sri Sri Chandi 5.73)

The Question of Language

By SUNITI KUMAR CHATTERJI

Emeritus Professor, University of Calcutta
Chairman, West Bengal, Legislative Council

INDIA is not a single, unilingual nation, like Japan and Germany, or France and Britain. These countries are virtually unilingual, in spite of some diversity of speech which still obtains, specially in France and Britain. India is a polyglot (and a multi-religious) country. The *intelligentsia* of India, however, in the different language-areas, are striving to feel and work as a single nation, in the modern sense, in spite of many great hindrances and handicaps. Here is, of course, a profound sense of a geographical, historical and cultural unity which transcends the diversity of race and speech in India as a whole.

A unilingual nation, which has moreover learnt to check or restrict the fissiparous tendencies of an organised dogmatic and intolerant religious faith, is free from most of these handicaps. Multiplicity of speech in the world, or in any particular country, is considered by some to be an unmixed evil, and by others as something which brings in complications, and therefore not quite a blessing, although not an insurmountable handicap. According to one's mental and political make-up and inclinations, one is either tempted to look upon diversity in speech (as in other matters) to be equally important with an all-embracing unity; or he is tempted to condemn outright diversity as something to be eschewed, since it tends to divide a people, and to retard or prevent or hamper the unity that is needed to forge humanity into one single and all-inclusive entity. With the one mentality goes the strong sense of the Individual, whether as a person or as a community, as having its own inherent right to exist and develop *in se*—its right to continue and progress in its own special line and along its own natural and inherent proclivities so long as it does not seek to curb or curtail similar rights of other individual elements. With the other kind of mentality, we have a stronger sense of the mass or the total as opposed to the components, regarding it necessary to subjugate the components in the interest of the mass. This commonly resolves itself in practice into a subordination (or even elimination) of the minority in favour of the majority, within a particular sphere or world or context.

THE UNILINGUAL IDEAL AND 'LINGUISM'

In India, in the domain of language, problems of various types, individual and social, cultural and communal, and administrative and political, and even economic, are presenting themselves; and in the interests of the various elements of the body-politic in India—of the Indian Nation itself—an objective and a dispassionate survey of the linguistic situation is called for. It may be presumed that a similar situation with analogous conditions prevail in many other countries or communities; so that *mutatis mutandis*, this linguistic problem is not confined to India alone. India is a polyglot country, which is a palpable fact. This polyglot character of India is either being made too much of; or it is being treated cavalierly, and dismissed light-heartedly as an undesirable thing and as an evil inheritance which must be and can easily be removed by following a particular regimentation, even one that has to be officially sponsored and enforced. Between these two points of view, there is a third line of approach, which does not minimise the nature of the linguistic diversity in the country, but which at the same time gives special emphasis to the fact that underlying this linguistic diversity there is a profound sense of cultural unity throughout the entire country. This sense of cultural unity has risen and still can rise superior to the disintegrating tendencies of linguistic communalism, or provincialism, or even what may be called "provincial nationalism"—what has been labelled in India as *Linguism*, and still can maintain the all-round unity of the country in a single nationhood, cultural and political.

Religious Communalism has been in India the greatest hindrance to this maintenance of Unity, when this Religious Communalism has as one of its bases some kind of extraterritorial affiliation and loyalty, as for instance in certain forms of Islam as well as of Christanity. This has been up till now the greatest problem of India, and this has led to the vivisection of India into the two independent States of India and Pakistan, and has created new problems in states like Kerala. Unfortunately, even after 14 years, this Religious Communalism is not yet dead, and is still being fostered and encouraged in the interest of political parties and immediate political expediency. A situation like this is quite baffling indeed, and seems on the face of it hopeless of solution. In a matter like this, we cannot only practise the cheerful optimism of Mr. Micawber, hoping for something good to turn up. But we must also strive in our own spheres to bring about a better outlook and attitude, and work for a reasonable frame of mind through the wider spread of a non-denominational secular education. So long as this devoutly wished for consummation has not been attained, we shall have to prepare ourselves for some more decades of national suffering and frustration.

To come back to the question of language in a polyglot country like India, which as a whole has not

yet accepted or reconciled itself to a single language as the one and unique national or official language for all the various linguistic areas. The great fact is frequently forgotten that the vast country of India, particularly in modern times, never developed and adopted a single *Modern* Indian language as a Common Language, official, cultural or otherwise, for the entire country, from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin and from Afghanistan to Burma. There is no *modern* Indian language which can act as a language of higher thought and education for the whole of India, a language which in its literature in both the Humanities and in Science and Technology can present something approaching the wide thought-content and incentive to action which one finds in a Modern European language like English. So that when it is proposed to set up in Free India one Modern Indian Language, viz. Hindi, as the Official Language (and even as the *National* Language, whatever it may really mean) for the whole country, the matter is not so simple as many of the supporters of this proposal would seem to think. These supporters of Hindi largely belong, naturally enough, to those groups which speak it or have already accepted it—particularly when it will give them some obvious advantages as well as prestige over speakers of the other languages.

ROLE OF A NEUTRAL LANGUAGE

In British India and Pre-British India, the question of language was not at all a problem when we think of the deplorable linguistic conflicts of the present day. Now, within the last few years, with the background of a new kind of linguistic nationalism, of small linguistic nationalities with the ideal of one single language in the state replacing the old polyglot provinces, a new outlook or attitude has come into being in India. Till recently, we had a number of multilingual states or provinces, in which people speaking different languages and dialects lived amicably under one administration, and never felt any rivalry or animosity or conflict of interests in the domain of language. But now people are finding it increasingly difficult to adjust or harmonise the claims of the home and the outside in the matter of language. In supporting or advocating Hindi as the first or main language to be used in most affairs outside of the home by all and sundry throughout the whole of India, there appears to be a lack of both the knowledge and the imagination to appreciate the difficulties of implementing such a proposition. Sixty years ago, English was flourishing on the Indian scene as the very much needed common modern language for the whole of a politically unified India, for all-India administration, for higher education in the humanities as well as in science and technology, for business and industry, and for exchange of ideas through books and journals, and meetings and conferences. In Free India, when the British people are no longer dominating the scene, its importance has not yet passed away ; although formally or officially its prestige is sought to be lowered, and persistent efforts are being made in some quarters to remove it entirely, if that were possible, from the Indian scene. English formed (as it still forms) the most effective link binding up the *intelligentsia* of the whole of India in a common nationalism and a common quest for freedom and free and honourable existence. English not only brought us air and light from outside, but it was the great neutral language. There was no occasion for a conflict among the speakers of the various languages, since English, as the language in the higher levels of administration and education, did not seek to make subordinate any modern Indian language or dialect to another, much less to suppress it.

English was never forcibly imposed upon the people. The greatest amount of latitude possible was allowed in the matter of language, and the masses were always approached through their own languages. But there was in favour of English its great prestige, in the first instance as the rulers' language, and then as the language of the administration in the higher levels. A new type of competence with a new outlook was necessitated for service in a new kind of administrative machinery set up by the British, and that could be obtained only through English. The people accepted this new machinery as it presented something more efficient, more equitable and more understanding than what was prevalent in India during the 18th-19th centuries. And this was in spite of the British subordination of the economic and political interests of India to those of Britain. English was tacitly accepted by many (or strongly opposed by others) as the Symbol and expression of a new intellectual and spiritual revolution and renaissance.

SUPERIORITY COMPLEX AND LANGUAGE

Those who studied English became, in spite of occasional cases of *faux pas* among them in being swept away from their national moorings, by the strong current of English, the greatest force for good in waking up India. It would be ignorance and ingratitude to suggest that the English-knowing *elite* wanted to keep up English and reserve it for their own group for selfish reasons. Nothing can be farther from the truth. Those who benefited by their knowledge of English were most eager to share their benefit with the people, and were always anxious to spread English education among the largest group of people possible.

The "superiority complex" which is in season and out of season ascribed to English-knowing people we find also in present day India among persons who are studying Hindi, *vis-a-vis* those who speak some *patois* only, or only some other language which is their mother-tongue.

English took the place which Persian occupied in North India and the Deccan during the 17th, 18th and early 19th centuries. The highest offices in the state were of course jealously reserved for British people, and it was there the English tried to keep up and maintain their controlling and directing power. At first the lower offices only in the British administrative set up were kept open for Indians ; and since here too English became first a desirable and then a necessary qualification, a large number of Indians took to acquiring English for respectable jobs not only in the government but with British firms and offices, and in the learned professions which were now based on English or European learning (law, medicine, engineering, teaching) where English was fully established by 1850. People eager for literary and scientific culture and for progress in business and later on in industry, took to the study of English not only as a matter of course but also with eagerness. For their own needs and requirements, English became for Indians with progressive ideas their first language. English helped the leaders of the Indian people to carry on successfully their right for freedom, notwithstanding what many sincere and ardent political workers and leaders (including persons like Mahatma Gandhi) preached to the country that English was an anti-national and a denationalising force. As English did not give special privileges to any particular group of people in India, but offered equal chances (or equal disabilities, when there was a lack of qualification in English) to all, and as it permitted under its umbrage fullest development to all Indian

(Continued on Page 178)

sistance, and it was your Chaitanya who preached and practised it more than four hundred years ago." If this story be true—and there is no reason to doubt it—Gandhi is also indebted to Chaitanya for his doctrine of Passive Resistance or Civil Disobedience.

A typical and successful example of non-violent non-co-operation was witnessed in Bengal just about a hundred years ago in connection with the protest made by the peasants of Bengal against being forced to cultivate indigo. The outrages perpetrated by the British indigo-planters in Bengal (and Bihar) constitute one of the saddest and blackest chapters in the history of British rule in India. It is not possible to give a detailed account of all the miseries suffered by the peasants, but only a few may be indicated. The Planters forced the cultivators to sow indigo and sell it to them at a fixed price although it was much more profitable to grow other crops. Written agreements were drawn up by the Planters and the ignorant and illiterate cultivators were made to sign or fix their thumb impression on them. This meant that for generations they were bound to sow indigo at a loss. If they refused they were forcibly confined in dark cells in the factory for months, their women were ravished, the crops in their fields were mercilessly destroyed, and their bullocks, ploughs etc. were forcibly seized. There was hardly any remedy, for the English Magistrates, with rare exceptions, favoured the British planters, and what was exceedingly strange, the Planters themselves were appointed as Honorary Magistrates. A picture of the miserable life of indigo-cultivators has been drawn in the famous drama *Niladarpan* written by Dinabandhu Mitra. It is said that when this drama was played on the stage the people were so much excited that shoes were hurled from the auditorium at those who played the parts of the planters.

The Bengali peasants meekly submitted to these insults and injuries for nearly half a century. Then they revolted, But it was an unarmed revolt. They decided not to sow indigo, come what may. Harish Chandra Mukherji wrote in his famous paper, the *Hindoo Patriot:* "Twenty lakhs of poor ryots combined and resolved, even at the sacrifice of their hearth and of home, nay of their lives, not to cultivate their lands with indigo, nor to enter into any fresh contract with the planters for the same." Such an organization could not, of course, be built up in a day. There were some who took up the cause of the indigo-cultivators and helped them in every way. Harish Chandra Mukherji was one of these. By his writings and severe declamations he aroused public opinion. Another destined to become no less famous was Sisir Kumar Ghosh, the future founder of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika.* He was then a young man of 18 but he took up the cause of the cultivators and not only wrote letters to the Calcutta papers bringing to light the atrocities of the planters with full details, but also moved from village to village encouraging and urging the cultivators to make a united stand. At the instance of Sisir Kumar the representatives of ninety-two villages assembled in a meeting at Jayrampur in the District of Nadia where the plan of resistance was discussed. It was decided that the sound of a drum (*nagra*) would be the signal of an attack by the planters in a village and an urgent summons to other villages to come to its help. In this way the peasants learnt self-help and unity.

Shortly, there arose from among the people two leaders named Bishnu Charan Biswas and Digambar Biswas of the village of Chaugachha in Nadia district. They originally served as dewans of indigo factories, but the horrible atrocities perpetrated there moved them to pity. They gave up their jobs and began to organize the cultivators. As a result of the unwearing efforts of these three the indigo-cultivators of the districts of Jessore, Nadia, Rajshahi, Pabna and Maldah took a vow not to sow indigo. Cases were instituted against the recalcitrant cultivators, and the planters got money-decrees against them. The Biswases helped them with money and spent nearly seventeen thousand rupees from their own pocket to save them. These instances had a great reaction upon the people. No amount of fines, imprisonment or physical torture could induce the peasants to sow indigo. The Government were forced to come to terms and the cause of the heroic cultivators was vindicated by a Commission appointed by the Government. The Non-co-operation of the indigo-cultivators triumphed at the end and their grievances were removed.

SPARK IN COLD FRAME

Discerning men realized the importance of the heroic struggle of the Bengali cultivators from a broader standpoint. The following extract from an article in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* of May 22, 1874, would be read with interest even today: "It was the indigo disturbances which first taught the natives the value of combination and political agitation. Indeed it was the first revolution in Bengal after the advent of the English. If there be a second revolution it will be to free the nation from the death grips of the all-powerful police and District Magistrate. Nothing like oppression! It was the oppression which brought about the glorious revolution in England and it was the oppression of half a century by indigo planters which at last roused the half-dead Bengalee and infused spark in his cold frame."

In addition to these two episodes of the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries which foreshadowed the Non-co-operation and Passive Resistance or Civil Disobedience Movements, they were developed in full detail by Arabinda Ghose early in the twentieth century, immediately after the inauguration of the *Swadeshi* movement in Bengal. Practically all the details of Non-co-operation which were enunciated by Gandhi in 1920 were discussed by Arabinda in a series of articles during the month of April, 1907, in his paper, the *Bande Mataram.* These have now been published in the form of a book entitled *The Doctrine of Passive Resistance.*

Boycott of educational institutions, law-courts, of foreign goods etc. are all included in his scheme. "The policy of Passive Resistance," said he, was "a means of putting pressure on Government. The essence of this policy is the refusal of co-operation so long as we are not admitted to a substantial share and an effective control in legislation, finance and administration. Just as 'No representation no taxation' was the watchword of American constitutional agitation in the eighteenth century, so 'no control, no co-operation' should be the watchword of our lawful agitation in the twentieth."

It is unnecessary to give further details, but it would be obvious that the movements of Mahatma Gandhi, at least in their theoretical aspects, were fully anticipated by Arabinda, and were more elaborately dealt with by him than Thoreau or Tolstoy ever did. It is a matter of surprise that while Mahatma Gandhi referred to these sources he never referred to the doctrines of Arabinda, even once, as a source of his inspiration.

THE MOTHER

Hallowed by a tradition of nearly two centuries, this image of Mother Durga is annually worshipped at Duttabati, Mazilpur, 24-parganas.

Colour transparency by Prafulla Mitra

The Society of the FUTURE

By DR. SRIKUMAR BANERJEE

THE origin of society has always been wrapped in obscurity which no subsequent investigation has been able completely to dissipate. The two elements of its composition—the gregariousness of man and the regulative power of a collective association—have coalesced in course of a long evolutionary process, which can be imagined but not marked into well-defined phases. Researchers of a later and more self-conscious age have tended to oversimplify the process and to convert the undefined and unconscious course of events into certain concrete positive actions which just could not have happened. Rousseau's famous theory of Social Contract ascribes contractual definiteness to an arrangement which came to be evolved by itself. Contract and delegation of power imply a maturity of judgment and a conscious separation of identity between the two parties which we cannot ascribe to that remote age and primitive frame of mind.

A nebulous idea of entrusting the guidance and protection of half-grown humanity to a superior individual dimly representing the interests of the community could hardly be designated as an act of contract. Neither the retained powers of the component elements nor the delegated functions of society could clearly emerge in this complete reliance on the leader of the clan or group. The formation of groups tied together by the common problem of living and a sense of common danger from rival groups was the first element in the process of crystallisation. The group led directly to the group-leader and indirectly to the consciousness of a more composite entity which held men together and guaranteed that common pool of energy which was the minimum requisite for self-preservation. The authority of the group in time of danger gradually led to its recognition and consolidation in safeguarding the more complex interests of a time of peace. Physical authority thus turned in time to moral, and the implicit obedience customarily paid to the former was transferred, more or less as a matter of habit, to the more far-reaching control and supervision of the latter. Any revolt against a group meant not an assertion of the right of the individual but involved a transfer of allegiance to another group. The basic elements of what we mean by contract were absent even in embryo in the transaction.

Burke, on the contrary, has gone to the opposite extreme from Rousseau. He has stressed the mystical element in the evolution of society and discountenanced the conception of reason and enlightened self-interest as having anything to do with its beginnings. He speaks of society as "the great mysterious incorporation of the human race." Living together is an innate quality which man shares with other animals which have not as yet reached the rational level. A herd of cattle is drawn together by an instinctive attraction without developing in its long history even a rudimentary social sense. Some animals, however, like ants and bees, have succeeded in refining gregariousness into a limited social solidarity. A higher co-operative feeling regulates the activities of individuals, instils a sense of order and discipline and lays the foundation of a compact, well-knit organisation. Ants, and bees, however, have never moved beyond the strictly restricted area of their semi-rational functionings, and evolved a higher and more comprehensive social sense. Something must have occurred to arrest the natural process of evolution and leave them stationary at a particular point of progress.

SUPERADDED POTENCY

It will be thus seen that the growth of a full-fledged social conception cannot be accounted for on either the instinctive or the rational plane. A special mystical purpose must have taken shape in the human species to make it realise the full potentialities of a social life. Society did not merely mean the aggregate of the individuals living in it; it was a superadded potency, a kind of charged atmosphere which brought out latent human faculties and richer qualities not inherent in the individual life. The gap between the isolated, self-sufficient life and the expanded life lived in a social environment could only be bridged by the assumption of the

operation of a mystic impulse, a supra-rational inspiration, that elevated man to a higher plane of existence.

However society may have originated, it soon assumed a dominant and ever-expanding share in directing the lives and actions of men and women living under its protecting influence. The earliest societies, as reflected in the literature of antiquity, concentrated in themselves the spiritual wisdom of the community and this gave it the right to exercise a progressively stricter control on the unrestrained impulses of average humanity. In all ancient literature, in the Vedas and Upanishads, the Old Testament, in the earliest epic poetry of Homer and Valmiki and Vyasa, we find a patriarchal form of society, in which the wisdom of a few, whether worldly or spiritual, has conferred the right to direct and rule. The norm of righteous conduct, of a well-regulated life which prescribed both religious rites and social observances, gradually came to be fixed and tightened the grip of society on the individual. In cases of conflict between an erring refractory will and the collective influence of society, the sympathy of all right-thinking men was in favour of conformity rather than that of dissent. Domestic ceremonies like marriage, baptism, the last rites became compulsory observances on the part of every member, no deviation from prescribed standards being permitted. Social festivals and enjoyments, however originating in the joyous instincts of man and the stimulus of seasonal appeals, such as sowing and harvesting or the springtide germination of fresh life in Nature, soon assumed a religious complexion and made of religion the one strongest force in the life of the community. In fact in the early ages of human history, religion became the most powerful factor in the consolidation of the influence of society.

In the Middle Ages, all sorts of human relationships and diversities of human conduct fell more and more into a stereotyped pattern. The overstrained pressure of religion was gradually felt to be more and more oppressive and made the individual restive to break away from the yoke. Religion overdid its part and in its growing encroachment on the other functions of life made itself an instrument in the process of social disintegration. Sectarianism and schism disturbed the unity of the religious sphere and made men split up into rival camps. The twin Popes each claiming the religious allegiance of Christendom created a gap which was soon taken advantage of by the emergence of a new secular power, that of the Emperor.

STATIC ELEMENT

Politics and nationalism now dominate the scene and oust religion from its place of power, besides making deep inroads upon the autonomy of the social unit. A traditional society, which has practically exhausted its new potentialities, propped up on the basis of staid conservatism, could hardly absorb the progressive currents of energy in the life of man. It became the static element in life as contrasted with the dynamic element represented in political experiments and fights. The assertion of the freedom of the individual, who found his new-born and expanding aspirations more and more out of tune with the unchangeable fixed pattern of society, the Renaissance with its fierce untamed passions and the Reformation with its glorification of individual conscience and claim to worship God in its own way—all combined to undermine the structure of society. Society was no longer the living expression of the growing human will, but a sort of unadventurous shelter for the stay-at-home impulses of humanity.

In India things took a rather different turn. Politics had never been a live issue in pre-modern India, and there a religion-centred society grew up unchecked by any political competition; Religion, which ever grew more and more engrossing in its claims, made use of society as a formalised expression of its inner urge. Society became a kind of handmaid to religion, embodying its injunctions with almost a mechanical obedience and subordinating its free impulses as completely as possible to religious dictates. In medieval India we reached the closest approximation to a theocratic society achieved by any country in the world, ruled entirely by the priesthood and developing an almost completely fatalistic surrender to the imagined will of Divinity. Families with their hereditary customs and traditions, their rigidly prescribed duties and ordinances held their members in an iron grip, not merely nipping any tendency to revolt but undermining the very will to attempt it. These unitary family cells built up the wider social organisation and their relation to society was an exact replica of the individual family members to the family.

Society, presuming upon its superior moral standards and as the repository not merely of the religious heritage but of the collective practical wisdom of countless generations, assumed an air of absolute infallibility and exercised a more autocratic sway over its component family units and all individuals comprised within it. Conformity to the accepted standards was developed to such high perfection that the very thought of dissent, even in minor articles of food and dress, provoked a sacrilegious horror. Saivism, Vaishnavism and Saktism, the three main channels of the flow of religious emotion, no doubt broke through the outer crust of formalism and released a stock of dynamic spiritual energy that infused fresh blood into the old veins of conventional faith and saved religion from stagnation. But in course of time these fresh religious upsurges hardened into fixed custom and failed to have much impact on the rigid social system. Vaishnavas, Saktas and Sahajiyas, Bauls and other kindred forms of popular religion founded some minor sects with a spurt of heterodoxy in them, but in most cases they were absorbed in the time-honoured social system and kept their heterodoxy a closely guarded secret known only to the initiate.

In the Western countries, the industrial revolution and the dominance of the economic factor in life hastened the dissolution of the old society, already undermined by the progressive assertion of individual freedom. The break-up of the family was accomplished much earlier in them than in the East. Democracy accentuated the sturdy individualism innate in the Western mind, and philosophers like Mill and Bentham assisted with their powerful, if one-sided advocacy in demolishing the social structure by ruthlessly exposing its irrational basis. The shattering earthquake of political revolutions brought in its wake the toppling down of all established social institutions, and left man free to make his contact with his fellowman without the intervention of an intermediate agency. Literary societies, associations, clubs, organisations for promoting a common object sprang up as miniature forms of society to keep up human ties for filling up the gaping void left by the uprooting of the all-inclusive social edifice. The individual now carries on a cash transaction with life, without

(Continued on page 192)

Our UNIVERSITIES

By Dr. ANIL CHANDRA BANERJEE

EXPANSION has been the keynote of India's educational policy since 1947. This policy was the inevitable result of the release of aspirations and of energy after the achievement of Independence. Nor was it a wrong policy, for the size of the country and of its growing population demanded rapid expansion of educational facilities. The framers of the Constitution were aware of the possibility that in the race for expansion quality might be sacrificed to quantity. While recognising education as a State subject they vested in the Centre the power as well as the responsibility in respect of "co-ordination and determination of standards in institution for higher education or research and scientific and technical institutions". The inclusion of this item in the Union list in the Seventh Schedule was intended to give legislative power to Parliament to regulate standards in Universities and in higher technical institutions. The framers of the Constitution obviously wanted the Centre to maintain an all-India level of uniformity so far as standards of higher education were concerned. Parliament and the Union Government sought to discharge this responsibility through the University Grants Commission, a body created by a Central Act and financed by the Union Government. During the comparatively brief period of its existence the Commission has done much good work, but it is generally admitted that the standards of higher education are falling rather than rising. It is more or less apparent that the constitutional objective has not been fulfilled. Expansion has resulted in qualitative deterioration. It is a matter of vital national importance and a thorough scrutiny is overdue.

MULTIPLICATION OF UNIVERSITIES

A fairly large number of Universities have come into existence in recent years. As these are sponsored by the State Governments, the U.G.C. and the Central Government do not come into the picture directly at the initial stage. But no State can make large-scale financial commitments without the approval of the Central Government, and every State expects generous financial assistance for its Universities from the U.G.C. No new University can, therefore, be brought into existence by a State Government without the goodwill of the Central Government and the U.G.C. Delhi has effective co-ordinating authority in this matter. It can decide whether a new University is really an academic need, whether it can be expected to work in conditions conducive to the maintenance of proper standards, whether its financial requirements can be met without affecting the legitimate needs of the existing Universities, etc. Unfortunately Delhi makes no such scrutiny; it permits the State Governments to go on with their plans, although those plans would involve heavy expenditure from Central funds. And it is not a question of drain of financial resources only; it involves the much more important question of maintenance of standards. As Chairman of the U.G.C. Mr. Deshmukh was aware of the likely effects on educational standards of the hasty creation of new Universities, although he was unable to resist the rising tide of pressure. His successors do not appear to have given much thought to the problem at all.

The decision to establish new Universities is generally taken at the political level, *i.e.* the academic implications of the matter are not considered by educationists from the educational point of view. Such Universities are in most cases the offspring of political interests or regional patriotism. In some cases these two factors unite in an unholy combination. The common people, fed by propaganda, welcome new Universities as gifts from their democratic Government. But dis-illusionment follows quickly enough. Students continue to rush to the older Universities and complain if they are refused seats, forgetting that the new Universities were established ostensibly to cater to their needs.

NEW UNIVERSITIES

Most of the new Universities have two well marked characteristics. First, they are more or less departments of the State Government, deprived by statute and administrative practice of that autonomy without which a University becomes a lifeless machine. There is no analogy between such shadows of Secretariats and the State Universities in the United States. The latter enjoy complete autonomy after their budgets are approved by the State Legislatures; the State Governments do not interfere in policy-making and in administration as they do here. Again, there is much difference between the passing of a University budget by a State Legislature and the allocation of funds to a University by the Secretariat. In the former case decisions are taken collectively by the representatives of the people after open discussion on a public forum. In the latter case public funds are distributed in the dark rooms of the Secretariat by a few individuals on principles (if any) known only to themselves. A Vice-Chancellor ready to oblige them might get much more than another who had views of his own. Distribution of public funds in this arbitrary method is open to the gravest objections.

It demoralises the Universities and frequently results in wastage of public money. It is an issue on which public opinion is deplorably silent.

The second feature of most of the new Universities is scarcity of competent teachers and of essential instruments of teaching such as libraries, laboratories, etc. It takes long years to build a rich library or a good laboratory. It would, therefore, be wrong to expect a high standard in these matters in a newly founded University. But a beginning must be made on the right lines so that healthy development in stages might follow. Here lies the real difficulty of the new Universities. In many cases they are unable to secure the services of experienced teachers who alone can organise good libraries and laboratories. Books selected by inexperienced, inadequately equipped teachers put libraries on the wrong track. The same difficulty arises in a larger measure in the case of laboratories.

So far as teaching and research are concerned, the new Universities are at a disadvantage for various reasons. Very few really capable and promising teachers are attracted to these new seats of learning even if they are offered higher salaries and better positions than they get in the older Universities. A teacher who is not intellectually dead will refuse to tie himself to an institution which cannot offer him a good workshop, *i.e.* a good library and a good laboratory. Moreover, the new Universities are located at centres where there are no learned societies or institutions (apart from the Universities themselves) and no libraries or laboratories except those provided by the Universities. It is not surprising that teachers who want opportunities for researches should hesitate to court intellectual exile. Naturally the new Universities have to satisfy themselves with teachers of inferior quality. Even if they succeed in roping in a few competent men the latter soon exhaust their capacity for good work for lack of the necessary apparatus, *i.e.* libraries and laboratories.

The procedure of appointment of teachers in some of the new Universities leaves much to be desired. There are no statutory Selection Committees as we have in Calcutta. Sometimes *ad hoc* Selection Committees are constituted and experts are chosen at random by the administrative authorities. Sometimes appointments are made by Vice-Chancellors, with or without formal advice from external experts. It is obvious that such easy-going methods of selection do not inspire the confidence of aspirants for teaching jobs. Justice, as the saying goes, must not only be done but must appear to have been done. Persons in close contact with academic circles know that lack of confidence in the procedure of appointment is responsible for keeping away many promising teachers from the new Universities.

The quality of teachers naturally affects the quality of teaching and examination. In ancient times, when large scale public examinations were unknown, the quality of a student was judged, at the end of the period of study, by the reputation of the teacher from whom he took his lessons. Even under the vastly changed circumstances of to-day the value of degrees awarded by a particular University depends to a large extent on the teachers who teach and examine the degree-holders in that University. This is one of the reasons which explain the reluctance of promising students to join or to continue their studies in the new Universities. Rightly or wrongly they believe that degrees conferred by the older Universities carry greater weight and open better prospects of employment. How can the new Universities improve their standards if they do not succeed in attracting really meritorious pupils? The average intellectual equipment of the students has a decisive influence on the determination of University standards. Backward students drag the standards down to their own level.

Thus the new Universities move in a vicious circle. They cannot attract teachers of the highest type who can bring distinction to the new seats of learning and release a fresh intellectual stimulus. And because they cannot attract such teachers they fail to attract promising students. Educational institutions failing in the two-fold task of attracting worthy teachers and worthy pupils are doomed to stagnation: the initial handicaps continue to cripple their work and they fail to play their normal role of enlightening the community.

From this point of view the establishment of new Universities is a sheer wastage of public funds. Universities are not required for the production of Pass—or even of Honours graduates. That task should be left to the Colleges, which can perform it with much less cost to the public exchequer. A University is primarily a centre of advanced studies and researches. A University which cannot perform that primary task is no University at all; it is merely a camouflage for a degree-giving body. If the number of under-graduate Colleges is found to be too large to be supervised by the older Universities, it would be much better to establish purely examining Universities conferring degrees up to the graduate standard. Post-graduate teaching, examinations and researches are specialised jobs which cannot be done properly by institutions created by political decrees and managed by bureaucratic orders.

It is not generally recognized, although it is well known to academic circles, that the deterioration of standards in some Universities affects the standards in other Universities as well. If University 'A' is liberal enough to grant Class I M.A./M.Sc. degrees in dozens, University 'B' is in an embarrassing position. The employers—even the supposedly expert bodies like Public Service Commissions—rarely discriminate between genuine Class I degrees and the inflated imitations. The result is that good Class II M.A./M.Sc. of University B' find themselves superseded by their intellectual inferiors, the Class I diploma holders of University 'A'. Naturally University 'B' is subjected to increasing pressure for placing its degrees on a par with those of University 'A'. Such pressure frequently becomes irresistible. It is a new, and pretty serious, threat to the maintenance of proper standards in the Universities. This threat comes generally from the new Universities, but some of the older Universities are no less guilty in this respect. One result of the establishment of new Universities is the intensification of this threat. It is unwise to multiply centres of infection.

UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMISSION

All Universities, old and new, depend largely upon subsidies from the University Grants Commission. Here their primary difficulties are two-fold. First, most of the grants made by the U.G.C. are development grants and not maintenance grants. Development grants are available for a fixed period—generally five years—after which they are discontinued. But the commitments of the Universities continue. For example, a Professorship is created at the instance of the U.G.C. and the salaries are paid by the U.G.C. for five years. At the end of the term the U.G.C. grant is stopped, but the University is committed to the U.G.C. to maintain the

(Continued on Page 22)

FANTASY AND MORALITY IN CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH FICTION

By HAYDN MOORE WILLIAMS

Reader in English, Jadavpur University

A CHAPTER of English literature opened and closed between 1910 and 1922, the period of experiment and innovation, and the climacteric of naturalism. James Joyce took the novel to the little-charted lands of "streams of consciousness" in the great novel-to-end-all-novels—*Ulysses*. Ever since the pundits have been prophesying the imminent demise of the novel; and even now many critics are conducting a post-mortem on a still living body. But what happened after Joyce? The American novel went merrily on with Faulkner and Hemingway. For them the experimental period was not over (*The Sound and the Fury*, for example) and the Americans to some extent created their own idiom.

In Britain Joyce seemed to have a paralysing effect; and it was not until the Thirties that social realism combined with *dogma* (Marxist, Freudian, and Christian) began to transform the content and form. Graham Greene is the most notable figure in the novels of the Thirties but the reader will find interesting symptoms in the less successful novels of Rex Warner (*The Aerodrome, The Professor*). For both Greene and Warner the novel was a vehicle for ideas; in Greene Catholicism, in Warner the strength (and weakness) of liberal humanism. There was also a crop of Marxist or pseudo-Marxist writers eager as usual to display their orthodoxy in *their* religion.

It seems to me that the form of these "philosophical" novels was conditioned by two new phenomena in contemporary art and entertainment: the film, especially the film-thriller of Lang and above all Alfred Hitchcock with their technique of *terror-in-ordinary-life* and economy of narration through deft cutting and editing; and the fantasies of Kafka. The film-thriller brought terror through realism and sought the fantastic in everyday life (actually John Buchan's thrillers had first used this trick superbly); Kafka on the other hand found terror inside the mind of man and gave a realistic setting to nightmarish fantasy. Incidentally both the film and Kafka reflect the atmosphere of political terror and despair in post-1918 Europe. Almost all of Greene's novels and entertainments are shot through with Hitchcockian idioms—the hare-lipped hired killer stalking his paralysed victim in the middle of the students' rag (*A Gun for Sale*) or the monstrously fat Nazi spy crumbling Rowe's cake in the air-raid in his frantic search for the hidden documents.

After the Second World War, outside the work of Joyce Cary and Ivy Compton-Burnett, the "artistic" novel wavered uncertainly—still dominated by realism and naturalism. What was wanted was a fresh start—but one that would still utilise the formula of the well-directed film (the most lively art in Western Europe, after all) and the Kafkaesque philosophical fantasy. Three quite different English writers seem to me to have provided such a fresh start.

First there is what Arthur Koestler has called the earthquake in modern fiction: the novels of William Golding. Golding (a wartime naval officer) wrote *The Lord of the Flies* (recently filmed) out of his schoolmastering knowledge of boys, and his disagreement with Ballantyne in *The Coral Island* that boys without adults to control them could still behave like little gentlemen. *The Inheritors* was the fruit of Golding's disagreement with yet another book, H. G. Wells's humanistic *Outline of History* in which Man is presumed to be an advance on pre-Man and "progress" is a good thing.

Both books are frightening allegories; and the theme is the same—the Fall of Man, Original Sin. So the nice English schoolboys marooned on an island in a nuclear war descend to bestial savagery and devil-worship. In *The Inheritors*, innocent primitive man is destroyed and supplanted by sinful treacherous, lecherous Homo Sapiens. Golding's novels are not only graphically written—they are deeply disturbing. Take *Pincher Martin* with its vivid narration of a man's purgatory—the soul of the dead naval officer shrinking to the size of crab's claws and scuttling over the surface of a decayed tooth!

A second writer has taken over the police thriller *and* the religious theme from Graham Greene. This is James Barlow, a Birmingham rates-inspector turned writer who has come to the front in the last five or six years. His novels fall into two classes: the realistic novel of contemporary English life centred around an unusual character (*The Patriots* for example with its ironical title deals with two British paratroopers—veterans of Arnhem—disgusted with post-war England, who plan a master crime, and comes nearer to tragedy than any other novel since *The Heart of the Matter*); and second, Barlow goes in for what is almost Science Fiction, Buchan-like fantasies of which *One Half of the World* is typical: the saga of a policeman in a Communist Britain of the near future under foreign occupation who joins the resistance when he becomes converted to Christianity and dies a martyr's death. All Barlow's novels keep coming back to certain recurrent themes and character-situations. Christianity is a central theme—dogmatic Church Christianity menaced by the armed heresies of our time—Marxist atheism, materialism, humanism, hedonism. It is Christianity of the catacombs. Barlow is also obsessed by the struggles of the lonely, unheroic hero against the establishment (e.g., the schoolmaster in *Term of Trial*). But Barlow's hated establishment is not that of Amis, Osborne and the "Angries". In fact Barlow attacks many of the things they stand for. Barlow's establishment consists of the success-merchants, "yes men", the intellectuals, the complacent or bleating humanists, the good "Party" men (whether Communist or Capitalist), the hedonists, the peddlers of lust and violence. And Barlow's hero is often the much maligned policeman, detective, M.I. 5 man who has to do the necessary "dirty" work of a pharisaical society.

(Continued On Page 187)

9.3.61

OUR UNIVERSITIES

(Continued from page 20)

Professorship on a permanent basis. Where will the University get the money then? Acceptance of U.G.C. grants means, in most cases, mortgaging the future.

Secondly, most of the U.G.C. grants are available only on condition of providing matching grants which usually amount to 50 p.c. or 33 p.c. of the total expenditure. The rules of the U.G.C. require that matching grants are to be provided by the University out of its own funds or by the State Government. As the University's own funds are seldom adequate for the purpose, the State Government has to be approached. In effect, therefore, the acceptance of U.G.C. grants depends upon the generosity of the State Government.

In addition to these two difficulties, the Universities have to submit themselves to U.G.C. control even in regard to details of planning and expenditure. In this respect the U.G.C. is a loyal imitator of the Secretariat technique. The U.G.C. Visiting teams will determine the size of the windows of buildings constructed out of U.G.C. grants. The U.G.C. will dictate the number and qualifications of teachers whose salaries it pays. Perhaps the day is not far off when not a sparrow will move in any University building without orders from the U.G.C. All wisdom, it seems, is concentrated in the U.G.C. and men who run the Universities are to be treated as perpetual minors.

During the last few years the U.G.C. has spent tons of money on the Universities and it has done much for their improvement. That it has been a stimulating factor in the sphere of higher education is undeniable. But much more might have been done if the Universities had been given reasonable freedom to use the grants in conformity with local traditions and local needs. The fact is that the U.G.C. is a wing of the Central Secretariat and believes in the old saying: He who pays the piper will call the tune. It is highly regrettable that the U.G.C. should develop so soon into an enemy of the Universities' autonomy.

DIFFERENT STAGES OF EDUCATION

No University can maintain really high standards in the sphere of post-graduate studies, examinations and researches if a fairly high level is not maintained at the secondary and collegiate levels. It is necessary, therefore, that there should be effective and fruitful co-ordination between the secondary, collegiate and post-graduate stages. The existing system does not provide for co-ordination between Boards which control secondary education and Universities which control collegiate and post-graduate education. The Universities have no voice in determining the standard of secondary education which lies within the exclusive jurisdiction of the Boards. But any student who passes a secondary education examination is automatically eligible for admission into a College. In other words, the Universities cannot lay down the qualifications of persons who join the Collegiate courses. A host who cannot choose his guests is in a really embarrassing position.

The difficulty would have been less acute than it is to-day if secondary education throughout the country had been placed at a level of uniformity. But despite the Mudaliar Commission's recommendations and the flow of money from the Centre there is a bewildering variety in this sector of education. The number of subjects taught, the total marks assigned to different subjects, the limits of the syllabi, the books prescribed for study, the rules of examination: in all these matters there are wide variations. Naturally there is no uniform standard of secondary education, and in some cases the standard is deplorably low. For example, Board 'A' recognizes Physics and Chemistry as two separate subjects for the Higher Secondary Examination and assigns 200 marks to each of them, but Board 'B' groups them together under the name 'Physical Sciences' and assigns 100 marks to the group as a whole. Board 'C' recognises type-writing or soap-making as alternatives to History or Geography. Board 'D' allows candidates to pass the examination in two instalments, taking some subjects in July and the others in December, while other Boards require them to pass the entire examination at one sitting.

Such differences obviously imply material differences in the equipment of the students who seek admission into the Colleges. But no University can, for practical reasons, make any discrimination, in the matter of eligibility for admission into its Colleges, between fully equipped and partly equipped applicants. Inter-State migration of students is quite frequent now, and in big cities like Calcutta thousands of students from different parts of the country seek opportunities for higher education. Many of them come from Boards whose standard is low. To debar them from admission on purely academic grounds would raise many problems, personal and political. To admit them would mean lowering of the standard of the Degree courses.

The same bewildering variety prevails in the field of Collegiate education. University 'A' requires every B.A. candidate to pass in five subjects; University 'B' reduces the number of subjects to three. University 'C' prescribes an eight-paper Honours course, University 'D' is liberal enough to make it a six-paper course, and University 'E' has no Honours course at all. In regard to admission to post-graduate courses the graduates of all these Universities claim equal eligibility. If this claim is recognized (as it usually is), the level of post-graduate teaching is inevitably lowered to accommodate the backward section of students.

Even post-graduate degrees of different Indian Universities do not imply equality of equipment. In most cases these degrees require a two-year course of teaching, but in some cases post-graduate courses are of one year's duration. And there are Universities which confer post-graduate degrees *without teaching and without examination* upon graduates holding the three-year Honours degree. I found one M.Sc. of this category teaching in a Government College within the jurisdiction of Calcutta University, although Calcutta University graduates with three-year Honours degrees cannot blossom into M.A./M.Sc.s overnight without going through a two-year post-graduate course and passing an eight-paper examination.

It is really surprising that neither the University Grants Commission nor the Inter-University Board takes any notice of these anomalies. It is neither expected nor desirable that all Boards and Universities should conform to the same pattern in all particulars. Variety is the spice of education as it is of life. But if variety means simplification of courses and of examinations it thwarts educational progress instead of accelerating it. To stimulate intellectual forces is the proper function of a University. This function cannot be discharged by distributing cheap degrees and diplomas for the immediate benefit of job-hungry youngmen and women. The least that the U.G.C. can do—and should do immediately — to arrest the infectious

(Continued on page 11)

NETAJI AND NEHRU

By NANDALAL CHATTERJI, Ph.D.,D.Litt.
Research Professor, Lucknow University.

NETAJI and Nehru have been makers of the Age and daring path-finders in their own ways. Their flaming patriotism and undying courage form an epic chapter in the annals of Modern India and of the modern World.

Netaji's role as a Congress leader was from the very outset characterised by a spirit of revolutionary dynamism and his forward and aggressive ideas reinforced the leftist trend in Indian politics. Having made great sacrifices like Nehru, he was also associated like Nehru with the formulation of the socialist idea in India.

His role in the Congress leadership, distinguished though it was, was only a prelude to his subsequent role as a soldier of freedom in distant land. It is his spectacular war-time escape from the country despite the surveillance of the British police and his remarkable exploits later outside India which really established his claim to immortality as a national hero.

There was a time when the British propagandists and many Indians doubted his bona fides and took him for a Quisling in the pay roll of the Axis Powers. This accusation was as false as it was cruel. A man, whom the powerful British Government sent to jail eleven times and yet could not cajole or corrupt would not dream of selling his conscience to Germany or Japan.

Netaji's objects in going over to the Axis Powers was only to seek their help in India's fight for freedom. These Powers and India had at the time a common enemy, and therefore, there was bound to be, for the time being at least, a common interest and objective. Netaji simply tried to exploit the international situation, but he was never once willing to give up his freedom of action on any account. Till the end, he studiously maintained his independence and never allowed himself to be dictated to by the Axis Powers.

ENTERPRISE

The manner in which Netaji recruited and assembled a National Army first in Europe and then in the Far East testifies to his wonderful capacity for organisation and skill in strategy. It was indeed a signal achievement that he induced the Axis Powers—and Japan in particuar—to render all possible military help to his plans to liberate India. It was even a greater achievement that he organised the scattered Indians outside India—especially, Indians in East Asia—and prepared with their moral and material assistance a fighting force which was named Azad Hind Fauj or the Indian Army of Liberation. This army was fashioned entirely under Indian leadership and went to battle under Netaji's supreme guidance. Its inspiring slogan, "To Delhi, Onward to Delhi", galvanised the entire I.N.A. personnel with the three ideals: patriotism, duty and sacrifice. Everyone was conscious of the grave risks and manifold difficulties that faced the army, but Netaji instilled into every heart an unshakable determination to fight for the motherland shoulder to shoulder through joy and sorrow, through sunshine and darkness and through suffering and martyrdom till the goal was reached.

It is significant that this Azad Hind Government which was formed on foreign soil ushered in a new era of Indian political enterprise and produced a great effect on the popular mind in India. The recognition it received from the Axis Powers gave it an international status which went a long way towards strengthening the morale of the Indian people in and outside India.

Netaji's bid to launch an offensive on the Assam front with the help of his new Azad Hind Force will be long remembered as a romantic chapter in the history of India. The initial success of his army in penetrating inside the borders of Manipur, was, however, ultimately frustrated.

Even though Netaji's plans eventually failed, his grand failure itself created history. His historic achievements in the Far East and on the Manipur front brought at least moral victory for the cause of India's independence.

His lofty idealism created a new spirit among the Indians, and his I.N.A. completely shattered the illusion of the Indian Army sepoys' blind devotion to the alien ruler. If the British Governmen had in the end to decide to quit India, one of the contributory causes was the new conviction that the Indian sepoys would no longer fight and die for the British Government. The new feeling of self-sacrifice and patriotism of the men of the I.N.A. who had once served under the British and had surrendered to the Japanese in the Far East and Burma showed that the days of the British domination in India were over for ever.

India has been blessed with a Gandhi but also with a Jawaharlal Nehru. Both were complementary to each other and both have advanced the cause of India's freedom in different ways. The greatest

follower of Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru, is yet a liberator in his own right. If Gandhiji gave the idea, Nehru gave the colour, shape and the concrete form to India's independence. And, there is no doubt that Gandhiji forged the weapon which Nehru wielded with will and ability.

Nehru is the best interpreter and spokesman of Gandhiji's thought and it was the two together in a brilliant partnership that led India's fight for freedom. Gandhiji was the Lord Krishna and Nehru the Arjuna of the great Indian Mahabharata-conflict of the 20th Century.

Why did Nehru accept non-violence in this struggle for independence ? With his rational and historical sense Nehru could not simply have done otherwise. Terrorism made no appeal to him, for he regarded it as a sign of political immaturity. He had no doubt that it formed a tragic and futile weapon and no nation had really benefited by it. Non-violence, he was convinced, was to be the salvation of India and, indeed, of the whole world. Violence, he thought, had had a long career, and had been weighed repeatedly and always found to be wanting. Violence must go from excess to excess and ultimately it would perish in the flame it kindled and be reduced to ashes.

CHOICE

But, like Gandhiji, Nehru was also clear that non-violence could not mean cowardice or weakness. Nehru made his choice because Gandhiji appeared to him as the age-old soul of India. He chose the path of non-violence and suffering in the spirit of a true votary and took thereby the proud position in the vanguard of the army of freedom which believed that freedom would be valueless and tainted, if it came through foul means.

In 1929, Mahatma Gandhi who had so far been rather lukewarm about the independence creed, at last gave it his blessings in the Lahore session of the Congress. This enabled the Congress to unfurl the flag of independence on the banks of the river Ravi at midnight of December 21, 1929 and in the early hours of first January, 1930. This was indeed a glorious day in the political career of Nehru. He had positively changed the outlook of the Congress and had given it a new orientation altogether.

The word 'Swaraj' in the Congress constitution was henceforth to mean complete independence.

FORESIGHT

As a soldier of freedom, Nehru took his stand with the socialist and nationalist forces of the world in order to rise above the tide of world-imperialism. He saw the world divided into two blocs—the imperialists and Fascists on the one side, the Socialist and anti-imperialist on the other.

The British Empire represented the strongest and oldest imperialism and this was the real argument for India's freedom and for the end of India's connection with this Empire. After all, there could be no connection between India's freedom and the British imperialism. So, if India remained within the imperialism fold, whatever name or status and whatever external appearance and power India might have, India would have remained a slave to the reactionary forces and to the imperialist bloc.

Nehru saw as no other leader saw it, that the only key to the solution of India's problems lay in socialism and this socialism he viewed in its scientific and economic sense. To him socialism was more than an economic idea. It was a way of life and as such it immensely appealed to him. He saw no way of eradicating economic backwardness, the large scale unemployment, the political subjection and the misery of the masses except through socialism.

He was aware that this meant drastic changes both in the political and social structure of the vested interests in all spheres. It was ultimately to mean the replacement of the present profit system by a higher ideal of cooperative service — which would amount to a change in philosophy of life, completely different from the existing capitalist order. But, Nehru was always clear on the point that there could not be a slavish imitation of the Soviet system which he personally admired. He held that every nation must have its socialist system after its own liking and shape it with its own genius.

He worked for Indian independence not only because the patriot in him could not put up with foreign rule but also because it appeared to him to be the inevitable step to a socialistic rebuilding of society. But he realised that the majority in the Congress might not be prepared to go thus far and so he was prepared to slow down the pace of advance. In any case, he was not willing to force the issue in the Congress and thereby create difficulties, in the way of India's national struggle against the British rule.

He was always ready to co-operate gladly and with all the strength in him with all those who worked for independence even though they did not feel much attracted to the socialist idea. The object was to convert the Congress slowly, if not all at once. The Congress was in the British period a broad popular front representing a variety of ideologies. It was to remain thus for a long time to come. That is why Nehru could with his passion for socialism and rapid industrialisation co-operate with Gandhiji for the village uplift, Khadi and untouchability-removal programmes. But, these appealed to him no more than temporary acceptance of a transition stage rather than a permanent solution of the country's problems.

INFLUENCE

As a soldier of freedom, Nehru always experienced the thrill of mass feeling, the power of influencing the common man. Unlike Gandhiji he kept religion outside politics. He took to the crowd as the crowd took to him, and yet, he never lost himself in it, despite their love and adoration.

His sentiments and language were noble but they were never those of a rabble-rouser. From his higher mental perch he never ceased to feel how different he was from those thousands who idolised him; different in outlook, in taste and in aspirations. In order to be sure that the people really liked him for what he was, he was often frank, critical and even rough and rude in his criticisms and denunciations. Still the people put up with him and he remained their hero and darling.

On a survey of Nehru's contributions to the freedom struggle it would appear that Nehru powerfully influenced it and gave it a new orientation. Firstly, he introduced the independence creed which even Gandhiji had not at first approved. Secondly, he gave the Indian freedom movement a world background and perspective. Thirdly, though no pioneer in the socialist field in India, Nehru was the first Congress leader who popularised the socialist thought of the Marxian kind. Fourthly, he organised a broad-front against all kinds of communalism and casteism. Lastly, it was Nehru who first gave a concrete shape to the idea of national planning after the Soviet model of the Five-Year-Plan.

Nehru's name in modern Indian History will live for ever as that of a great patriot and architect of freedom.

Asian MOTHER GODDESSES

By DR. SUDHAKAR CHATTOPADHYAYA

IT is autumn. India wears a gay look at the advent of the Divine Mother. Her image is a source of consolation to the devotees who pray for salvation and to others whose aim is to gain material prosperity through worship. Amongst the mass of devotees and visitors assembled at the hall of worship, if there be any historian or anthropologist, his sight would be at once attracted towards Kalabau (several plants covered in cloth) placed by the side of the great image. The priest would explain that she, and not the image, represents the real mother goddess. This assertion is in keeping with the tradition recorded in the Mahabharata where the goddess is described as *Sakambhari*. This shows indirectly that her presence should be searched for in corns and plants. Thus she at once becomes the earth-goddess, *bhu-devi*, the goddess of fertility. Bhumi, the soil, is one of the village cults and to her offerings are made of cakes. sweetmeats and fruits. Such worship may be as old as the time of the Indus valley culture (C. 3000 B.C.), as we have from Harappa a seal representing nude female figure upside down with legs wide apart and a plant coming out of her womb.

Frazer has pointed out that from the primitive conception of earth mother as either kindly or malevolent has developed the worship of the mother goddess, which forms such an important element in the beliefs of the people of India. As in Greece, the close connection of the mother goddess with the earth is illustrated in sacred art as well. In the Greek vases, the mother-goddess is depicted as rising out of a mound. Similarly, the Dravidian goddess Ellamma is often figured on stone, the head being only visible while the body is concealed in the earth. It is not without significance that the great Indian mother goddess is worshipped at the advent of the autumn and spring, the two harvesting seasons. It has often been conjectured, however, that mother worship cannot arise simply in an agricultural society, that society should be matriarchal too. It can arise in a society where mother is the head of the group. This is no doubt illustrated to some extent by the history of the early Semites who developed a mother cult and had at the same time a polyandrous form of life. But India proves a contrary case. After the Vedic Aryans settled in the land of the seven rivers they had to fight constantly with the original dwellers—the Dravidians and the Proto-Austroloids etc.—of the land. At that time the male gods were predominant. Later on, when they tasted a quieter life, the conception of a supreme mother goddess developed among them. Their mainstay was agriculture but their society was never polyandrous. Looked at from this point of view it may be held that mother cult develops mainly in a predominantly agricultural society.

Long before India developed the conception of *Adya-Sakti* or Supreme Mother Goddess, the worship of a supreme feminine energy had been prevalent in Western Asia among the Semetic Assyro-Babylonians and Hittite Aryans. Whether the Assyro-Babylonians and the Hittites developed these cults independently or got inspiration from a common source is still a moot question. In the regions around the Mediterranean the worship of the mother goddess was prevalent in remote antiquity and this may have influenced the Asiatic cult to some extent. In Punic Africa, Egypt, Asia Minor and Greece a virgin goddess was worshipped along with a male god who was her son. Some historians think that this cult was of Cretan origin. The son, born of the virgin by immaculate conception was believed to die and reappear again in life as does nature from summer to winter and from winter to summer. Here also we find the same notion evidently of the earth goddess producing harvests in different seasons. Anthropologists maintain that the Dravidians of India belong to the Mediterranean race and among them we have a reference to such a virgin mother goddess. Thus the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea, an anonymous Greek work composed between 60 and 80 A.D., speaks of the Cape of Comari where "come those men who wish to consecrate themselves for the rest of their lives, and bathe and dwell in celibacy and women also do the same, for it is told that a godddess once dwelt here and bathed." Cape of Comari or Kanya Kuma-

rika, according to Indian tradition, is the abode of Kumari (virgin) or Durga. It is not unlikely that this virgin goddess may have been brought to India by the Mediterranean Dravidians and later on she came to be identified with Durga.

A virgin goddess should naturally be worshipped under strict celibacy, as the Periplus of the Erythraean Sea seems to suggest. In the Mediterranean countries also the virgin goddess was worshipped under similar fashion. Her male votaries were castrated and the female votaries had to ignore their married life but could observe ceremonial promiscuity which was looked upon as nothing impure. A virgin with her son forms the basis of the Christian religion, and this idea also came evidently from the Mediterranean region.

FERTILITY CULT

Among the Assyro-Babylonians who dominated Western Asia till the rise of the Median Iranians in the seventh century B.C. a Great Mother Goddess was worshipped who ultimately became the supreme deity. She was Ishtar-Nana. As in India, we understand by the expression *Adya-Sakti* all the goddesses like Durga, Kali etc. So Ishtar ultimately absorbed all the female deities of the ancient Semites and became the *Adya-Sakti* or the Supreme Goddess and her name came to denote any of the female deities. She was also originally a goddess of fertility and her principal seats of worship were Uruk (where she was worshipped as Nana), Akkad (where she was worshipped as Anunitu), Nineveh etc. It is apparent that Nana, Anunitu etc. were originally local divinities and were ultimately merged in Ishtar. A similar process operated in India as well. Uma was originally the goddess of the Himalayan region, Kali the deity of the Proto-Austroloids of the Vendiyan tract and Kumari, as we have already seen, a divinity of the far south, but they all ultimately merged into one *Adya-Sakti*. Similarly, Ishtar-Nana gradually rose in supreme importance and her temple at Uruk became a sanctuary of great repute. Besides various ritualistic practices, temple-prostitution was followed here and it is not unlikely that it developed under the influence of the Mediterranean mother cult.

Ishtar-Nana is described as a goddess of love and of the life of the nature in general. She was also a goddess of war and thus she became a favourite deity of the Assyrian Kings who were very much fond of war and chase. She was also connected with Venus and Sirius and thus she indirectly became the presiding deity of the Babylonian astrological sciences. Lion was her sacred animal and dove also was sometimes associated with her. In the various Ishtar hymns, we find her often described as a merciful goddess, forgiving men their sins, delivering them from different maladies and we often reach high ethical levels with them.

ISHTAR-NANA

Ishtar-Nana appears to have exerted a great influence on Indian religious thoughts. Thus we find on a coin of Huvishka, the Kushana King of North India ruling in the second century A.D., the figure of a male and a female with inscriptions which have been interpreted as referring to the male as Oesa or Bhavesa (Siva) and to the second as Nana, i.e., Ishtar-Nana. As again on some coins of the same king we have figure of Oesa together with another female figure with the inscription Omma or Uma, and as in later period we find that Durga absorbed many of the traits of the goddess Ishtar-Nana (c.f. lion-seat, warlike attributes etc.) it has been assumed that the cult of the Babylonian goddess introduced into India by the Scythian Kings became merged in the cult of India. Ishtar-Nana absorbed all the female divinities of Western Asia, but she failed in India. India has a peculiar capacity for absorbing foreign influences. Ishtar-Nana became merged into Indian mother goddess.

Let us now turn to the mother goddess of the Hittites. A branch of the Aryans, the Hittites settled in the Asia Minor region in the second millennium B.C. and founded city states of their own and followed a religion that was evidently Aryan in character. Each city State had a local shrine where a storm god and a goddess were worshipped. Whether the storm god was the husband of the goddess is not clear. In India, Sakti is regarded as the wife of Rudra- Siva who is sometimes regarded as storm god in the Rig Veda, the earliest literary document of the Aryans. When the different city States coalesced into an empire, naturally all the local goddesses were merged together and there arose thus a supreme Goddess. She was regarded as presiding over the production of the soil (cf. *Sakambhari*) while the male god came to be regarded as the tutelary deity of the army. This pair is represented in the sacred gallery of Yazzaly Qaya, the holy place of the city of Hatti. In the procession at Baghaz-Keui the goddess has a crown on her head, stands on a lion or panther, and bears a staff in one of her hands. There are two figures accompanying the goddess throwing some interesting light from the Indian point of view. One of them, regarded by some scholars as her son, is a beardless youth in masculine dress, having a staff in one hand and an axe on the other, while a dagger hangs in a sheath fixed in the waist. The other figure is somewhat an uncouth one, having the body of a lion with a human head. The first male figure naturally reminds us of Skanda-Kartikeya and the second one of Ganesa. There is no doubt much dissimilarity between these two classes of icons, but the underlying motif in both the cases appears to be somewhat the same. We do not know exactly what was the name of this Supreme Goddess, "though it seems likely that the original Cappadocian form was something like *Ma*, the name under which she was worshipped later at Comna".

Our knowledge of the early history of Central Asia is rather poor at present and we do not know exactly whether any mother goddess was worshipped there. From the writings of Herodotus, who lived in the fifth century B.C. we learn that among the Scythians of that place there was a supreme father god and a mother goddess. Later Indian works look on the region as a source of inspiration for their mother worship. Thus the *Nilatantra* states that the Devi was born in a lake called Collying to the west of Mount Meru. Meru has been identified with Pamir and to the west of it lie the Syr Daria and Amu Daria valleys where even at the present time the lakes are called Col by the local people. This may point to the fact that some form of mother worship prevailed in ancient Russian Turkistan. We know that the Indian mother goddess is associated with Sakinis and Dakinis. Dr. P. C. Bagchi has shown that the Sakinis refer to the Sakas and the Dakinis to the Dags of Dagistan. The Tantras further state that Lord Vasishtha went to Mahachina (Tibet?) and learnt there a peculiar form of sadhana—known as *Chinachara* which he later introduced into India. It is further stated that the goddess Tara was worshipped there after that fashion. Tara was originally a Buddhist goddess and later on came to be regarded as a manifestation of the Indian Divine Mother, the *Adya-Sakti*. The reference to the deity is found in old Japenese records and her worship was prevalent in Mongolia also where she was known as Dara.

third stages are kinetic the fourth again is potential for it may serve as the inspiration of a fresh artistic activity.

It has been stated already that all art has a perceptual and a conceptual element. The proportion of the two varies with the different arts.

In poetry the perceptual element which is primarily based on the senses, is the least. The sounds of the words of a poem and its audiel rhythm contribute to its enjoyment but both can be enjoyed mentally without reading the poem aloud. We have to consider how the appreciation of poetry is related to values, and to which category of values.

Value varies with people and all values are not perceived as such by all. There are the merely physical or sensory values whose scope is very limited for they begin and end with the physical entity and do not reach the higher cerebral processes.

Their influence in terms of instinctive gratification is confined to the cerebellum. But towering far above these are the conceptual values—aesthetic and ethical. They constitute the core of humanity's noblest striving. They are the outcome of Man's ceaseless cry to be delivered from bondage to darkness.

The highest poetry as essential literature embodies this urge, this ceaseless yearning, this unquenchable hunger and thirst for enlightenment's sake and not for the sake of any accruing benefit. In this sense all art is perfectly useless. Uselessness in this sense is the quality of real values. This uselessness is not a negative utilitarianism, for no real value can be merely negative. It means that real values are so completely full of essential significance that they need no adjunct of added quality beyond themselves. They are self-contained and, therefore, self-perfect. It also means that their significance or worth is not relative to the transience of flux; that in the midst of ceaseless change and decay they endure and that they are different from knowledge which is progressive and subject to change and modification, whereas value has the finality which knowledge lacks.

Value, therefore, is beyond knowledge. It is not perfect knowledge even, but an entity of a totally different category. "The world through wisdom knew not God;" this is also true of the highest values.

Values are subjective. The objective world of the cosmos can be conceived to exist without any life in it but values presuppose a subjective apparatus to make them possible. Values must be both valuable and valued.

TIME AND SPACE

Time is the evolvent of values and it is through Time that values make contact with the objective world. Time has been described as the mind of Space for without Time Space would cease to be Space and be reduced to mere extension. Time is the only point at which values may impinge on the objective world.

Values, however, cannot exist in a vacuum, for a vacuum, physical or mental, is a purely negative state which is repugnant to value. Value is significance at its intensest and significance must be positive or be a significance unrelated to itself, i.e., a significance, by inference, of something else, which is equivalent to saying that its significance has no significance.

Poetry is concerned directly and immediately with aesthetic values and with intellectual and ethical values only by inference, if at all. The highest values cannot be contradictory. The poet feels what the philosopher thinks and the unity of value is suggested by the harmony of the consciousness of values, but this is not to say that the values are identical. Aesthetic values involve an element of contemplation quite different from thought and not to be confused with it. It is not its core but its habiliment. That is what is meant by saying that poetry is emotion recollected in tranquillity. In aesthetic appreciation the immediacy of feeling is followed and modified by the solvent of recollection and contemplation. In rare cases, however, due to the integrity and strength of the feeling, its character is hardly modified by the second process, but in other cases the molten ore of feeling is cooled in the mould of contemplation. It is "the sense sublime of something deeply interfused."

We have seen that values have the completeness of finality, that is, we are aware of them as perfect wholes.

Now in poetry there are several elements or ingredients. There is the form, there is the matter, there is the scaffolding or frame-work of ideation or plot—but the mere aggregate does not constitute poetry in essentialness. Permeating and fusing these there is the quality of inspiration which transforms these various elements into an indistinguishable whole. It is the consecration without which poetry cannot be itself.

"The light, the gleam that never was on sea or land," transmutes the ingredients of poetry till these are fused, and glow with the prismatic colours of the poet's dream which also consecrates them.

The word consecration is significant. It underlines the spiritual element to which all exalted inspiration ultimately leads. Just as there is the rationale of feeling in poetry, so there is also the rationale of the spirit in poetry. The quest of poetry under the right conditions of inspiration becomes the quest for the Holy Grail. Just as there is ethical purity or holiness so, too, there is poetic purity and dedication in terms of the integrity of inspiration and its attendant corollaries. The Galahads of romance have their counterparts in the realm of poetry as revealed through the quest for eternal values, which form the house not made with hands founded on the certitude of realization and not on the shifting sands of transient awareness.

If values inhere in the mind and spirit then it is reasonable to suppose that poetry, which has the minimum of perceptual elements, is best suited among the arts to reveal to us these values at their best and clearest. In poetry we are in the midstream of pure imagination much sooner than in the other arts of motion and sound, which require a broader expanse of sensory bank before we can reach the depths of the stream. In poetry the transformation from perceptual to conceptual is quickest and the perceptual element, such as it is, most tenuous. In all true poetry the conceptual element has power to resuscitate the perceptual not through any sensory medium but by the intensity or concentration of mind which makes the perceptual element of a poem "flash upon the inward eye" which constitutes one of the most exalted and refined pleasures the mind and spirit are capable of experiencing. It is subtle as telepathic communication; it demands a rare intuitive sympathy with the pristine inspiration of the poet and is the highest form of communion between man and super-cosmic reality which men call by different names and pay homage to in diverse manners.

ESSENTIAL QUALITY

This brings us to the essential quality of all enduring values—mystery and wonder which become deeper the more we try to realize them, for they are the forms through which the quality of the Infinite is conveyed. The objective quality of mys-

(Continued on page 172)

SHAKESPEARE'S TRAGIC SOURCE

By Prof. JOHN J. PINTO

THE whole truth of Shakespeare's tragedies does not lie in the Renaissance world, the spirit of whose chivalry and the torch of whose culture set his imagination aflame; nor in the spring of Helicon of whose waters he drank deep; nor in the pages of Aristotle, whose definition of dramatic art he may have known, which he put into practice within reason; the truth lies, more than in any of these, in the palpitating heart of London, to which centre of fashion and learning he hastened, not entirely with the dreams and ambitions of youth, but chiefly with the hopes and fears of a fugitive, not from Justice but from an impossible situation. The heart of London where he lived and tasted the wine of fame, reaped the comforts of fortune, the heart that throbbed with pain and emotion, and felt the throes of birth of a new Age, this heart was the rich source of his tragic art. The sorrows of London, of England, of Catholics, wrung groans from his human heart, felt as a hidden spring, intimate, integral, personal for in and through them he voiced his solidarity with his people; their agony was his agony, their calamities, his calamities, for their country was his and their God his God. Here we must seek the deeper truth of his tragedies.

Every great poet is the child of his Age, not always in harmony with its spirit or in sympathy with its culture; often in antagonism bemoaning the tyranny of the present, recalling with nostalgic pathos and fervour the glories of the past, some order of society that reflects his Vision; or looking forward to the dawn of the future: so it is with Shakespeare. If we fail to understand and appreciate the conditions that governed his life and moulded his genius we do him an injustice and his work an injury, for that work is the urn holding not only the ashes but also the fire of his time; it is the mirror in which we can see the pageant of life, not shadowy figures but men and women of flesh and blood, in whose fate we read the destinies of nations. How can we understand the agony of tragic emotion unless we know the cause of Shakespeare's sufferings, for out of their womb came the child of his creation, Tragedy! His emotionalized thought took its fire from the temple of Society; with that fire Dante had set ablaze the regions of his Inferno! We can apprehend his thought and understand his emotion only if we study them in relation to his age, in relation to his sorrow, personal, social, universal, in relation to that religious movement which decided the fate of England, which found, not a mutual compromise, but an arbitrary settlement devised by cunning and imposed by force.

II. Its Basis: The State of England

"Something was rotten in the State" of England! It was the legacy of the Reformation which like a witches' cauldron had brewed a charm of many ingredients religious, political, social. A society in conflict, with no hopes of an honourable compromise as there was little promise of justice and freedom of worship! Ill gotten wealth from the dissolution of monasteries sharpened greed and hardened the lines of division. The Marian restoration, perhaps inspired by lack of wisdom, and the much exaggerated fires of Smithfield, kept fresh in the minds of men by Foxe's Book of Martyrs, the restoration made somewhat ineffectual by the shortness of Mary's reign, the loss of sympathy by her marriage to Philip of Spain—these were contributive causes of the Elizabethan predicament. Elizabeth quickly repudiated her virtuous avowal of loyalty to the Church made solemnly to appease the suspicion of her sister: "I pray God that the earth may open and swallow me up, if I be not a true Roman Catholic." She took off the mask from her face the moment the Crown was placed on her

head and before the sound of her voice taking the Coronation Oath died in the ears of her audience.

The death of Mary Tudor marks the end of a civilization; the coming of Elizabeth marks the birth of a new Age. The creation of this Age was the deliberate work of a woman great in many ways, miserably small in others. But without the assistance, perhaps the inspiration, of William Cecil would she have achieved what she did, would she have realized her dream? To that no positive answer is possible.

The New Age, then in the making was shaped by religion more than any other single force, for experience teaches us with no little conviction that religion exerts the greatest influence, makes the deepest impressions; it moves men to hate when in their pride they dare to challenge God, and arrogating to themselves the prerogatives which belong to Him, deny His existence; it inspires men to sacrifice and self-immolation when out of love they surrender to His will and from the depths of sorrow, misery, misfortune lift the cry: Thy Will be done! So England learnt in all the bitterness of religious conflict, which like an explosive shattered the social order and destroyed national peace and harmony.

How many pens through the centuries have sung the praises of the Golden Age of Elizabeth! And yet, amidst its blaze of glory stands a pillar of smoke that darkens its skies and casts its black shadow on its brilliance: Persecution! Not since the days when the Romans shouted with drunken joy and frenzy: Christians to the lion! and watched with tense excitement crowds of men, women and children kneel in the stands of the arena with fear in their hearts, but prayers and psalms on their lips, waiting to be torn to pieces by wild beasts maddened by hunger; not since then was there such a Reign of Terror;—the fires of Smithfield cast but a pale glow on the Night of this horror which seemed to grow darker and darker as the years passed, as if Dawn would never break, peace and joy never return. Sad it was to live in fear-ridden England, sad for Catholics, and for those whose hearts were still human.

Over the people who once worshipped freely in their churches, their very persecutors kneeling beside them, hung the shadow of death. Their voices were hushed, their minds confused, but in their poor, afflicted souls there still flickered the Faith of their fathers. Fines, imprisonment, torture, death had done what they could to wipe out Catholicism; Mass was forbidden; the law compelled all to attend Protestant services. The rich were impoverished and the poor humbled. Gloom settled over the lives of the faithful. To be a Catholic was to be a traitor, a stranger to the land of his birth; so the Law decreed! In this situation only the brave dared to believe in the Old Faith.

The Elizabethan Age was boisterous in every sphere of life. It stirred men to their depths, excited their emotions, agitated their thoughts; it lifted their horizon and widened their imagination. Englishmen saw the beginnings of their Empire, of power and wealth, and the thought swelled their hearts with pride and ambition; they also saw and tested the bitterness of religious conflict, and the experience filled their hearts with shame and sorrow. And the duality of Life with its conflicting passions, dividing as it did their loyal ties, shaped two cultures; the Protestants found much to love and praise, the Catholics much to condemn and deplore; they walked different paths, they breathed the same mixed atmosphere. Those who could poured their dreams and hopes, their sorrows and fears in their passionate songs; because their emotions were inflamed, their songs are rich, because their thoughts were deep, their poetry is great. And the greatest singer of them all, perhaps because the most representative, deeply moved, profoundly impressed by the most moving and impressive pageant it was his happiness and misfortune to witness, the greatest singer was Shakespeare.

III. THE PROPHET

1.

Into this world of storm, marked by fear, hate, misery, doubt and suspicion, fit nurse for a tragic poet, entered Shakespeare somewhere between 1585 and 1588, fugitive from the dangers of Stratford-upon-Avon. The time was auspicious from the viewpoint of creative Art, for stirring events leave on the mind a lasting impression, sad and turbulent conditions act like leaven on the aspirations of the poetic soul: Mary, Queen of Scots, was put to death in 1587. In 1588 Philip II's ambitious hopes were shattered, with the defeat of the invincible Armada began England's greatness at sea: and the persecution then reached a terrible intensity.

Shakespeare was no country bumpkin entering a world of fancy, to be too quickly lured by its fashions, too easily duped by its confidence-tricksters; he was perhaps lost in wonderment, but he was soon disillusioned for the impact of a rebellious life, where Rachel bewailed her suffering children, was too great, too insistent, too emotional for him to ignore it; he was too much of a realist to find peace and security in escapist literature; he was too much of an idealist to surrender to overpowering melancholy. The songs of the Sirens charmed his ears, the cries of the Catholics touched his heart; but the bud of genius opens slowly into a flower, opens slowly under the pressure of the winds that blow. The grapes must ripen before they are crushed into the chalice of Art!

2.

If Shakespeare was not a Catholic the entire fabric of his thoughts is a Castle in Spain! His work is an eloquent testimony to his Faith, Orthodox conventions, ritual, practice, tradition meet in him; he speaks as one who is familiar with the liturgy and doctrine of the Church, with that naturalness and intimacy which could come only from one "to the manner born", for the beliefs he professes in his dramas are the habits of his mind; even pagan forms are inspired and sustained by Catholic ideas. Deny his Catholicism and his work is a contradiction; accept it and his work is coherent, comprehensive, expression of a system, and, read against the background of his Age, illuminating.

The Mass, Holy Eucharist, Confession, Grace! Anyone speaking of these with pious respect, understanding, and theological correctness is tainted with Catholicism; a better profession of his Faith is hard to imagine; Shakespeare does not only refer to their usage, but to their inner significance and meaning, he mentions and employs them with that appropriate exactness which in the fitness of things comes from knowledge, practice and conviction. In a thousand other ways does the poet reveal his Catholic Faith, always with propriety, reverence, affection. His marriages are sanctified, for marriage is a sacrament; his sin is born of the flesh that fails, destroys the beauty of the soul, dehumanizes, degrades; regeneration, redemption rises from the crucible of pain and suffering; or the whole person, body and soul, degenerates and becomes evil,—its greatest punishment. Shakespeare's friars are lova-

ble because they are a happy blend of priest and man, who do not confuse their power and duty with sympathy for they feel like men and teach like priests. In questions of religion and morality he is orthodox, strictly conservative and distinct from the mocking spirit of the Reformation.

We are safe in concluding that Shakespeare was a Catholic from his birth. There is little doubt that his father was true to the Old Faith; father and mother kept the Faith alive and burning in his young heart, surely with greater care because of the dangers that would assail it. Generally speaking, he came under the influence of teachers who were Catholics or in sympathy with Catholicism. So educated, so trained he fled from Stratford, a refugee, to London, to a larger world full of difficulties and temptations, there to fall and rise through bitter experience and terrible knowledge. What if he began in a humble way, held the horses of the great outside The Theatre? he soon mounted Pegasus and scaled heights never before reached! He found a patron, the Earl of Southampton, courted his favour with VENUS AND ADONIS and THE RAPE OF LUCRECE? repaid his patronage and friendship with the SONNETS; gave him immortality for the benefits received. He may have met Fr. Southwell, —he certainly knew him in his poetry; during stolen hours in some crowded room in the quiet of the night, he may have listened to his sermons and, thus strengthened, broken away from the Dark Lady of the Sonnets, though his reformation was slow; the redemption of a soul lost in such circumstances is often a slow process, for the devil and the flesh are powerful foes, the battle long and fierce, but the cry of agony that came from that tormented soul found its echo in the world of his tragedies; how it blended and strengthened the lamentation of a Catholic who sealed his solidarity with the Church Militant by mingling his sorrow, his sighs, and his groans with the passion with those who suffered and whom he saw suffer!

Gentle Shakespeare, loved by all who knew him, was sensitive and affectionate; possessing a lovable nature who could resist the charm of his personality though some feared the edge of his wit, as his friend Ben Jonson had cause to know; but Ben, proud and learned, was at least an honest man, honest enough to love Shakespeare and praise him for what he was, man and poet. If he had but put wax in his ears or been more faithful to his God, he would have escaped the arms of his siren; but he heard her seductive song! Degraded by sin, covered with shame, he had the good fortune of opening his soul to grace: at last when hope was near to despair, he broke the chains that bound him, but the terrible experience left a deep impression on him, and he gave full vent to his wounded feelings and excruciating thoughts in the most tragic yet grandest poetry ever written; his tragic plays, like the Confessions of St. Augustine, are the autobiography of his hell-ridden soul, and the hell was not entirely of his own making, but partly of the persecution which he witnessed, which he escaped, the horrors of which filled his imagination with their ghastliness, with gloom, till despondency seemed to sink into despair. His personal sin, negligence of his Faith, brought the tragedy of his people closer to him till it bruised his heart, filled his bosom with agony, his soul with depression; was this the end of the world? Had God abondoned man to his folly, left him to his own devices? Then hope were dead and faith a vanity! But in this Night he saw a ray of hope,—the Counter-Reformation. He saw a change, religion was awakening in the breasts of many, as it revived in his own; he saw in a Vision Chaos gathering into peace and order, defeat yielding to victory, despair giving way to hope and faith; if the Night was dark, cold bitter the Dawn, warm, smiling, cheerful, was not far behind. This Vision he saw in the certainty of Truth and Beauty and unfolded in his tragedies all the bitter of it and the sweet.

Research has thrown light, rather indistinct, on the lost years of his life in London, on his haunts, friends, activity, making him a more familiar figure than he ever was; but silence broods over one aspect of it: his reaction to persecution, torture, priest-hunts: like impenetrable darkness it seems to desceand on these most vital and bitterest experiences of the life he was fated to witness and taste. But silence is often more eloquent than speech, and Shakespeare's silence is pregnant with celestial fire. Out of its womb came the bleeding child of his tragedy. When sin had done its worst, guilty conscience and repentance were already awakening his prodigal soul, the spectacle on which he gazed touched the spring of his deepest feelings filling him with desire to utter his Jeremiad on his Age; but prudence dictated caution. He raged in silence until speech became imperative and the pain in his heart was hidden yet expressed in the intensity of his tragic emotion. Silence speaking with the tongue of poetry contributed to the genesis of his tragic Art. A Catholic, alive to the gloom and misery of the painful situation, could not but feel for the sufferings of the members of his Church. till silence, imposed by the unhappy dilemma of the hour, became unbearable.

The mystery of this silence is provocative. Why was he compelled to hold his tongue and then to speak in parables? Was the motive purely selfish? The fear of recognition was real and reprisal a possible danger. He spoke of other matters, but he did not dare tear the veil from the face of things, though that veil concealed very little, though he did dare to be niggard in his praise of Elizabeth; his murmur, playing half-heartedly on a muted string, is deafened into uneasy silence by the blaring trumpets of other poets,—Spenser, Marlowe. "Discretion was the better part of valour". Moreover, open criticism may have condemned him to absolute silence, and he was most anxious to speak, to show the temper of the Age. And speech may have brought suspicion on innocent heads, suspicion, with its attendant evils, harassment, fines, persecution. Let us not forget that his spiritual and moral reformation was neither sudden nor easy. When he suppressed the urge to speak, for probable reasons, he did no little injury to his moral being; his gloom deepened, he brooded like Othello, Hamlet, Lear till a cry was torn from the agony of his heart, till he heard the echo and re-echo through the world of his creation. And yet the terrible irony: of his hope, fear, despair he might speak; speak too of the misery and agony, of the scandals of the hour, of tyranny, intrigue, treason; he might sigh for order, harmony, peace, for a strong and just monarch, a Henry V; but he might not speak of the horrors of the persecution, of torture, — he may have hidden Topcliffe in his villains! — of priest-hunts: over these he could only brood in silence, in anger, in pain.

IV. HIS PROPHECY

Shakespeare's plays are an insidious piece of Indictment: the sound of the wind that was to deafen the ears of the audience begins in an inconspicuous manner in the Comedies, gathers volume in the Histories, reaches its highest pitch

in the Tragedies, lessens but does not fade in the last plays; insidious piece of indictment, but the spirit that animates and the meaning that inspires them are but "sickled o'er with a pale cast of thought."

We do not enter a closed world of personal feelings; we do not listen to the sad story of a lonely heart, grieved by sordid love, tormented by sin. His heart sighs in unison with the bleeding heart of the Church, and reaches out to the despondent heart of mankind sunk in the fury of hate and despair. We enter an open world, for the universal tragedy in which we read the destiny of a nation, the fate of Society, does not issue from the spring of personal sorrow, limited and separate in its finiteness.

The first period may be considered as the unconscious but congenital preparation for the great corner-stone of his work, the central piece of his Vision. As early as the first Comedies we feel the pulse of his discontent. Through his humour, refined or hilarious, rings the voice of his mockery, sounds the tone of his serious thought. He ridicules Court life and mocks courtiers with tolerant suspicion and humoured contempt. His disagreement, his resentment, his impatience, the deepening shadows of his fallen hopes, increase their pressure on his sorrowing spirit as we enter the world of his Histories: here he treads on dangerous ground, touches delicate points, flirts with ambiguous situations, but with the assurance and boldness of his growing power he revives the past to edify the present through pertinent themes, chosen with care and applied with a purpose. The Sonnets tell us a more intimate tale — they are not only an effusion of personal grief, they are also a lamentation of social wrongs. And then with a sudden rush — so it seems — comes the flood of his tragedies, like a great Deluge covering the shores of his Being with its violence; it is a cry out of the depths which rends the veil of the Temple of Jerusalem! The sound like a blast reverberates through the world till it fades and dies, till through the overcast skies we catch a glimpse of a breaking Dawn! The shadows shift, the skies fall, but the heavens remain, resting on Faith and Hope: the mist melts, disorder resolves itself into order, peace returns when over the raging waters is heard his voice in imitation of his Lord: Peace, be still! The last Comedies give us a glimmer of this Vision; they are an aftermath where emotions are still stirred, but the murmur of their waves makes sweet though sad, sad but sweet music in tired ears: we hear the Swan song of a great Singer.

Shakespeare went to Holinshed and Plutarch with deliberate purpose; he chose periods resembling and illustrative of his Age; he treated them with pointed argument, pressing home his moral if only they could understand his meaning: this is specially true of his tetralogy, RICHARD II, the two parts of HENRY IV and Henry V: "Know you not, I am Richard"! In their pages he found apt illustrations, in the spirit they breathed fitting analogies, in their very language a wonderful cover for his thoughts and feelings. It is suggested that in his close imitation of Holinshed and Plutarch he paid the highest tribute, one genius could pay another, for on the intellectual plane there are no national barriers, no shame in honest and artistic transcript; if he found it necessary to change the language of their 'inspired prose was he not expressing his artistic taste, acknowledgement, fellowship? With no stretch of the imagination can this be called plagiarism. There is a measure of truth in this conclusion. But is it not possible that there is a deeper reason? Is it not more plausible that in such open imitation Shakespeare found it expedient, prudent, safe to portray his Age in the recorded words of those who painted other periods, other scenes?

The liet-motif of his Histories is true kingship. He dreamed of a King like Henry V, uniting in himself the practical virtues of a ruler and the excellent qualities of a man. In the face of civil dissensions, social division, of differences that inspire misunderstanding, suspicion, hate he preached unity, trust, friendship, which could only flow from a stable government under the presiding genious of a just, good and strong monarch, deserving respect, love, loyalty. Again and again he insists on the need for a strong, good and just King who would respect the rights of his people giving them security in peace and freedom, for thus is the dignity of the Crown ensured and its responsibility discharged; he repeats this idea till it becomes an obsession, and the obsession is a mirror, not so much of Shakespeare's sentiment as of his ominous judgement. With Elizabeth and Cecil controlling the religious destinies of the country what hope could he hold out to Catholics but what true Justice can bring? No discriminating Catholic, however loyal to Queen and Country, could approve their religious policy, hostile to the freedom of worship, malignant in the execution of Penal Laws. One could admire her for her practical wisdom in the sphere of politics; none could respect her, for respect is attracted and held by character; one could give her tragic pity, nothing more: and Shakespeare did not see in her a ruler worthy of praise.

Across the dark and bitter world of his Tragedies there is no fatal inscription: Abandon Hope, ye enter here! Whatever the state of his emotions, whatever the condition of his mind, there was no pessimism in his soul, — there could not be or his faith would be an illusion and his repentance, inner conversion, a lie. As the horizon darkened, his mood changed, and his awareness of the Dawn beyond the gathered clouds moulded his thoughts and in spite of appearances gave him the Vision of the only possible hope for men caught in the maelstrom of terrible misfortune. In his Comedies and Histories he sought to reform his nation with gentle satire, with pointed criticism, with harmless scorn couched in a smile, with appealing sympathy in the heart of laughter for he felt that a little correction, a small warning, a fine example could save her from her degenerate course; but the little he did could not arrest her flight into disaster. Hope gave way to deep despondency, his imagination was haunted by spectral horrors; he wrestled with a night of fears, saw and felt the conflict between Good and Evil, played with the Supernatural as only a man full of faith could, with the assurance of a religion whose Temple was made not with hands but by the power of God, whose grace infused Eternal Life into the dust of its earth! In this mood he felt that Society must be destroyed before it could be re-built; it could only resurrect from its ashes; this Vision which he unfolds in the midst of the shadows, thunder and lightning of his tragic world could not come from the finiteness of Protestant belief which stripped the Church of her Divinity, but from the Infinity of the Catholic Faith. Here alone is proof enough of Shakespeare's Catholicism.

The Spirit that inspired his Tragedies is constructive; pessimism could not possibly envisage a world made whole, a Society cured of its mortal

(Continued on Page 178)

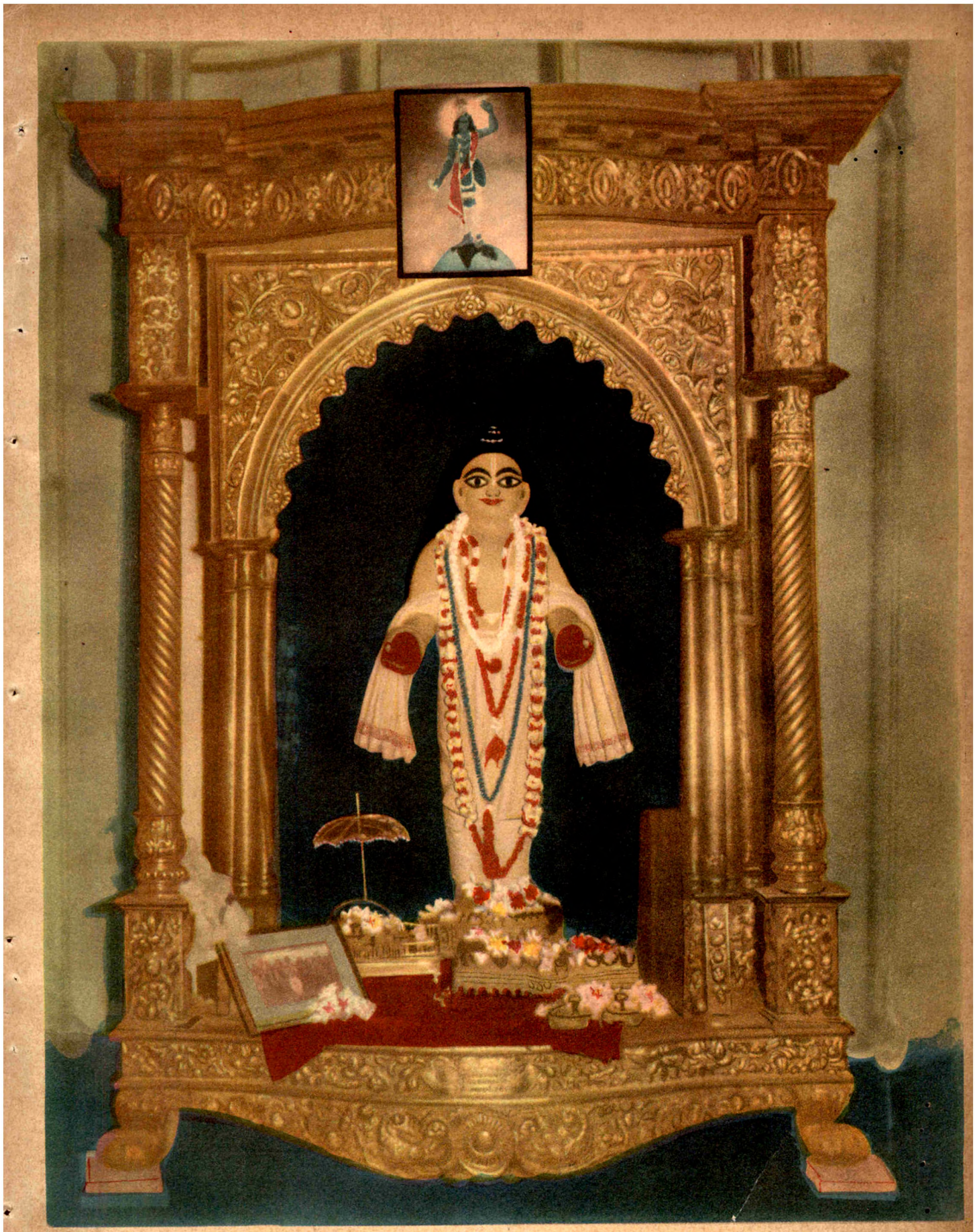


Image of Shree Shree GOURANGA MAHAPRABHU at
Nabadwip worshipped by Shree Shree Bishnupriya.

A MYSTERY STORY

THE WAITING KNIFE

BY

BRUCE CASSIDAY

THIS late afternoon of a bitterly raw January day, fog lay thickly over the white patches of snow in the silent Connecticut woods. To Diane Andrews, peering out through the front window, it seemed as if the mist was woven in and out of the trees like streamers of gauze. She shuddered and drew back when she saw that Alec Bern had not yet arrived. There was no movement anywhere in the wooded area, and that was as it should be. Her nearest neighbour was half a mile down the road.

She thought again that Dr. Marcus might have been right: perhaps she should not have come directly home from the hospital to these lonely woods. Perhaps she should have spent a day or two in her New York apartment, getting used to being with people again after her long convalescence. But she had been quite insistent on coming to the Connecticut house immediately, and Sam Ward, her attorney, had gotten it ready without voicing any objections.

She went into the back bedroom to unpack Alec's portrait of her, and had just opened the closet door when the front doorbell rang. She turned, and, thinking it must be Alec, ran through the house and opened up.

A little old lady stood there. She was solid and determined, with gray hair and rimless glasses. She wore a neat dark suit and held a black leather purse in her hand, making a picture almost grim in its simplicity.

She smiled stiffly. "Is this 24 Cedar Glen?"

"Yes. Of course it is."

The woman looked expectantly at Diane, as if she were awaiting an invitation inside.

"What do you want?"

The woman smiled fleetingly. "Why, to look around." She moved forward, pushing rudely past Diane.

Diane stepped aside, unthinking. But as the aggressive little woman walked into the entryway, a wave of hostility rose in her.

"Of all the insolence!" Diane cried out, her voice trembling. "What's the meaning of this? Who are you?"

The little woman turned, solid and sturdy, staring blankly at Diane with bottomless gray eyes. 'I'm Mrs. Bernays", she said officiously. "I've come to look the place over." Her voice hardened. "I'd think you would at least offer to show me around."

"Show you around?" Diane cried, realizing with dismay that her voice was trembling, that she was almost shouting. "What are you talking about? Why are you coming in my house?"

The woman stood back, surveying Diane with the astonishment that only the very unimaginative can show. Then, without another word, she gazed about the living room impatiently.

"But all the things are still here", she burst out with annoyance. "I understood everything was in readiness for immediate occupancy". Her gray eyes swung back to Diane.

Diane stared, putting her hand to her throat. This woman was surely mad. Her visit made no sense. And yet, a strange foreboding of disaster rose in Diane.

"Immediate occupancy?"

"But of course!" the little woman said, standing there pouty and sprightly as a banty hen. Her voice took on an impatient, outraged tone. "They said there would be no delay. They said all the effects of the previous tenancy were removed." The woman seemed to swell up in ruffled anger. "But I can see that everything is still strewn about."

Diane, outraged, holding her fists tight to her sides, shook her head. "You've made a mistake. If someone told you this house was for sale, you've been misinformed. I'm sorry."

The woman's frown deepened. "But they said the owner had died suddenly, and that the house

was on the market." The woman opened her purse and drew out a want ad. "Here, Look."

Diane, curious, took the clipping and read it.

> FOR SALE: 5 room cottage on 2 acre wooded plot. Exclusive residential area. Immediate occupancy. Must sacrifice due to owner's death. 24 Cedar Glen. Midland.

Smiling faintly, Diane handed the clipping back. "It's an obvious error. The wrong address, perhaps."

The little woman's face reddened. Her lips pushed together in a determined line. "But, see here, I've come all the way out from town, spent several hours in finding the place—"

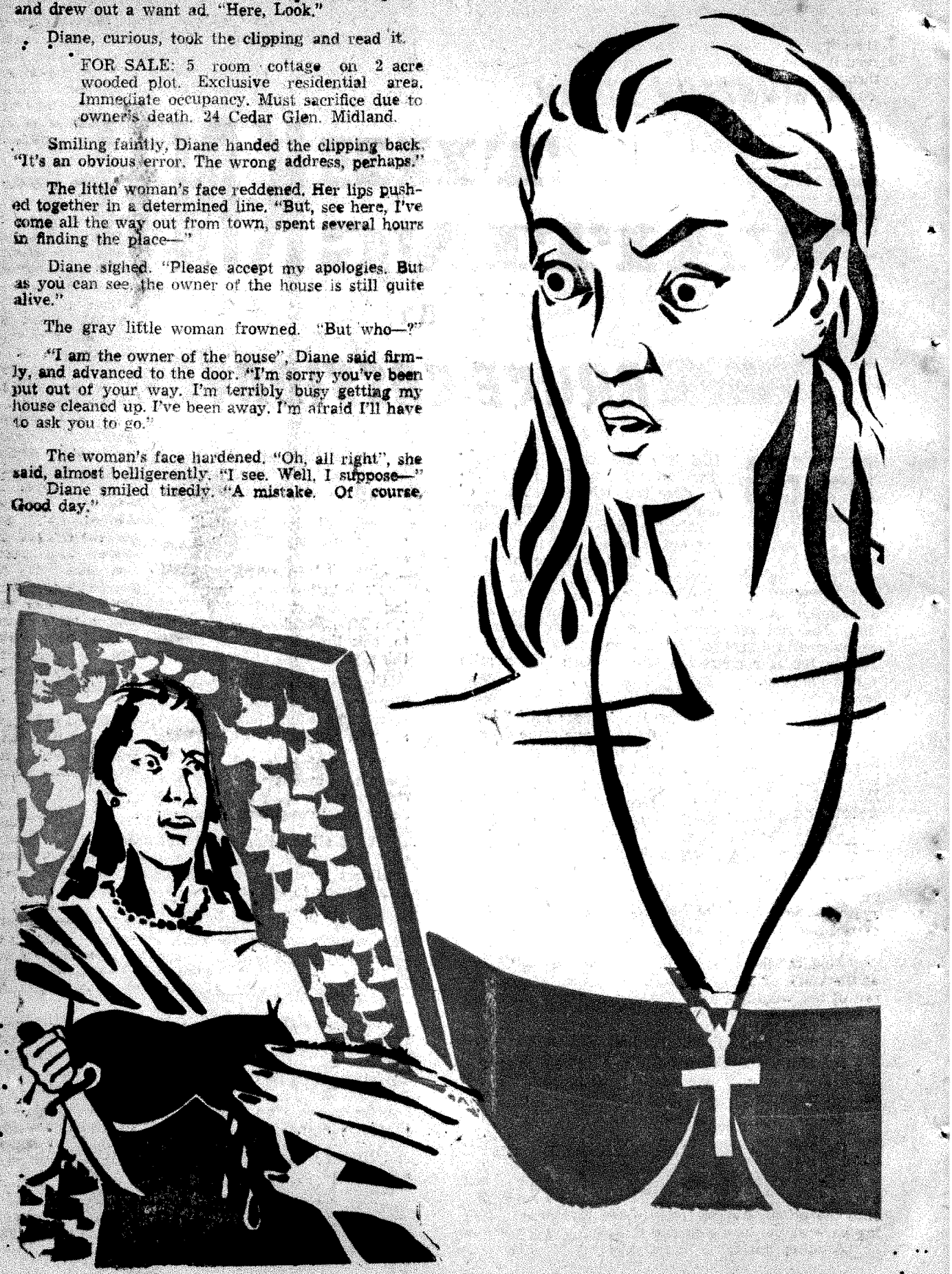
Diane sighed. "Please accept my apologies. But as you can see, the owner of the house is still quite alive."

The gray little woman frowned. "But who—?"

"I am the owner of the house", Diane said firmly, and advanced to the door. "I'm sorry you've been put out of your way. I'm terribly busy getting my house cleaned up. I've been away. I'm afraid I'll have to ask you to go."

The woman's face hardened. "Oh, all right", she said, almost belligerently. "I see. Well, I suppose—"

Diane smiled tiredly. "A mistake. Of course. Good day."



The woman, still shaking her head, walked out onto the front porch, gripping her black leather purse determinedly. Diane watched through the window. Halfway down the walk the woman took the clipping out of her purse and looked at it again, read it carefully, and stared back. Then she tramped through the patches of snow to the road, and went out of sight in the fog.

Diane sank into a chair. It was silly, but somehow her bizarre interview with that intense, aggressive little person had completely unnerved her. She leaned back wearily and closed her eyes. All the energy seemed to have drained out of her. She had seemed so good at the hospital, and certainly able to come home. But now, after one small, inconsequential encounter with a total stranger, she was shaky and jittery again. For no reason at all. Because of some stupid error a typesetter had made.

Sighing, she stood and walked into the bedroom again. As she passed the big mirror in the open closet door she saw the reflection of her pale face, her enormous eyes, her unpainted, pale lips. Her cheeks were almost gaunt. She started at that with a sinking feeling. But then, she told herself, she had been sick a long time. She put her fingers to her cheeks. Her skin was smooth and young. A little colour might help.

She put lipstick on, and looked again, and felt better.

Diane watched through the window.

Pushing the closet door open, she stared down at the stack of oil paintings on the floor. Alec's portrait of her would be among them. She bent over, and then she heard a sound at the door.

Another visitor? she wondered. Or Alec?

Hopefully she hurried out and pulled open the door. There was no one on the porch. But, behind her, on the door.....

She fell back, staggered at what she saw.

A large frighteningly beautiful funeral wreath hung there on her front door!

She tried to stifle her scream as she stumbled back against the door jamb. Dazedly she moved out onto the porch, staring into the fog, and then looking back at the door and the wreath.

Another mistake?

No. This time she had really had a visitor. Death.....

Then, with one of those curious emergences of faith that is the strength of the human race, she felt a surge of relief. Obviously someone had seen that foolish want ad in the newspaper and had mistakenly sent a wreath of condolence to 24 Cedar Glen. That was all there was to it. Diane touched the wreath. It was beautiful, expensive. Queer, she thought, how death always brought such expensive gifts.

Shuddering, she took the wreath down and carried it into the house. Now, she really must get Alec's picture out of the closet. She pulled the stack of canvasses out, calmed by the simple physical therapy in lifting and sorting.

As she looked at the paintings one by one, she was struck again by what a talented painter Alec Bern was. His native genius had been the first thing to attract her to him, of course. It was only natural that she, with all her advantages of money and position, should try to put him on his feet and make his art support him. He had no money, and no prospects of any outside resources.

What had begun as a casual arrangement had in time ripened into romance — a romance that had been ill-fated from the start. Diane's health, never too strong after her first breakdown two years before, had broken suddenly and she had been forced to spend months at a rest home. And now, once again, she was ready to take up where she had left off with Alec.

She found the portrait. It was number thirteen in the pile, lying face down. She lifted it, amused over the "bad luck" number, the "death" number, thirteen. She turned it over.

And all the life drained out of her.

What had been a portrait of Diane Andrews smiling and holding a bright red rose was now the portrait of a smiling, evil-eyed woman, holding a gleaming, curved-bladed dagger, dripping bright red blood.

And worse, than that, just over the woman's heart there was a jagged wound, freely bleeding, sending the red blood streaming down her defiled white dress in a cascade of sudden death.

CHAPTER—II

DIANE Andrews flung herself on her bed, sobbing brokenly. It was no use trying to get her mind off that ghastly picture. She saw it again and again, seared into her brain: the bleeding heart, the dripping knife, and the strange, half-mad expression in the eyes of the woman in the painting.

It had changed! It had altered all by itself! It was a portent. Or rather, the other two incidents had been portents, and this was a prophecy. Death was waiting for her here in this house. It was that simple, that horrifying.

She stopped sobbing. She lay on the bed and became calm suddenly. There must be some rational explanation of these three things, she thought reasonably.

She stared at the ceiling for a long moment, and then sat up on the bed. She had walked the tightrope stretched over insanity for so long, undoubtedly she was imagining all this. She was still in that twilight region where she could not trust her own judgment.

The painting was lying on the floor, near the other canvases, face down where she had dropped it. It must be, it had to be, the old familiar painting of her own face. With steadily mounting confidence, she reached out her hand and turned it over. Hoping against hope.....

The ghastly image of Diane Andrews with the dripping knife, with the bleeding wound, mocked her. She stared at it a long, trembling moment, marveling at the reality of the blood on the bosom, the slashed flesh, the curved blade of the knife. A craftsman had painted it. A craftsman every bit as good as Alec Eern.

As she stared at the canvas, a thought occurred to her. Suppose this was an earlier painting of Alec's that she did not know existed. Suppose her own remembered portrait lay at the bottom of the pile she had as yet not uncovered.

Eagerly, hopefully, she turned the rest of the paintings over, one by one. The old mill. The field of sunflowers. The red barn. The brunette girl. The old lady at the cider mill. And then she came to the last one.

She turned it over.

Her breath caught in her throat.

The last one was the old familiar painting of the brindle cows grazing in the green Connecticut fields.

The "bleeding" portrait must be the same one Alec had painted the year before. Strange, incredibly, it had altered itself and had turned into that ghastly painting of the mad woman with the knife.

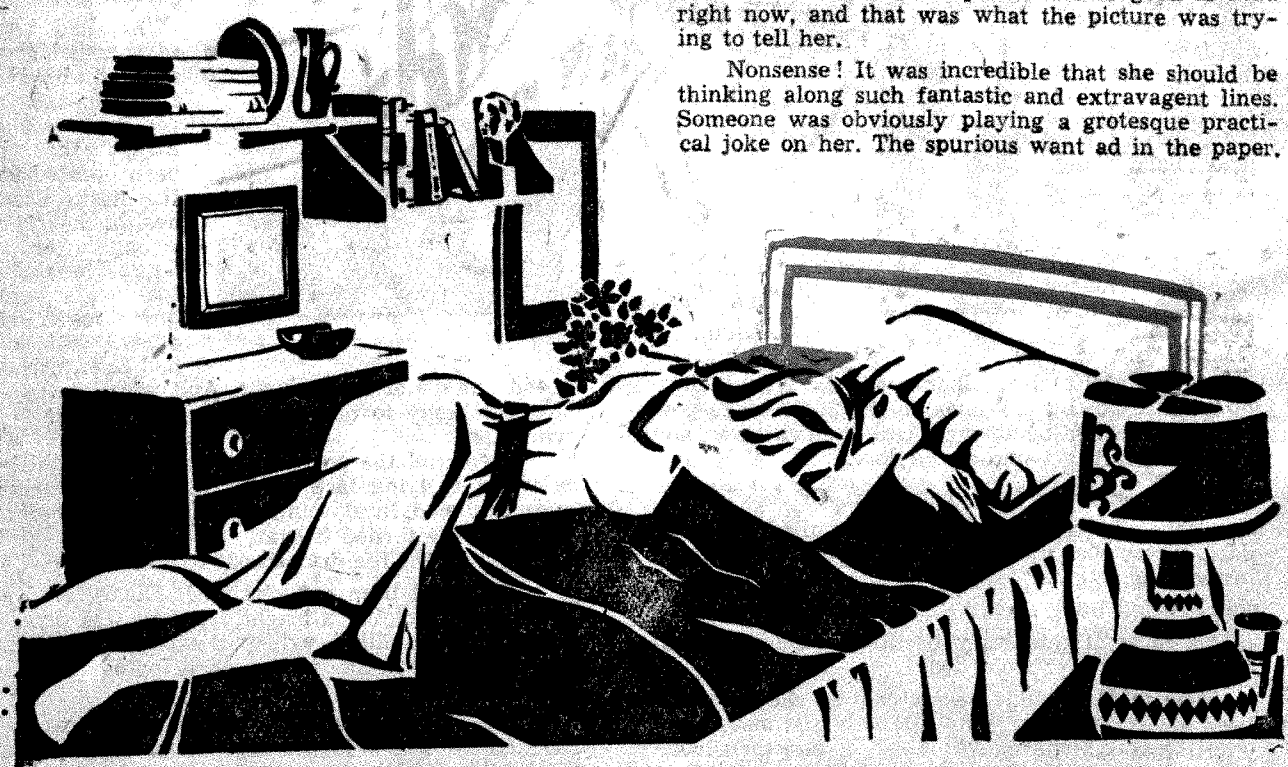
Stunned, light-headed, she piled the rest of the oils in the closet, leaving the damnable portrait of herself propped up against the wall. The half-demented eyes of the woman in the picture watched her unblinkingly as she went about her work.

Her own eyes.

She remembered vaguely a story she had read long ago—the story of an evil, lecherous man, who had retained his youth and his good looks through years of debauchery and vice, and his life-size portrait had slowly altered, revealing the ravages of time, and of the evil in him. It was a fable, but the story had stuck in her mind, had haunted her after she read it.

And now ,in her own home, perhaps the same thing had happened. Perhaps Diane Andrews had figuratively killed herself—through her own extravagances, her own squandered life, her own foolishness and mistakes. Perhaps she was as good as dead right now, and that was what the picture was trying to tell her.

Nonsense! It was incredible that she should be thinking along such fantastic and extravagent lines. Someone was obviously playing a grotesque practical joke on her. The spurious want ad in the paper.



Diane Andrews flung herself on her bed.....

The funeral wreath delivered to the wrong door. And now the substitution of this morbid portrait for the beautiful one of her.

She went into the living room again, opened the front door and looked out. It was still a gray January afternoon, with heavy mists woven in and out of the bare, denuded trees.

Through the long expanse of woods surrounding her house, Diane could see no movement. Several hundred yards away, through a sudden hole in the fog, she made out the dim shape of her nearest neighbour's house down the hill. But no one was in sight. To the north, of course, there was nothing but woods. And across the road, a steep hill, studded with huge trees, vanished into a thicket of cloudy mist.

There was not a sound.

She shivered, not so much from the damp, cold air, as from the loneliness about her. The sense of emptiness, the sense of wasteland, the sense of gloom that had oppressed her during her worst days in the rest home.

She should have taken Dr. Marcus's advice and stayed in New York before coming to Connecticut. She should not have let Sam Ward, her attorney, go about opening her home. Alec had been insistent, too, though. In his letter to her, he said he blamed himself as much as he did her for all that had happened. Now he wanted to patch up any misunderstandings between them. As if there had been any, Diane thought. It was just her accursed weakness.

So she had ignored Dr. Marcus's mild protests, and come into the woods the night before, to fix the house for Alec's arrival.

Alec would arrive sometime in the late afternoon—four-fifteen, he said. He was leaving Roanoke, Virginia, in time to get to New York in the middle of the day, and he should be coming to Midland a little after four.

That was why she had been trying to get Alec's portrait up. Now, she realised, she must put it away, and concentrate on preparing dinner. Sam Ward had hired old Mrs. Bowen to set the house in order. Unfortunately, Mrs. Bowen, who had stayed with Diane last night, would not be able to help out tonight. She had long ago promised to do a baby-sitting job in Midland.

She picked up the eerie portrait, pushing aside all the forebodings and ominous feelings that crowded in on her as she touched it. She put it in the closet on top of the other paintings, and closed the door tightly.

Closed out the memory of the horrid picture.

She strode purposefully into the kitchen, feeling as she did so that she must look quite like the little old lady who had pushed into her living room earlier.

Now, in retrospect, Diane smiled. It was an embarrassing mistake for anyone to make. It would put anyone's back up. She was a fool to have worried about it.

On an impulse, she turned and lifted the telephone receiver. She dialed the number of the *Midland Gazette*, the newspaper carrying the ad the woman had clipped.

She was referred to a nasal sounding girl on the classified ad desk.

"You've made a mistake in one of your real estate ads today", Diane said. "I thought I'd report it so you could correct it in tomorrow's edition."

The girl was silent a moment, and then she said: "Which ad is that, please? We're very careful with our classifieds. We seldom make mistakes."

Diane laughed tolerantly. "The house for sale on 24 Cedar Glen."

There was a long moment's silence, and then the girl was back on the line. "What is the mistake, please?"

"This house is not for sale."

"I'm sorry, but I have the insertion notice right here. What is your name, please?"

"Miss Andrews. Diane Andrews."

"Yes, ma'am, that's right. 24 Cedar Glen. Isn't that correct?"

Diane laughed again. "But that's incorrect, I live here. It's my house. But it's not for sale."

The girl sounded confused. "But I have the notice right here in front of me. It reads exactly like the ad. And the insertion notice is signed by you. Have you changed your mind?" The girl's tone took on an edge.

Diane was unable to speak for a long moment. "You say you have an insertion notice signed by me?"

"That's right. Miss Diane Andrews. We received this insertion notice through the mail. Along with a money order for the amount."

"An insertion order from me?"

After a short pause, the nasal girl spoke up. "Yes, ma'ma. Mailed in from you at Roanoke, Virginia."

CHAPTER—III

SLOWLY Diane Andrews hung up, keeping the handset clenched in her fist for a long moment.

Roanoke, Virginia, she thought, desperately. How could a communication have come in from Diane Andrews in Roanoke, Virginia? Obviously someone had mailed it in her name. Someone was playing a bizarre joke on her. Someone in Roanoke..... Roanoke!

And only one person she knew could be in Roanoke: Alec Bern!

She sat there, clasping and unclasping her hands. She must concentrate. She must focus her mind on this new problem. She must reason out why Alec Bern would be playing such a monstrous joke on her.

He had said he loved her. He had sympathized with the six-month stay at the rest home. He knew she had been dangerously ill. He knew she needed rest and relaxation. He knew that any disturbing thing such as this must surely upset her, and perhaps send her back into the care of Dr. Marcus.

Why, then, was he doing this to her?

On impulse she rose and walked into the bedroom again, opening the closet door. She pulled the top painting off the pile and brought it out into the bedroom. She leaned it against the wall, and stood back looking at it. The mad woman with the knife in her hand, and the slashed cut on her breast, stared back at her.

It was almost an inescapable conclusion that Alec had painted this over the original portrait. It could have been any painter, but it was probably Alec. Especially since it was Alec who had sent the notice to the Midland paper about the sale of the house.

But why ?

She stared at the painting. And got her answer.

Suicide. If Diane Andrews, stunned first of all by a newspaper item advertising her house for sale due to her own death, and then further depressed

by the accidental placing of a funeral wreath on her front door, if Diane Andrews, barely through sustaining these blows, were confronted with the picture like this of a maddened woman mutilating herself—then perhaps Diane Andrews would slip back into that world of unreality she had just emerged from, and plunge a knife like that into her own breast.

But it didn't make sense, Diane realized, snapping out of her mood of depression and misery. Why should she want to commit suicide? Why should she destroy herself? She was going to see Alec tonight. Alec loved her. He wanted to marry her. It was all planned.

Unless.....

Unless Alec had changed his mind !

The thought struck her with tremendous force. If it were true that Alec had changed his mind about her, then perhaps he was using this method to tell her he was through with her, and give her the mad woman's way out.

Perhaps there was truth in Dr. Marcus's fears about her. Perhaps Dr. Marcus had told Alec some-

'Alec was a frequent escort of Mildred

thing he had not told Diane. Perhaps she was still ill, sicker than she thought. Perhaps she was incurably sick. Perhaps Alec, in his love and sympathy for her, had decided to help her on her grisly way; perhaps he thought it was the best way out for her.

She shook her head. It didn't make sense. Alec would certainly use a more direct method. He would speak to her. Tell her.

Or — would he?

Whatever his reason, it was almost certain that Alec Bern had inserted that ad in the newspaper. And that Alec had repainted that portrait of her, adding the knife, and the blood.

Had he also sent the funeral wreath ?

A moment later Diane was at the phone again, dialing the first of the three florists in Midland. From the first she got a negative answer; no wreath had been delivered to 24 Cedar Glen. From the second, the same.

From the third she learned that the wreath had been ordered the morning of the day before. And it was to have been delivered at four p.m. of that day. Had it been delivered ?

"Yes", Diane said weakly. "Could you please tell me where the order came from ?"

There was a short silence. "Yes, of course. Here it is. From Diane Andrews."

Her voice was barely a whisper. She had expected that, somehow. "Where ?"

"It doesn't say here, ma'am. I'll have to get the record book. The order was phoned in."

"Telephoned in?" Diane's voice quickened with sudden hope. "From Midland ?"

The man said, "Let me look, please. Just a moment." After some rustlings and murmurings, his voice finally came back on the wire. "From Roanoke, Virginia, ma'am," he said. "It was a long distance telephone call."

She nodded and slowly hung up. It was true, then. Both the want ad and the wreath were no accident. They had been the deliberate plannings of a methodical mind. A mind that was trying to build up an unholy terror in her. A mind that had clearly and coldly calculated the prospects of survival for a marriage between Diane Andrews and Alec Bern—and decided against it.

She rose and paced the room, her mind in a turmoil. She remembered Dr. Marcus's caution to her : Don't let yourself get upset, Diane. Once you begin worrying, once you begin probing deeply into all your motives and actions, you'll go completely back into the world of unreality.

She stopped abruptly, cleanching her hands at her sides until she could feel her nails biting into the plans of her hands. She must stop this ! She must think, think, think !

She peered out the front window, hoping that the sight of the gray, bleak world out there would at least bring her back to her senses.

Her thoughts turned again to Alec. And the first remembrance of Mildred. Mildred Canning.

Before Diane had met Alec Bern, he had been a frequent escort of Mildred Canning. Mildred had impressed Diane as a social climber, and a narrow-minded person at best. And apparently Alec had felt somewhat the same way. There had been less and less of Mildred Canning in Alec Bern's life, and more and more of Diane Andrews. Mildred and Diane had had several energetic scenes over Alec, Mildred accusing Diane of buying Alec Bern with her money and her financial support.

Mildred, for all her veneer of sophistication and delicacy, had the constitution of a horse, and was psychically sturdy. Perhaps in Diane's absence she had made hay while the sun shone, and had won Alec back.

That would account for a reason that Alec might have changed his allegiance to Diane. With Mildred continually nagging at him day by day, she might well have convinced Alec that life with a psychologically unsound woman like Diane might prove impossible. Even distasteful.

Yes, thought Diane, that would be like Mildred. That would be like her, through and through.

It was growing dark outside. Diane sprang up and peered out the window. Evening came quick in Connecticut in January. And with the darkness came a sense of depression and hopelessness that she could feel acutely.

She snapped on the electric light and glanced at her wrist watch.

Five o'clock ! Good heavens — Alec should be here already. And she hadn't made a move to prepare dinner. Luckily it had been all planned. She had only to put it in the oven.

She walked into the kitchen, and then stood stock still. If, that is, Alec was coming. Would he come ? If he had been responsible for the ad and the wreath, did he intend to come ?

She thought back to his last letter. He had mentioned being in Midland by four-fifteen. It was already five o'clock. She used the phone again. Yes, the four-fifteen had come on time. No, it had not been delayed. Yes, it had gone on through.

She moved out into the kitchen mechanically. Alec had been held up somehow. She had missed the taxi at the station. A thousand things could have happened.

She clung to that hope desperately.

Or, she thought wildly, he could have decided not to come at all. He could have decided that he was through with her, and that the best way out for her was the way shown in that portrait.

By taking her own life.

Absently she opened the drawer to get out a tablespoon, and she saw it.

It was a long-bladed knife, with delicate scroll-work on the handle, and a curved, cruel blade. The blade was honed to razor sharpness.

It was the model of the knife in the picture. And she knew what she had to do with it.

CHAPTER—IV

DIANE Andrews turned the knife over and over in her hand thoughtfully, studying it carefully. It was no knife she had ever seen around the house before. When she had gone to the rest home, and left the house in the care of Sam Ward, it had certainly not been there in the kitchen drawer. And yet, unquestionably, it was there now. And it had been placed there for one obvious purpose.

It had been placed there so that Diane Andrews could use it the way her twin in the portrait had used it.

But had it been placed there by Alec Bern?

She sat down by the window and stared out into the bleakness of the darkening woods. She didn't want to believe that Alec Bern could be doing all these dreadful things to her: trying to drive her mad and frighten her into suicide.

But who else could it be?

She sat bolt upright. Of course! There was one other person who might logically want Diane to destroy herself. Mildred Canning.

Mildred would believe, "All's fair in love and war."

She must have found out that Diane was coming back to Connecticut, and that Alec was coming up to join her. Mildred had ordered the wreath, had placed the knife in the kitchen drawer, had put the ad in the paper, had altered the painting.

She had wroked it all out to perfection. All she needed to do was sit back and wait for Diane to collapse from hysteria and plunge the knife into her breast.

Alec was innocent. Naturally. And the reason he hadn't come yet was because Mildred had detained him in some subtle, cunning way. Now all Mildred had to do was keep Alec away from Cedar Glen until Diane put the knife in her heart.

With sudden determination Diane stood and strode across the room toward the silverware drawer. She pulled it open and thrust the curved knife in on top of the silver. Then she pushed the drawer shut and smiled triumphantly.

Mildred Canning would get a little surprise! Diane Andrews was not going to do what Mildred had so cleverly planned for her to do.

With a start, Diane looked at the clock. It was now about six o'clock. Alec was over two hours late. Or had Mildred tricked him into not coming at all?

No matter what, she had better go ahead with the dinner as if nothing had happened. That would be Dr. Marcus's suggestion, she was sure of that. The activity of preparing food would certainly take her mind off the grisly series of incidents that had jarred her out of her convalescence.

Concentrating on the details of cooking, Diane Andrews moved about industriously in the lighted kitchen, and found that the mere fact of doing something with her hands did take her mind off the thing she was too terrified to think about.

It was at the moment she put the salad in the refrigerator that she heard the noise outside.

She went over to the kitchen window and looked out. But it was pitch black. All she could see in the long French-type windows was her own reflection. Her pale, drawn face, her slender body, her slightly awry hair. When she saw her hair she immediately put her hand to it, patting it in place.

There was no repetition of the noise. She shrugged and went back to work. She had already imagined too many things today.

She was setting the candles on the table in the dining room when she heard it again.

She stood there a long moment, staring toward the tall rectangular window in the dining alcove. There was nothing visible but the blackness of cold night through the glass, and a shimmering reflection of her own dress. But, unmistakably, she had heard some noise out there. She listened now, intently, but there was nothing. She lived deep in the woods. There were houses around her, but none close enough for any sound to carry. There were no automobiles to be heard. No planes overhead. Nothing which could have made the sound she was positive she had heard.

Imagination, she shrugged.

But this particular sound started a whole new train of thought in her mind. She was in an isolated section of the Connecticut woods. Residential, yes, but far off from other habitations. If anything were to happen to her up here, she would be helpless.

She had a phone, yes. There was no need to worry. She had never worried before. Why should she suddenly feel panic at the repetition of a strange sound outside in the dark?

Now, when she thought of it, it did not seem reasonable that Alec Bern should be trying to kill her. It did not seem reasonable, either, to suspect Mildred Canning. Mildred would be much more straightforward if she decided to get rid of Diane

It was a huge giant of a man.....

She would not use such a complex method. She would never think of a wreath, a want ad, a painting, and a knife. She would do it by taking the man she loved, and completely disregarding Diane.

Of course! That was the way Mildred would have proceeded.

Diane crossed to the phone and flipped through the desk book she had beside it. In it she had Mildred Canning's address in Roanoke. With the address, she could certainly get the telephone number and speak to her. If Mildred was guilty, Diane could tell by the sound of her voice.

It took several minutes for the connection to go through. And then after a moment's pause, she heard Mildred Canning's nasal, drawling voice.

"Hello?"

"Mildred!" Diane said. "This is Diane Andrews."

There was a stunned silence. "Diane!" Was it Diane's imagination, or did Mildred actually sound glad to hear her? "It's been years since I've heard from you. How are — feeling, dear?"

Diane frowned. Mildred's concern was genuine. Diane murmured something vague.

"But, Diane, it's so nice of you to call me up. Is Alec there?"

Diane stared at the receiver, as if it were a snake or a tarantula. Then she forced herself to speak. "Not yet."

"He must have been delayed. I know he's planning to be there. He was so excited. Honestly, Diane, I never saw a grown man so excited over a trip in my life!"

"You saw him today?" Diane asked hoarsely.

"But certainly! He came over to see Vic and me."

"Vic?" Diane repeated weakly.

"My husband, Diane! I'm married. Didn't you know? Oh but, of course not. Alec was going to tell you. Oh, yes, It's been four weeks now, and I feel like an old married woman."

Diane slowly held the receiver loosely, listening to the prattle of Mildred. It seemed obvious that Mildred had not sent that wreath. And, from Mildred's comments about Alec, it was just as obvious that Alec had not been trying to avoid seeing Diane. It was equally obvious that Alec had missed his train, or had been detained in some way.

Who then, had been responsible for the painting, for the wreath, for the want ad, for the knife?

She hung up and stood there, her body near to trembling again.

And the sound came for the third time. This time louder. A faint slithering and scraping.

Like a sleep-walker, Diane forced herself to cross the living room and approach the window. It was pitch black out now. The stars shone in the monstrously black sky. Her breath clouded the window pane in front of her. She looked to the left and the right, but all she was aware of was the reflection of the pale, jumpy, drawn face in front of her, the face of a woman driven past the brink of terror.

The sound came again, louder. Through the reflection of her own face, she saw the huge hulking shadow of something out there. A malevolent shape. A ghastly apparition.

Only the thin pane of glass separated her from whatever it was. And then in an instant of horror, the thing came into focus, and, looking through her own terrified expression, she saw what it was.

It was a huge giant of a man, a misshapen beast, crouched out there next to the house, a giant of a man with a huge moon face, with round goggly eyes, and the moronic grin of a mad man. His eyes were gleaming. He mouthed obscene words — or so it seemed to Diane — and pointed to the front door.

Then he disappeared.

Diane, frozen, remained glued to the spot.

She heard the door knob rattle. Rattle hard.

She ran for the kitchen, stumbled, and fell to her knees. The door continued to shake as if it would burst open.

CHAPTER—V

DIANE Andrews hung there, suspended in an eternity of fear, kneeling on one knee, trying to keep herself from collapsing. Shivers coursed through her whole body. Her stomach was knotted up into a tight ball.

The door banged and thumped, and then she heard a strange, eerie voice.

"Diane! Diane!" It came from far off. It called from another world, a world of distances and distorted sounds.

She half rose, crouched there, staring down ruefully at her nylon stockings, both out at the knees from her fall. Resolutely she stood, turning and facing the front door. Fear tugged at her but she moved forward stiffly.

"Diane!" the voice came again, louder this time, firmer. More human. More recognizable.

And then Diane realized who it was.

"Sam!" she cried, moving swiftly for the door, and pulling it open with a flourish.

The big man moved in from outside, holding out his hands to her. For an instance she could not make out his face, and she had a panicky feeling that it was not Sam Ward at all, but the giant of a man with babbling lips and mad eyes she had imagined through the front glass.

And then the light fell on the big man's face, and he reached for her, touching her shoulder.

"What's the matter, Diane?" the big jovial man asked, turning her face up so he could see her eyes. "I knocked and knocked, but you didn't answer. I got worried. I came around to see if I could find you. I knew the light was on. I got worried."

Diane frowned. "Knocked? But I didn't hear you, Sam. I really didn't".

The big man's eyes narrowed just the slightest, and a puzzled look came into them. He stood back just a fraction of an inch and searched her face. Then he threw his head back and laughed. He was a genial, hearty man, a man with zest and spirit. He was huge and rough, and yet at the same time his hands had a strange gentleness to them. The way they had now, touching Diane's shoulder.

Almost tender.

"This is a surprise, Sam. I'm expecting Alec—Alec Bern, you know", she said simply.

Sam Ward moved over to the big divan and sat down. He pulled a pipe out of his tweed jacket and put it in his mouth. He felt around in his pocket for matches, and brought out a small folder, applying one of them to the bowl of his pipe. He sucked on the stem and got it going and then grinned at her. He leaned back and crossed one big leg casually over the other.

"Don't worry about me, kitten. I won't stay around and hamstring your little tete-a-tete. I just dropped by to see if everything was in order."

She stared at him. She knew he was not trying to draw her out or find out if she was well enough to be left alone. "Of course everything is in order, Sam."

She felt his eyes on her.

"You'll pardon me for saying it, but I think you seem a bit jumpy, Diane."

She laughed fitfully. "I guess it's just getting back to the house after all that time away." She glanced around, trying to change the subject. "I think you've done a marvellous job of readying up for me."

Sam Ward smiled. "Mrs. Bowen is certainly a gem. But then, you know all about her."

Diane debated in her mind a moment: should she tell Sam Ward about the want ad, about the wreath, about the painting, about the knife? No. Common sense ruled it out. What good would it do? Quite possibly the whole thing was a ghastly mistake. A mistake like the one that had made her see Sam Ward through the glass as a grinning mad man with gleaming eyes and wet, slavering lips.

The big man reached into his breast pocket and pulled out a folded paper. He handed it over to Diane. It was a heavy legal sheet, folded in four places.

She looked puzzled. He pointed his pipe stem at it. "Your new will, Diane. The one you wanted made out for you."

She stared down at the papers in her hand, trying to understand. She could not honestly say that she remembered anything about it at all. But then, there were so many things lately that she couldn't remember. Or understand.

She looked up puzzled into Sam Ward's apprehensive face. "Diane. You do remember, don't you?"

She moistened her lips and smiled faintly. "Yes, of course, Sam. I remember." Even if she was lying, he must accept that as indication that she did at least believe him. She unfolded the papers and read them.

"The will", Sam explained, as he might to a child. "Your new will. You wanted to change your beneficiary to Alec Bern."

She frowned. "Before we're married? But is that legal?"

Sam's eyes suddenly flowed with compassion. He shrugged. "I did what you'd asked Diane. It is a little strange, but I understood you wanted it that way." He reached for the document. "If you've changed your mind..." His eyes searched hers.

Pride, or shame, prompted her. She shook her head, retaining the paper. "No. If I said to make out the will, I meant it." She looked it over. "Let me sign, and you can be on your way." Sam Ward grinned and puffed on his pipe. Then he took the pipe out, stared at it, found it had gone out again, got out his folder of matches. He lit the tobacco, puffed on it contentedly, and laughed. "Waste more matches on this thing."

Diane was rumaging through her purse for her fountain pen. She came over and signed the document on the divan's end table.

"I can't imagine why I shouldn't remember", she said finally, when she had finished and was putting the cap back on the pen.

Ward paused a moment and looked at her keenly. "Then you did forget talking to Alec about it."

She turned, startled. "Alec? But I thought you said I talked to you about it."

Ward frowned. "No I didn't say that. It was Alec. He came to see me in New York two days ago. He told me you'd have mentioned the change to him at the hospital."

She felt her hands clasp convulsively together. She bit her lip to keep from crying out. Shudders passed through the length of her body.

"Diane!" cried Ward, hastening to her. He took her in his huge bear-like arms and steadied her.

against him. The solid bulk of his body was comforting to her. He was like a father to her, a solid rock to lean on.

"Oh, Sam!"

And she broke down, crying and sobbing without end. She lay on the couch, and Ward sat gently next to her, patting her on the shoulder, soothing her, his pipe cold and forgotten on the end table, sitting just on top the paper that Diane had signed, the new will that told her exactly why Alec had painted that picture, why he had ordered that wreath and why he had inserted that ad in the paper. To drive her mad and get her money.

For a long time she lay there, shaking and unable to speak, but finally she got her tongue back, and in a few words she told an astounded, sympathetic, and then violently angry Sam Ward exactly what had happened to her on that strange afternoon.

The big man's jaw jutted out like a rock of Gibralter. "He can't get away with it, Diane! We'll prosecute him within an inch of his life. He's trying to unnerve you, to drive you back into madness, so he can gain control of your money."

Diane nodded. "I guess so. I never thought...."

"You're too trusting, Diane", Ward said solemnly.

"Yes, Sam. It was Alec all along."

Sam left the room and returned with a glass of milk. "Diane", he said. "I've warmed this up for you. The best thing for you to do is take a glass of it, along with a couple sleeping pills, to calm yourself."

Groggily, Diane nodded. "Yes, Sam, if you say so." It was hitting home now, the terrible truth that Alec Bern was trying to take her possessions, take her love, take her life, even. It was not a pleasant truth to face. She was tired, so terribly tired. One glass of warm milk and a couple sleeping pills would certainly help. On an empty stomach she felt weak already.

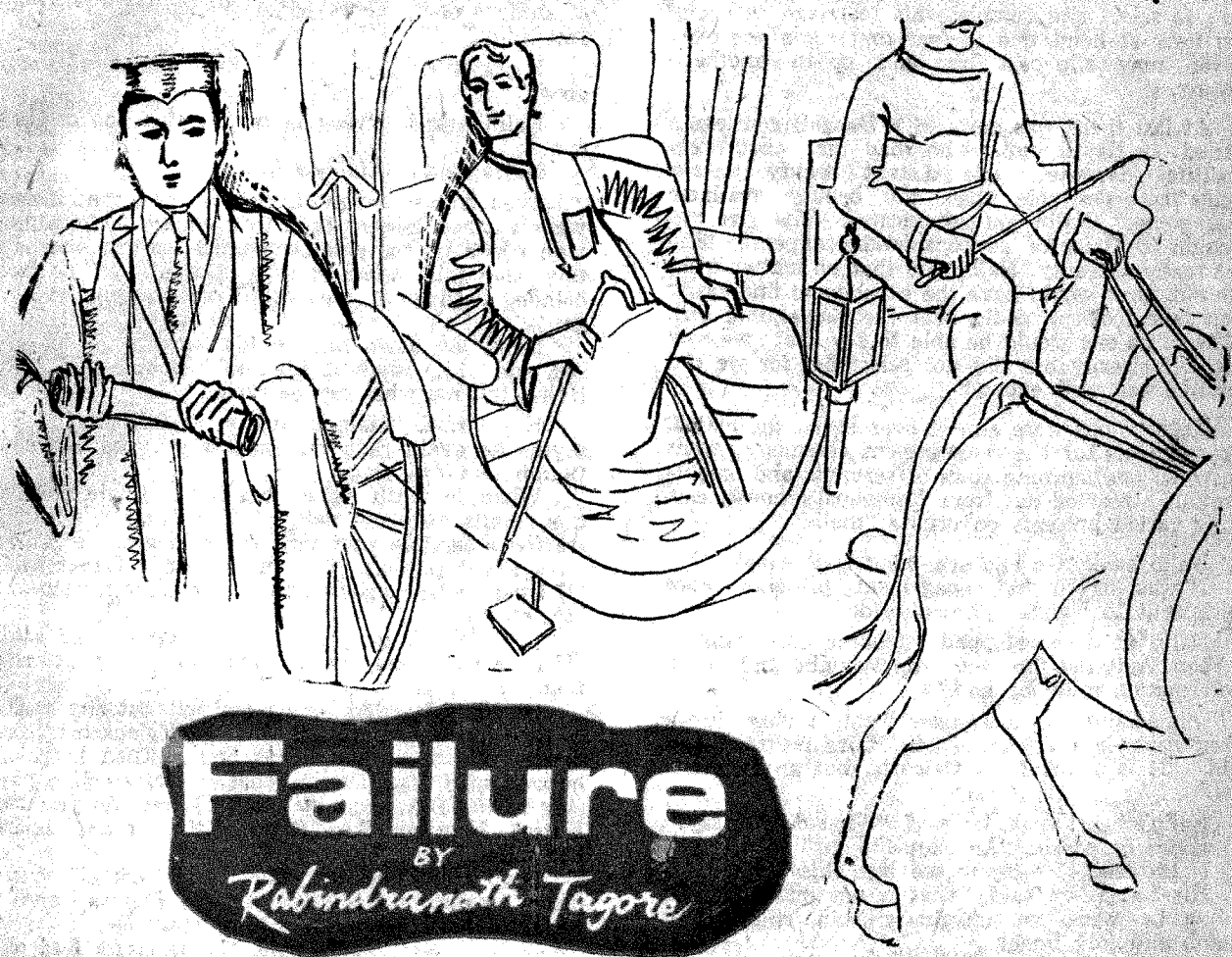
The glass of milk was set on the table. She reached out for it, took it in her hand, and then, just as she started to tip it up to her lips, she gave a sharp, pitiful cry, and slumped down inert on the couch.

The glass fell to the floor, and the warm milk spread out rapidly in all directions.

In Diane's white face there was a frozen expression of terror and hopelessness—the expression of a person driven quite past the point of no return.

(Continued On Page 54)

The glass of milk was set on the table.



Failure

BY

Rabindranath Tagore

IF the head and tail of a fish or Rahu and Ketu the baleful planets were placed side by side, what would they look like? This was the exact situation here. The aristocratic ancient Haldar family had split in two and lived back to back in their enormous family mansion, partitioning it with a wall through its centre. They did not see each other's face.

Nabagopal's son Nalin and Nanigopal's son Nanda were from the same family of the same age, they went to the same school and there was complete unity between them as regards family hatred and inter family rivalry.

Nalin's father Nabagopal was a very strict father. He scarcely allowed his son any breathing time from constant unalloyed study. All cravings of the son for games, fancy food or dress, he suppressed under school books and home work.

Nanda's father Nanigopal's discipline was very lax. His mother sent him to school most neat and well dressed. Besides she gave him about three annas for tiffin. Nanda became quite famous by using and giving away at will such luxuries as fried spices, "kulfi" ice cream, kite reels and marbles.

Feeling in his heart that he was defeated, Nalin often thought—If Nanda's father were mine and my father occupied the place of Nanda's father, then I could have taught Nanda a lesson.

But while such an opportunity was awaited, Nanda kept on getting prizes every year. Nalin came home empty handed and slandered the school authorities as partial. His father sent him to another school, engaged another private tutor, cut off an hour from his sleep and added it to his study but there was no change in the results. Nanda was successful in every examinations and went beyond the B.A. degree. Nalin failed and failed and remained stuck in the entrance class like a trapped rat.

At this time his father did him a good turn. He died. After three years of rigorous imprisonment in the entrance class, he was liberated. Free Nalin glittered, decorating himself from top to bottom with rings, buttons, watch and fob chain and tried hard to dim Nanda's lustre. The coach and pair and four-horse carriages of the entrance failed easily to outran the single horse buggy of the graduate. A university degree could not keep pace with Waler horses.

On the other side search began for suitable brides for Nanda and Nalin's marriage. Nalin had sworn that he would marry only such a girl as would be near impossible to duplicate. Nanda would

surely have to be defeated by his carriages and his wife.

The man who wants the very best of all has perforte to discard many good ones. Nalin did not dare to select and complete his marriage with any girl near at hand, due to fear that some one even better may slip past him and go to another's destiny.

At last there was news of a Bengali gentleman settled in Rawalpindi, who had an exquisitely beautiful daughter. The distant beauty always seems more desirable than the beauty available near home. Nalin got intoxicated. The girl was brought to Calcutta at considerable expense. She was really a beauty. Nalin said that no matter what one did, none would have the capacity to find easily such good looks as could beat the Rawalpindi girl. At least no one would be able to say that we saw this girl already but did not select her for we did not like her well enough.

Negotiations were almost over fixing the match, arrangements for the engagement ceremony went on, when one morning rows of servants and maid-servants streamed out from Nanigopal's house, carrying varied presents on ornate "thalis".

Nalin said, "Go and see, what is the matter."

It was known that engagement presents were being sent to Nanda's chosen bride.

Nalin at once stopped smoking his hubble-bubble. Agitated, he sat up straight and said, "Information must be had."

Immediately a messenger went racing in a hired hackney carriage. Bipin Hajra returned and said, "It is a girl from Calcutta, but an exquisite girl."

Nalin's heart sank. He said, "What do you say?"

Hajra only said, "An exquisite girl".

Nalin said, "I have to see into this."

His hanger-on said, "That is not difficult." So saying he made an imaginary coin ring, using thumb and fore finger.

So saying he made an imaginary coin ring, using thumb and fore finger.

Nalin created an opportunity and saw the girl. The more he thought that this girl was quite irrevocably meant for Nanda, the more he felt that this one was better than the Rawalpindi girl. In a fever of anxious doubt he asked the hanger-on, "What do you think?"

Hajra said, "Sir, to our eyes she does seem good."

Nalin asked, "Who is better, this one or that one?"

Hajra said, "This one is better."

Then Nalin thought that this one's eye lashes were a trace thicker than that one's; her complexion was a bit too pale compared to this one. In this one's fair complexion a tint of yellow had blended with gold. One could not possibly let her go.

Nalin lay down flat on his back, very depressed, and while smoking his hubble-bubble said, "Oh Hajra, tell me what can be done."

Hajra said, "Maharaj, where is difficulty?" So saying he again rang an imaginary rupee between thumb and fore finger.

When in truth money began to jingle noisily, due results were not delayed. The daughter's father started a terrible row with the bridegroom's father on a slight pretext. The bridegroom's father said, "If I get my son married to your daughter, then..... etc., etc."

The girl's father redoubled his attack and said, "If I give my daughter in marriage to your son then.....etc., etc."

So Nalin cheated Nanda and without any waste of time quickly completed his auspicious marriage ceremony at an auspicious hour. Then laughing he said to Hajra, "This is what is really called passing in the B.A. examination.* What do you say Hajra? Now our Bara Babu of that other house has failed."

Soon after, one day drums and "sehnai" music began to play at Nanda's house. It was Nanda's turmeric bath ceremony before marriage.

Nalin said, "Look Hajra find out who the bride is."

Hajra returned with the information that the bride was that girl from Rawalpindi.

"The girl from Rawalpindi! Ha ha ha," Nalin burst out in hilarious laughter. "The Bara Babu of that other house could find no nther bribe but is marrying our discarded one." Hajra also laughed a lot.

But gradually Nalin lost the strength of his laughter. A worm entered into his laugh. A tiny doubt whispered in his ears in a sharp edged voice, "Alas! you lost her. In the end she was to be Nanda's!" The tiny doubt slowly became bloated like a swollen leech, its voice too grew strong. It said, "Now, she cannot be had anyhow. But really she is a great beauty. You have been badly cheated."

When Nalin went to the inner house of women for his meals, all the tiny blemishes of his wife loomed immense and mocked at him. He felt that this wife of his had swindled him dreadfully.

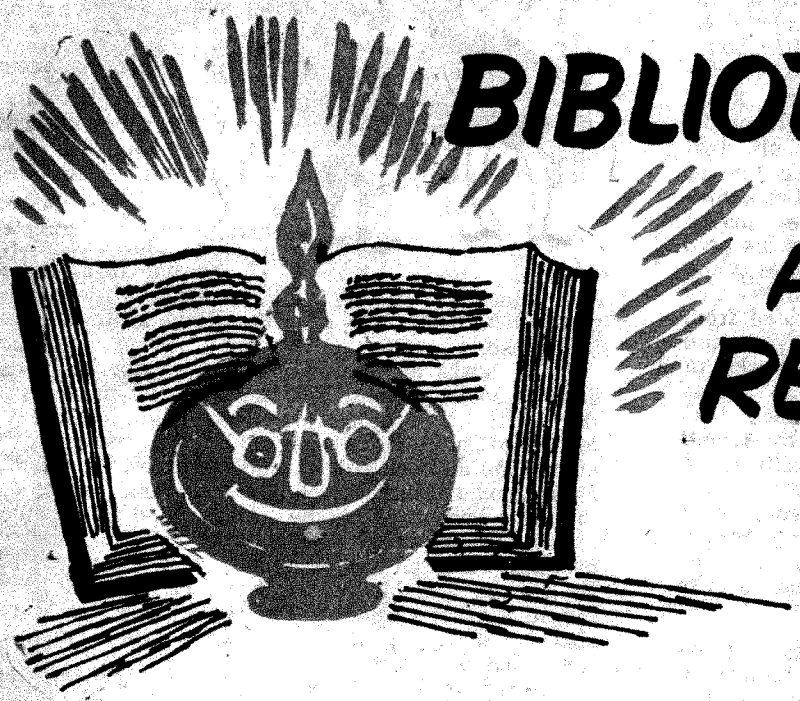
Nalin took out the photo he was sent when his marriage proposal was going on with

(Continued On Page 55)

* In colloquial Bengali, marriage is "Beeay"

BIBLIOTHERAPY

A NEW REMEDY



By
C. R. BANERJI

SO far we have been reading books for acquisition of knowledge, recreation and attainment of professional skill. A new use of books is being gradually developed in the U.S.A. and in some European countries during the last forty years. It is the use of books for the treatment of the sick. Attempt to introduce this system in hospitals and clinics after the First World War was regarded as a fad. But today more and more librarians and physicians are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of books in the treatment of mental illness. Reputed hospitals have opened new departments for treatment of patients with books. Even well-known specialists are no longer sceptical about the success of this new cure.

This science of curing disease with the help of books is called 'Bibliotherapy'. Bibliotherapy is "the use of carefully selected books for therapeutic purposes". The relationship between our mind and body is very close. If the mental balance is upset we become ill. When the body is affected the mind suffers. Physicians therefore advise patients to keep their mind free from all cares.

Diseases which owe their origin to the mind are particularly amenable to bibliotherapy. Works of imagination have great influence on our mind. It is, therefore, nothing new to offer patients suitable books in order to make their mind cheerful. The doctor first investigates the reason for the loss of mental balance and then prescribes books which are most suitable for the removal of the cause. For example, a patient who has become ill after being frightened for some reason or other must be given books which will inspire courage and remove all fears and apprehensions. A patient who has lost all hopes and who is pessimistic about his future must be given books which will generate new hopes in his mind. There are again patients who suffer from unfounded jealousy and meanness of mind. To cure them of their disease they should be given books, the study of which will enable them to rise above all pettiness.

Bibliotherapy may be self-administered like aspirin pills; it may also be applied by highly specialised psychologists and physicians. The utility of books in curing disease was known even long ago. In olden times bibliotherapy was a self-administered cure. The person concerned selected his own book and derived benefit from it. But it has now become a specialist's job. About two thousand years ago Pliny said that there is no pain in the world which cannot be cured by a good book. Books also helped his digestion. During his meal someone would read out to him books of his choice. If on any occasion, there was nobody in the house to read out to him at the time of his meal he would inevitably suffer from indigestion. The famous Italian poet Petrarch read books everyday as a matter of routine. It was to him like a course of physical exercise for keeping fit. If, on any day he failed to read books, he felt indisposed. Petrarch's friends considered this as a very bad habit and they tried to break it for his good. So, one of the friends one day stole the key of Petrarch's book-case. Petrarch passed a very uneasy day without books. On the second day he suffered from severe headache. Fever developed on the third day. Seeing his condition the friend felt repentant and returned the key.

American author and physiologist Oliver Wendell Holmes regarded libraries as hospitals for the mentally ill patients. The English novelist Bulwer-Lytton realised that desultory reading cannot cure disease. Books must be selected with an eye to the nature of the disease and to the inclination of the patient. As an example he pointed out that a light reading should be prescribed for patients suffering from cold. When the mind becomes inert with deep sorrow inspiring biographies should be offered for

study. Bulwer-Lytton believed that the Bible was the panacea for all types of disease.

Famous men have written their personal experience about cure of disease by books. We cannot ignore their testimony. Bulwer-Lytton has written that Dr. Johnson was cured of influenza after going through Piozzi's (better known as Mrs. Thrail) autobiography. In this autobiography there are many engrossing anecdotes about well-known personalities of the time. Hazlitt has testified from his own experience that Fielding's "Tom Jones" was one of the best remedies for indigestion. Robert Louis Stevenson was a tubercular throughout the best period of his life. He said that his tooth-ache and his pain in the lungs were temporarily relieved after going through 'The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes'. The British author Richard le Gallienne has stated from his personal experience that Tolstoy's "War and Peace" relieved asthmatic troubles. The works of Victor Hugo also has curative qualities as far as asthma was concerned. He further testified that reading of Shakespeare relieved rheumatism. Arnold Bennett noted in his diary that he was relieved of neuralgia after going through some dramas which he purchased from a secondhand book-seller at a very cheap price. The English artist Aubrey Beardsley was able to keep his mind cheerful in spite of serious illness with the help of Nietzsche's works and Stendhal's "The Red and the Black".

It has been explained above that careful selection of books should be made after examining the nature of illness and the mental attitude of the patient. Selection of wrong books may aggravate the disease instead of relieving it. Examples are not lacking in this respect. Le Gallienne has said that study of Shelley and Keats would aggravate rheumatic diseases; there is even apprehension of an attack of apoplexy; tubercular patients may yearn for

Maeterlinck; but they should be given books by Fielding, Dickens and Balzac. Edward FitzGerald has stated from his own experience that his cure from influenza was retarded because he read Carlyle's "French Revolution" while in bed. Bulwer-Lytton became ill after he read Buckle's "History of Civilization". It was impossible for Coleridge read the Bible while he was indisposed.

The books mentioned above may not be beneficial to some persons. But this does not mean that they will not do good to others having different mental attitude. Donne has said : "To cast my eye upon good authors kindles and refreshes the mind." Here 'good authors' is relative. The same author or the same book may not be equally good to all. And for this reason careful selection by experts becomes necessary. But all are of opinion that the works of Dumas are suitable for all types of patients. It is indeed a great credit for Dumas that his works are also beneficial in case of patients whose disease has defied diagnosis.

Elizabeth Barrett was so ill that she could not leave her bed. A book of poems by Robert Browning kindled new hopes in her mind. Browning was a poet of hope and vigour. There was no shadow of pessimism or sorrow in his works. He wrote :

God's in His heaven —
All's right with the world ?

Elizabeth, who was unable to move out of her bed for many months, gained new strength born of hope after reading Browning's writings. She also had the good fortune of meeting Browning in her room. This personal contact with the vigorous poet made her even stronger. Her strength returned to such a degree that it was possible for her to elope with Browning and marry him far away from her father's house.

We have given above only opinions and criticisms regarding bibliotherapy by laymen, though they are famous as writers or artists. These persons used books like self-administered home remedies. But now qualified doctors and psychiatrists are practising this method of treatment in well-equipped modern hospitals and clinics.

Bibliotherapy is particularly efficacious in the disease of nerve, mental illness and in tuberculosis. Books have proved useful in the correctional methods applied to prisoners. Psychologists also believe that delinquent children can be treated with interesting books. Most of the modern hospitals abroad now maintain well-equipped libraries to serve the patients. Even if books may not ensure radical cure, they can help the patients to create a new world of imagination far removed from the world of disease and pain.

But patients should not be asked to read only

(Continued On Page 55)

ELEPHANTS WILD and FREE

By AUGUSTUS SOMERVILLE

THERE are two species of elephant in existence, the African and the Indian. The Indian elephant is the only species of its kind found in this country, yet geological remains suggest that no less than seven species of elephant existed in India in remote periods.

The African elephant is bigger than the Indian. It has huge ears and the trunk is provided with two fingers at its extremity. The Indian elephant has only one.

Recent discoveries have shown that the Indian elephant is closely related to the Mammoth. This ancient animal was not the fabled "Mountain of Flesh" it was popularly supposed to be. The height of the better-known Siberian Mammoths was an average 10 ft. which is also the height of the Indian variety, while its concave forehead and smaller ears were similar to the Indian elephant. Under its tail and protecting its anus from the cold, was a thick flap of skin. The Indian elephant has a similar flap which acts as a protection against insects. This is not found in the African variety.

The Indian elephant rarely exceeds 10 ft. 6 ins. at the shoulder, the average height of an adult male being 9 ft. Females are one foot shorter. Twice the circumference of an elephant's forefoot gives a fair indication of its height. This rule however, does not apply to young and immature animals. The colour of an elephant is greyish black. The chest, forehead and ears are often covered with flesh coloured spots.

Usually, only the males have tusks. Tuskless males are called "makna" and are very large in build, with well-developed trunks. The size and shape of the tusks vary in individual animals. A length of four feet is considered quite a prize. With the price of ivory at a record height, the shooting, trapping and even poisoning of males with tusks of only a few feet, is quite common. Gone are the days of record tusks. The Journal of the Bombay Natural History Society records a pair in the Royal Museum at Siam that taped 9 ft. 10½ ins. Record tusks of this length are no longer found in this country.

MOLARS

While tusks are the main object for which elephants are shot or trapped in this country, the teeth are also of considerable interest to sportsmen. At its present stage of evolution, the elephant has discarded all its canine teeth and incisors, except the pair in its upper jaw. These have developed into tusks.

As to the grinding teeth, the elephant develops six molars in each jaw during its lifetime, but the grinders are so large and the jaws so short, that there is never room for more than two at a time, one entirely and the other partially exposed above the gums. As the new tooth forms in the rear of the jaw, it gradually replaces the preceding tooth as it wears away, forcing it out of the jaw.

This peculiar process provides sportsmen with a fairly accurate means of judging the animal's age. The first milk molar is shed at the age of two years. The second at the age of six, the third at nine, the fourth (or first adult tooth) between the 20th, or 25th. year, and the fifth at sixty. The sixth and last serves the animal for the rest of its life.

The appearance of these molars are peculiar, consisting of a series of ridges across the crown of

the tooth. This is caused by the wearing away of the dentine. The entire molar is composed of a series of plates, each composed of a flattened mass of dentine, invested by a layer of enamel, the whole bound together in a solid mass of cement. As the softer dentine wears away, the harder enamel appears in a series of transverse ridges riding across the crown of the molar. The number of these ridges vary. In the Indian Elephant, the sixth or last molar may have as many as twenty-seven ridges.

Another interesting detail about elephants are their feet. The Indian elephant has normally five nails on its forefoot and four on its hind. These nails are comparatively small and crinkled, their impression only traceable on very wet soil, but the composition of the foot itself is remarkable. When placed on firm soil, the toes are splayed out and the circumference of the entire foot increased considerably; but when the animal is traversing soft mud or silt, where on account of his great weight he is liable to sink and be literally bogged down, the act of withdrawing the foot, immediately releases a pad of loose flesh, adhering to the base of the foot, which causes the entire foot to shrink and makes possible the withdrawal of the foot from the cavity made on entering. This accounts for the fact that so few elephants are ever trapped in marshy soil.

AGILITY

The elephant usually proceeds at a sedate walk, but when alarmed it is capable of rushing at quite 20 miles an hour, a speed that is not noticeable on account of its huge size, but as many a sportsman has discovered to his cost, it is capable of covering long distances in record time. At climbing up and down steep hillsides it is remarkably agile.

An excellent swimmer, it has one peculiarity that is seldom noticed. When compelled by circumstances to plunge from a height into deep water, the elephant will pause on the edge of the bank. Here after surveying the water for a moment or two, it will deliberately proceed to inflate itself. During this process its circumference visibly increases and when it considers it has reserved enough air to ensure its buoyancy, it will plunge into the stream and swim across. This is a process which the animal employs when bogged down in marshy soil or quick sands. This increased buoyancy enable it to free itself from the grip of the quivering sands. A personal experience will illustriate this.

Some years ago, I was with a hunting party in what in those years was the heavily wooded foothills near Angul. We were proceeding towards the Mahanadi River, intending to cross over to Daspalla, where rumour had it, a man-eater was terrorising the local folk.

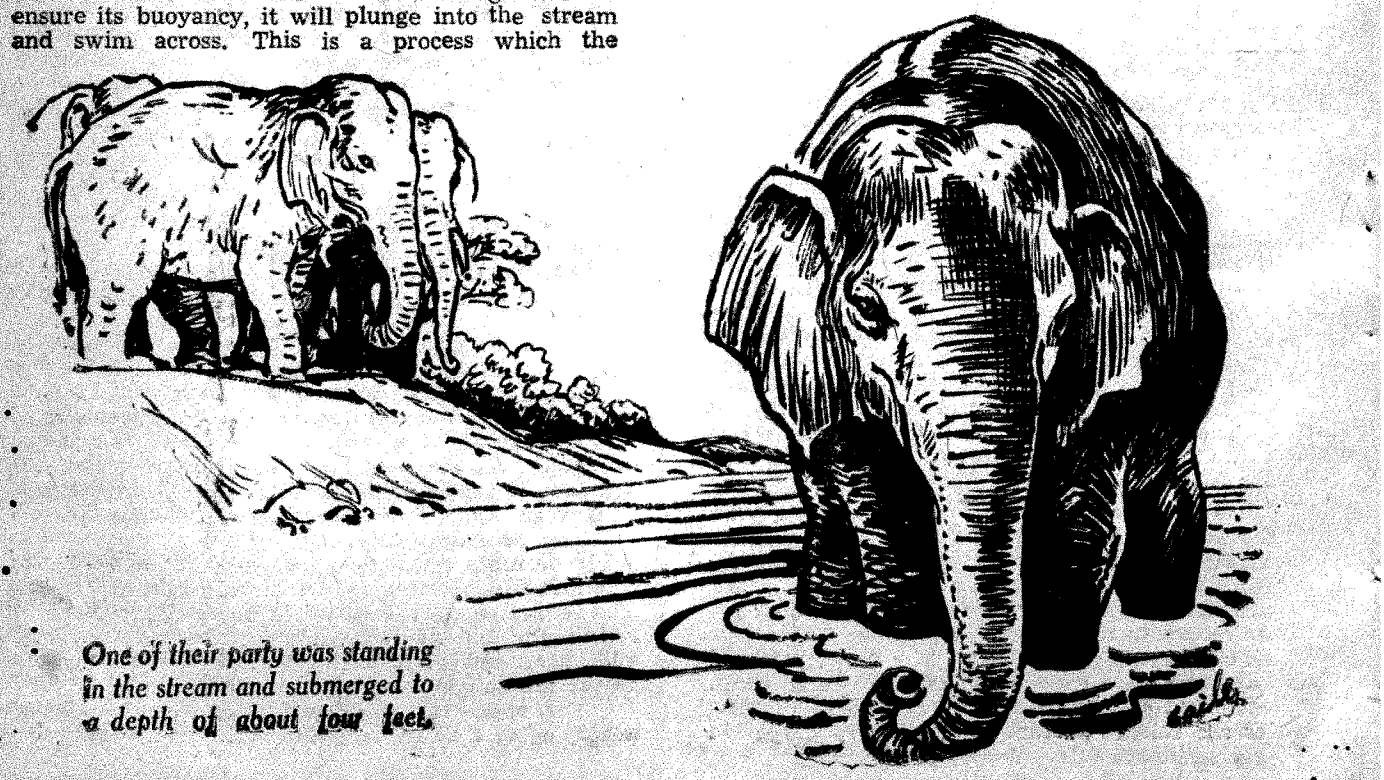
As we approached the stream, through a cutting in the embankment, we noticed the fresh tracks of a small party of elephants. In fact, in some places the freshness of the droppings indicated that the animals had only just passed. The Shikari, sent ahead to spy out the land, returned within a few minutes to inform us that the animals were almost directly opposite us on the river bank. Fortunately, the wind was in our favour, so advancing as cautiously as possible, we crept up to the edge of the forest bordering the stream and peered over. Not more than fifty yards from us and standing right at the water's edge was a party of elephants about six in number.

The elephants were all watching the antics of one of their party who was standing in the stream and submerged to a depth of about four feet.

The animal was evidently in great distress. Making frantic efforts to turn round, it only succeeded in sinking deeper into the water. Finally, it threw itself bodily on to the water and in this position, floating partially, it managed to free its legs from whatever was gripping them. A few poserful lunges carried it to the bank where it emerged literally trembling with exhaustion.

All this time, contrary to popular belief, its companions made no effort to assist, but once it emerged from the stream, they gathered round in a body and moved off down the stream to another spo. where they entered the water and swam swiftly across.

Curious to learn what had happened, I walked down the bank to the spot where the elephant had



One of their party was standing in the stream and submerged to a depth of about four feet.

attempted to cross. A warning shout from the shikari stopped me and that man came running up. Selecting a small rock from the many that lay around, he tossed it on to one of those 'churs' that form so frequently in these rivers. The rock landed with a splash and settled on the sand. For a moment nothing occurred then suddenly the entire surface of the chur became agitated. The rock, trembling like a sentient thing, began to sink and in a few moments disappeared from sight and I realized with horror that a few more steps would have taken me on to a belt of quick-sand, one of those treacherous spots that make of these rivers a living nightmare.

HABITAT

Elephants seem to prefer country where the terrain is hilly or undulating and covered with tall forests. As their main food supply is bamboo, they are always to be found in areas where bamboos grow in profusion. Intolerant of the sun, they sleep during the hot afternoons, coming out in the evenings and early mornings. During the night they leave the shelter of the forests and approach villages where they do much harm to standing crops, banana plantations and orchards. They have special liking for jack fruit, dorian and various tubers. An adult elephant may consume 60 to 70 lbs. of green fodder per day.

Elephant herds have one peculiarity which often results in their destruction. When undisturbed they follow a regular routine. Drinking and feeding in accustomed places, moving in single file, they are inclined to adhere strictly to a regular, well-defined track, which invariably follows the easiest and shortest path across country. These trails are known as elephant paths or elephant walks and it is along these trails that poachers await the oncoming herd with home-made guns, poisoned arrows and the like. These are the paths along which deep pits are dug and the animals, terrified into sudden flight with the aid of flaming torches, drums and gun fire, fall into these pits and are later destroyed.

In Burma elephants wander into bamboo forests at a height of 10,000 ft, while in Sikkim their tracks have been observed at 12,000 feet.

The elephant is a remarkably social animal. Herds of ten to fifty are frequently met with in the vicinity of tall forests. Extremely adaptable they are found in the cold, dense forests of Burma and Sikkim on in the hot, humid jungles of Orissa, Mysore and parts of Bihar.

CUSTOM

Most herds consist of family members. Led, usually, by an old and experienced female, they wander over a vast extent of land. It is remarkable how within the structure of their own herd, individual members will conduct themselves remarkably like the various members of any of our Social Clubs. The old and blase married members congregate and feed together, while the young bachelors spend the time independently. The very young, however, keep with their mothers or other cows, who appear to have taken on the task of protecting and nursing them, and this duty is not taken on lightly.

Some years ago, while in Mayurbhanj (Orissa), I was staying at a beautiful, little forest bungalow at a place called Lulung. Situated on the top of the hill, the bungalow was a favourite resort of fishermen keen on Mahasher, of which the stream that flowed at the foot of the hill, was said to be teeming. One evening, while resting on the verandah, which overlooked the adjacent stream, we were constantly disturbed by the trumpeting of a solitary elephant. Eager to ascertain what had disturbed the animal, we wandered down to the foot of the hill and led

Between her forelegs and probably not more than six months old was her calf.

by the shrill trumpeting, passed through the forest to emerge on a sandy clearing on the banks of the stream. Here an amazing sight met our gaze.

Standing in the middle of the clearing was a young cow elephant. Between her forelegs and probably not more than six months old, was her calf, but this was not what held our attention. Crouched on the sand and not more than 20 feet away was a tiger. Every now and again a deep menacing growl would rumble up and the calf, terrified at the sound, would attempt to escape from between his mother's legs, but each attempt was firmly but gently frustrated by her trunk.

Although we had approached as noislessly as possible, the keen eyes and hearing of the tiger immediately detected our presence and with an angry roar it immediately bounded away into the forest. Frequent trumpeting from the adjoining hills, now informed us that others of the elephant herd were hastening to the mother's aid and so we retreated back to the bungalow as well.

The tiger had evidently come on to the elephant and her calf shortly before our arrival. Afraid to attack the calf while under its mother's protection, it had contented himself with growling and approaching the pair in short rushes, hoping that its approach would so terrify the calf that it would ultimately break away from its mother's side and so provide it with a very satisfying meal.

INSTINCT

Elephants appear to look after the aged better than most other animals. I have seen an old tusker in the Sambalpur Division, guarded and tended by a couple of youngsters of the same herd. At the first indication of danger, these guardians would sound a harsh warning and then hurry the old elephant off into the dense forest, prepared to defend him should any hunter dare to follow. Why this particular elephant was so protected I have no idea, but the local shikaris maintain that elephants know that they are hunted for their tusks.

It is significant how, as soon as they detect the presence of hunters, the entire herd turn and face in that direction. The old bulls, especially, those with valuable tusks, move into the centre, where the females would ring them, as if protecting them from the approaching menace.

Old hunters affirm that this is not done because the elephants know that their tusks are sought after.

but because the females, fearing the extinction of the herd if the males are killed, protect them, as well as, the young animals, by building a barricade of their own bodies round them. I have seen this done on two occasions. It was significant that the Maknas also took up their position with the females.

There is another and oft repeated tale, showing the sagacity of these animals, and the extraordinary social instinct that inspires the entire herd. When one of their members is dangerously wounded, two young males would force their bodies against each side of the wounded member and thus would lead him into the forest and away from danger.

In one instance in Africa a herd of elephants constantly harassed by poachers, with poisoned arrows, and realizing that only the males with large tusks were the target of oppression retreated into the dense forest accompanied by a number of wounded animals and that when these poor harrassed creatures succumbed to the effects of the poison, the rest of the herd, wrenching out the tusks from the jaws of the dead animals, shattered them to bits on trees and rocks, thus making the pursuit fruitless.

COURTSHIP

The elephant does not appear to have any fixed breeding season. Most elephants drop their young at the end of September and as the period of gestation is 20 months, it is apparent that the large majority of elephants mate in March or April. There is a belief that if you spy on mating elephants, the male becomes enraged and it will immediately charge. I do not know the reaction of wild elephants, but in North Bengal, where I had an opportunity to watch the elephants in the Tea Gardens, no such display of temper occurred.

Elephants are affectionate beasts. I have watched the male courting the female, rubbing its head against the cow and caressing it with trunk. During the actual act, the cow goes down on its knees and the bull covers from the rear. Their trunks are frequently entwined, but whether this is done due to sexual excitement or to ensure the stability of the bull, it is difficult to say.

Only one calf is born at a time, although there have been rare instances of twins or even triplets. The young calf would walk a few hours after birth. It averages 2 ft. 10 ins. in height and suckles with its mouth and not through the trunk as some people suppose.

. . . Wounded animals provide the most prolific source for rogue elephants.

Years ago, sportsmen and even those who had studied the subject, were convinced that 'Musth' in elephants was due to sexual frustration. The fact that this condition appeared during the months of March and April, a period that coincided with the mating period, seemed to indicate that this contention was correct. Subsequent observation has shown, however, that frequently the bulls in close contact with the cows during this period developed this condition; further observation led to the conclusion that 'Musth', while undeniably having some bearing on sex, was due to a specific disease, which appeared to attack some of these animals during this period, as flu' does in case of men at certain seasons during the year.

The physical manifestations of 'Musth' are very noticeable. With the onset of the disease, glandular enlargement beneath the skin, causes the entire temporal region to swell up, exaggerating the whole appearance of the head, particularly in old bulls. Subsequently a thick, oily and dark coloured exudation oozes out of the pores on either side of the face, between the eyes and the ears and flows down the cheeks. This discharge is of a caustic or irritating type, because it is noticed that when this occurs, the elephant would bathe the parts frequently, often applying moist earth to the cheeks for relief.

I have often heard sportsmen discussing how a wild bull in 'Musth' terrorised an entire area, killing people and raviging crops and villages. This is incorrect.

The wild elephant in 'musth' is seldom dangerous. Far from becoming a lone bull, it would frequently seek the company of the cows and it is noticeable with what kindness and consideration the cow elephants would treat the bull. During this period it possibly consumes some tuber or plant that has a soporific effect on him, because its whole demeanour changes and the animal appears to be in a drowsy, contemplative state, standing solitary and clam by some pool or stream.

If the water is deep enough it would sink into its cool depths and lie submerged often for hours at a time.

It is the elephant in captivity that is the most troublesome and treacherous. It will attack and kill his 'mahout' or anyone coming within reach of the trunk. It has to be firmly secured with ropes and chains and fed on a restricted diet. During the worst paroxysms of the disease, the animal is given large doses of opium to calm it.

ROGUES

Rogue elephants on the other hand are in quite a different category. They are seldom in 'musth' when start killing. Among the many rogue elephants I have seen shot, I invariably noticed that these animals had been suffering from festering wounds, inflicted by shot guns, light bore-rifles and in some instances, by arrows and spears.

It must be remembered that elephants are intelligent creatures, possessing a prodigious memory. When shot at and seriously injured, it would make off and hide itself in the most inaccessible places. The younger sportsmen, seldom follow up and destroy a wounded animal and this explains the source of rogue elephants.

It may be six months before an elephant, badly wounded in stomach or thigh, would succumb to its injury and during this period of pain and suffering,

(Continued On Page 86)

THE GOD INTOXICATED MAN

By D. S. MAHALANOBIS

THE crimson sun was setting on the banks of the Ganges. I stood on the deserted strand, contemplating the fascinating tonalities caught on the river where it fringed an ancient townlet.

A stranger stepped up abreast of me and accosted, "Do you believe in God, Sir?"

I look askance, irritated.

He begged pardon, and with studied courtesy explained that he could not help the question because he was a God-intoxicated man.

"I don't see why I need be a connoisseur of your exalted infatuation," I said disapprovingly.

He seemed sadly disappointed, then glanced up and discreetly posed a question. "Can you believe a lame duck become an off-bird overnight? And that in a manner no human could ever have foreseen, far less got it up. A catena of events made it happen, as if every single link in it had been put in perfect gear to this end. Isn't it inexplicable except by the improbable probability of a blind set of chances, Sir? You need not take me at my word. It's in every man's right to satisfy himself, and if you do me the honour to pay a visit to my villa here, you will find material to interest yourself in my story and be more than repaid for your trouble, I dare say."

In spite of my initial frigidity at his unceremonious introduction, the man was holding me to his story. He suggested that we sat on a nearby bench provided for the strand-visitors by the town authorities. I assented.

We moved to a bench.

He was in his late 50's, 5 ft. 8 in. by my side, had remarkable features, which seemed somewhat mitigated by his *neglige*. He talked rather diffidently, as if uncertain of effect on his hearers.

"You will have taken me for a jobber, I suppose," he ventured, "but, believe me, Sir, I have never been a bull, bear or stag, or that sort. In fact, I have never been in business of any kind. On the contrary, I was jockeyed out of my rich bequest before I knew where I was."

The stranger stopped and asked if I would prefer to visit his villa first and then hear his story.

I told him to continue.

"It's not a pleasant story to tell," he remarked. "This strand holds tragic memories for me. My misfortune began one evening right at this place. I had come for my evening stroll and after a few rounds along the banks, settled myself on a bench. An hour later I was unexpectedly taken ill. Instinctively I started to walk the distance back as I am won't, and on my way turned to the main thoroughfare for a pick-me-up, which I imagined, would brace me up. I suddenly realized that I was in for serious trouble. An intense feeling of sickness staggered my gait and I was fighting to keep myself on my feet. Something was wrong in a vital part, somewhere the controls were failing, I sensed. I had to have a conveyance at once and looked about. There was none. Steadying myself at every step forward, I plodded on anyhow, now and again squatting on the kerb to avert a fall. Cold sweat broke out, I desperately hungered for fresh air. An acute perception of the embarrassing situation made me tense and apprehensive lest I created a scene, and strove hard to avoid it. A rickshaw was visible on the other side up the road, which was the great metropolitan artery flung here along for inter-State traffic. I was faced with the decision to cross it or risk an appallingly rapid bout of morbific spurt. My nerves insensibly taut, I clenched my teeth, looked ahead for a breach in the fast-moving vehicular line, crazily lugged myself to the far side where the rickshaw stood, then barely jabbered an order and was instantly blacked out. When I came to, I found myself seated on the pavement in the arms of the rickshaw-man. By an effort of will I levered myself up limply into the three-wheeled car and

was rushed away to my place. Grimly I held on for a few precious seconds till I could hastily unlock my door and abandon myself to my bed, then began to belch out blood. The last thing I remember was an attempt to sit up, turn the light on by means of a bed-switch, ask the servant who had just brought my night meal to take it back, and then collapsed. The turned light leaped down on the ominous-looking fluid on the floor and flashed past through the open door. I lay under its lurid shine in a trance, unconcerned.

"My folk espied from their aloofness the dirty mess I had made of my room, but they concerted by a tragic decision to leave me to my fate. I languished under the darkening shadow of death for two mortal hours. No one called in, no one fetched a doctor. When I came out of that benumbing stupor, I was conscious of my utter helplessness and of the dire necessity of stopping internal haemorrhage that was still active. A medicine chest lay within my reach on a table, but I was far too mishappen physically and mentally to prescribe me a drug. Then came a profound little spell of suspended thought, followed by an impetuous splash of colour, a green signal fluttered, across my vision. Out of it blazed in clear outlines a name. I could not lift me up but extended my hand, got the named medicine vial from the chest and swallowed a dose. Slowly I felt I was rallying back, and was in better form in the morning to pull through to safety. But, it was my undoing in any case. I was left two-way broke. The bequest was gone. During my long incapacitation I was relieved of every farthing."

Something checked him abruptly. A puff of bitter resentment had darkened his face. He mopped his brow, waited a few seconds to study the effect on me, then asked, "Don't you believe my stuff, Sir ?"

'A green signal fluttered across my vision....

The mass of details he had packed into his narrative could scarcely have been all invented, I reviewed mentally, but kept the opinion back to myself and replied non-committally, "You know it that truth is stranger than fiction."

"That's true. My misfortune ended in a manner that, you will concede, is certainly stranger than any fiction."

I gazed critically at him, a scoff of disbelief quizzed in my brain for a long minute.

He perked up at my vacillation and resumed, as if to reassure me: "I was sitting one morning in my hammock chair, very much dejected. The town postman brought me a packet. It contained what seemed to me a set of shipping bills, which a friend had mailed to my address. In an ambitious deal he had imported a shipload of beet sugar from abroad, which he failed to clear. Ruin and dishonour staring him in the face, he took an ill-advised decision and hastily left the country never to return.

"I was in a sorry plight myself; the burden of unreleased documents on top of it, made me furious. I was just going to tear the bundle up when a telegram was put into my hand. It restrained my distempers. Little did I know that the mail packet was a windfall.

"At the end of a week," he went on, "news began to pour in of a sudden racket in the sugar market. That was a topsyturvy time years ago—the War had started. I had forgotten all about the mail packet. I now looked it over and without realizing the full effect of the bullish impact, announced the cargo at my disposal. Of that one deal my ship came home."

"There's nothing extraordinary in it," I remarked.

"No! Then what is extraordinary, Sir? May I tell you that the telegram too was a second windfall?"

I quieted down my resistance and awaited his explanation.

"The telegram," he continued, "was an anonymous message which disclosed clues to a diary incriminating the pretenders. And at long last I recovered my properties. What do you say to it, Sir?"

"I guess, you are a wealthy man now?" I evaded the question.

"Do I look it, Sir? I am what I ever have been—my naked self, not pegged to the illusive decore that fortune has cast about in the air, I have learned my great lesson in the Destiny's last sanctuary, that is, my sick-bed, which has been for me a unique clinic for post-mortem study. There I have had the rarest opportunity to dissect the individuated personality of flesh and blood, to lay bare the core of the 'self' and the 'not-self'—to gut the inside of everything I could lay hands on. I am no longer a cock-sure factor in my world."

"You mean to say you are not master of your own house yet?"

"In a sense, I am, I have come into my traps. With the harvested fortune on my hands, I could engage the best lawyers to snuff out the pretenders. It grieved me to do it, but I had to, in a tough legal duel that has this time ruined them."

He looked away from me for a while, then

interrogated, "Can you see my point now, where I offended you right at the beginning by my first query? Who flashed the 'green signal' and spelt out the name of the drug in my crisis, Sir? You look up the catalogue of events ranged one after another for the geared action—the green signal, the shipping documents, the telegram, the sugar racket, and the restitution of the will-properties. Who, do you think, horoscoped this massive array of circumstances, each in its place and time? Who brought them to a finality to achieve one end?"

"Can't be dogmatic about it," I rejoined, then angled for a feeler to change the subject. "Did you say that your villa holds a secret?" I suggested.

He pondered over my question for a time and then remarked obscurely, "Do you think you could believe such a thing? Yet, if the secret is anything, the best part of it is that it is no longer my villa. I can use it, barter it, sell it, even demolish it, though."

I failed to see what he meant, but put no question. He tried to make an opening for me into his deferred explanation by a proposition: "Suppose you visit the villa. The game could be worth the candle."

Next morning I went to his place by appointment. As I came out of my house bound for the villa, I was surprised to find a car waiting outside, it had come from my host. I hopped in, wrapped up in one question—how the stranger knew my residence. Did he know me also?

The car dashed along a lap of drab road, flanked to the riverside. and then slowed down over a gateway giving on a well-kept garden. A marble slab at the outside announced it was 'Anand Villa,' and I instinctively associated it with my host's name.

I was received by a young lady of 22 and my host. She was elegantly dressed, her elderly companion in his free and easy attire of the previous evening. The difference was easily struck. I was further to be struck by the information that he and she were not father and daughter, who, none the less, admirably reciprocated the philoprogenitive and filial give and take on either's part.

I was at once smitten with her presence. Her physical attractiveness, charming deportment, cultured outlook and unassuming way of making her visitors feel at home—partnered in amity to completely win me over, and I felt an anxiety in my vision where I fancid a place for her in my home my son and heir had left, unhappy over a match I had overruled. I was ready to stake heavily not to let this chance slip. Now an irresistible curiosity and longing to know more of her kept me on the tiptoe to hear Anand's left-over story of the preceding evening.

"Excuse me for not formally introducing Monica to you," my host said as soon as the young lady discreetly left after tea. "She is part of my story, though not on the distaff side nor on the spear side, either. Yet, for her I hold the greater part of the property in trust. In such an intriguing situation, you could not have been satisfied by a brief formal introduction, I, therefore, desisted. If the story interests you, I could take it up where I left it yesterday."

"Indeed, it does interest me," I assured.

"Monica is my friend's daughter," he began. "Her father ran away leaving her with a relative when she was barely five, that is, at the time his shipping venture fell through. She has been homeless since, her mother having died earlier. I tried in vain to find her immediately after my lucky haul, and only discovered her by a coincidence a year ago. She is with me from that day. I am at a dead end of my ancestry, with no one to comfort me in my solitary life. That was perhaps in my subconscious mind a reason why I had kept on her trail through the years. But, in my conscious thought I was keenly eager to be fair to my unlucky friend. And I felt that the booty I had acquired in my unsweated enterprise in sugar

(Continued On Page 56)

THE WAITING KNIFE

(Continued From Page 42)

CHAPTER — VI

DIANE Andrews opened her eyes. Sam Ward was shaking her by the shoulder, calling out her name urgently. She stared at him dumbly, her eyes wide and vacant. She looked past his shoulder, and did not focus on his face.

"Diane", he said, his face tender. "You must get to bed. You must rest".

She turned to him, looking at him without expression. But she did not try to sit up.

Ward rubbed his hands on her wrists, and kept shaking her. "Diane! Diane! It's been too much for you. Let me call Dr. Marcus."

She stared back at him feebly.

He stood abruptly and moved across the room toward the telephone. Diane, her pupils pinpoints, her lids narrowed, sat up and slipped away from the divan and darted toward the kitchen. There was a slyness and a furtive quality to her motion, and Ward saw her out of the corner of his eye. She slipped through into the kitchen before he could stop her.

"Diane!" he cried, and came away from the telephone.

He followed her, and was just about to enter the kitchen when he came to an abrupt halt. He stared down at her, standing in the doorway, her eyes blazing half crazily at him, her face pale and blank, her body wound up like a too-tight spring.

"Stay away from me!" she cried, her voice a hoarse croak. She held her right hand in front of her, and in it she gripped the curved knife she had taken out of the kitchen drawer. She held it in an attitude of attack, as if she meant to use it on Sam Ward.

His mouth dropped open. His face drained of color. He stared stupidly at her.

"Diane," he said finally. "Whatever do you think you're doing? Put that knife down!"

She shook her head slowly, craftily, her eyes never leaving his face. They were unblinking eyes.

"You're unnerved, Diane," Ward went on, trying to make his shaking voice soothing. "You're overwrought. Put that knife down like a good girl, and get to bed. I'll call Dr. Marcus."

Diane shook her head. Her movements had taken on a sleep-walking appearance, and she moved her hands and body jerkily, like a puppet on a string. She advanced on Sam Ward, waving the knife menacingly toward his stomach.

He backed up, his face haggard and gray.

"You've gone mad," he whispered. "Dr. Marcus was right. He was afraid to have you come home so soon." Ward shook his head, "I told him I didn't believe it. I told him I could take care of you, that you'd be all right." Ward sighed. "I was wrong."

"In there," Diane said softly, indicating her bedroom to the lawyer. "Go in there."

Ward frowned. "But, Diane....."

"Hurry up!" Diane's voice was now firm and challenging. It was high-pitched and strained, and it held a high-tension warning. Ward moved.

"Well?" he said, as he stood in the middle of the bedroom. "What do you think you're going to do now?"

Diane pointed to the closet door. "Open that."

Ward shook his head in bafflement. "But why?"

"Just open it!" flared Diane, her voice breaking.

Ward moved toward the door. He opened it.

"Now go in there, Ward," Diane said evenly, her eyes gleaming.

Ward, his face like uncooked bread dough, cast one glance at her, another at the knife in her hand, and moved into the closet. Diane quickly pushed the door shut, turning the key in the lock.

A startled cry came from the lawyer. "Diane! What do you think you're doing? Diane! You're crazy! Do you hear me? Let me out of here. I have to call Dr. Marcus."

He pounded on the door, shoved against it, but it was strong and it held.

Diane stared at the knife in her hand, and at the door on which Ward was beginning to smash his huge fists, and she turned and fled from the room.

She ran to the front door and opened it and sprang out into the dark night. The mist of the woods swirled around her in eddies, and she plunged toward the roadway. The only thing she could think of was to get away from that terrible house, the house that had brought her right up to the brink of death.

She ran through the mist down the long driveway and then, as she stumbled along blindly, her world was made suddenly brilliant with a great flash of light. A monstrous noise filled the air, and the whole world shook to pieces.

Then there was only the bright light, and she was standing, panting and dizzy, in the middle of the road, staring down at her hand with the curved deadly blade in it. She could hardly breathe, and she saw the knife and she thought of the picture of the girl with the slashed breast, and she lifted the knife suddenly in a gesture of final despair, and as she did so she heard a cry from the darkness.

"Diane!"

He had followed her! She moved the knife down, down, down, firmly and steadily and swiftly, and she heard it clatter on the roadway. She slumped into a heap in the brilliant light and lay there quivering and spent.....

She came to quite suddenly. It was Alec Bern, bending over her and shaking her. She was back in the house again, and outside, against the house, she could see the glare of a pair of headlights. In the next room she heard the banging of a fist on the door panelling. But she paid no attention to it. And, to her relief, neither did Alec.

"Where did you come from?" she asked him.

"The car, Diane! I was driving up the road here to the house, when I saw you rushing toward me, waving a knife. What's the matter?" He looked at her closely. "Are you sure you're all right?"

"Car?" she echoed. "You came in a car?"

"Yes. But I broke down just outside New York. That's what delayed me. What's been happening? You don't look well, Diane."

Sobbing, she told him brokenly what had happened, from the time the peculiar little woman had come to look over the house. As she told him, he stared at her uncomprehendingly. And when she

came to the last part, when she told him that it was Sam Ward locked in the closet of her bedroom, Alec's eyes were incredulous.

"But whatever for, Diane? Why did you do a thing like that? And then run out of the house, waving that curved knife?"

"Don't you see!" Diane asked eagerly. "It was all done deliberately. Done by one man, and for a reason I can guess."

Alec shook his head, holding her close to him. "Don't get excited, Diane. Just tell me when you think you can."

Diane smiled. She pointed to the end table, where the new will was lying, where Sam's pipe even yet lay, along with a folder of matches. "That's proof of it. Don't you understand?"

Alec stared at the end table, and shook his head. "Of what?"

"The match folder. Don't you see?"

Alec picked it up. He read the advertisement for a Bar and Grill just outside Roanoke, Virginia. He nodded. "I know the place. What's wrong with it?" He turned inquiringly.

"Roanoke? What was Ward doing down there in Roanoke, unless he was trying to make it look as if you'd tried to send me that wreath, and put the house up for sale? Don't you see? He was the one who put the painting here! He was the one who tried to make me drink that milk—and heaven kows what he'd put into it!"

Alec's eyes narrowed. "Why should he do all that, Diane?"

"I can guess. He's afraid what will happen once we're married, Alec. I'm sure he's not the first lawyer or trustee in charge of a big estate who has borrowed a few thousand here and a few thousand there to make life a little more comfortable for himself."

"I see", Alec said. "He realized once we were married I might take too much interest in the stocks, and find out what he'd done?"

Diane nodded wearily. "So he tried to put me back in the rest home, to keep us from being married. Failing that, he came here and tried to kill me with that doped-up glass of milk, but I pushed the glass onto the floor." She shuddered. "He lied to me about the new will, saying you'd wanted the change made. That was to make me suspicious of you. Later after it was all over, he could blame my death on you, as beneficiary of the estate."

Alec smiled, and leaned over her.

Alec stood resolutely. "We'd better call the police and let them take care of him.....He must be crazy."

"He almost drove me crazy", Diane said. "But I'm all right now, with you here. Aren't you going to give me a homecoming kiss?"

Alec smiled, and leaned over her. "This one has been a long time coming to you, too long."

(Illustrations by Shyamal Sen)

FAILURE

(Continued From Page 44)

the Rawalpindi girl. "Ah! superb! What rare grace there is in her enchanting beauty. I had this goddess Laxmi in my hands, and flung her away. I am such an ass."

On the evening of marriage the bridegroom went out in a carriage with band and illuminations. Nalin lay down and tried uselessly to draw a faint consolation from his hubble-bubble, when Hajra arrived grinning happily and was about to settle down with jokes directed at Nanda.

Nalin shouted, "Durwan!"

Hajra froze, scared he called the durwan.

The Babu pointed at Hajra and ordered in Hindi, "Catch hold of him by his ears and throw him out at once."

(Translated by Sheila Chatterjee)

BIBLIOTHERAPY A NEW REMEDY

(Continued From Page 46)

books: they should have other means of diversions such as music, film shows and games. This is necessary because patients cannot concentrate their mind in study continuously for a long time. The effect of books will be better if it is administered along with other means of diversion.

It must, however, be admitted that bibliotherapy is possible only within a limited field. Patients who cannot read well will find no benefit from books.

Will a time come when doctors will write names of books in their prescriptions instead of names of medicines, and special libraries will be established in every street and lane like dispensaries, which will supply books to the patients according to the prescriptions of the physicians? Books in these libraries will be classified according to their usefulness in a particular disease and not according to subjects as is done now.

ELEPHANTS WILD AND FREE

(Continued From Page 50)

its anger, and resentment against the assailant grows in proportion, till at last it emerges from the forest and creates horror and stampede in the adjacent areas.

SHOOTING

The act of shooting an elephant just for its tusks is to me a deed of unpardonable vandalism. It is true, there are instances when the destruction of the animal becomes unavoidable, as in the case of a proclaimed rogue and it is then that the hunter should know something about the anatomy of the elephant and the most vulnerable places in which a bullet will produce immediate and painless death. I will not attempt to describe the rifle, par excellence, as this is a matter of personal preference; any high class weapon, of .375 bore and above, throwing a bullet of 300 grs., will bring about the destruction of the animal.

The main difficulty is where to hit the animal. The majority of shots, in India at least, are taken when the animal is feeding in dense bamboo clumps. Once the direction of the wind has been ascertained, every precaution should be taken to approach the animal as noiselessly as possible. The bright eye that it turns so significantly in your direction, is miserably weak, so that objects barely 100 yards away, are seen only in blurred outline, but it is with its acute sense of hearing and smell, that the animal becomes aware of your approach.

Once the ears fan out and the trunk is turned rigidly in your direction, it is easy to see that your presence has been detected and located. The next moment, the trunk is doubled back behind the tusks and that thundering charge begins.

At the first signs of the charge, do not hesitate on the manner of your departure, but if your nerves are equal to the occasion, then select the boss, conspicuous on the forehead and just above the trunk, and plant your bullet there. Immediately after firing, spring to one side, as often the impact of the charge would carry the animal past the place where you are standing.

There are many other shots, the most favoured being the depression between the ear and the eye, but this depends on how the animal is facing. But never, on any account, shoot an elephant in the body. This type of shot, even if aimed at the heart, rarely proves fatal and an elephant shot in the body, even with a heavy rifle, is a rogue in the making and a potential killer.

GRAVEYARD

This is a legend that is common to both India and Africa. The Indian elephant, if allowed to live its normal life, survives for about 100 years. Considering our vast forest areas and that the elephant population is about one-fourth that of the African, it is not surprising that hunters in quest of elephant, rarely come across the bones of an animal that has died of natural causes. But the legend still persists.

When an elephant, or for that matter, any animal, has premonition of death, it would leave the herd and wander away to some secluded spot, where it would lie down and patiently await the end. To find this spot has been the ambition of every ivory hunter.

The natives aver that the craving for water, as well as for seclusion, drives these poor creatures to seek deep isolated swamps or dense forest retreats, but it is significant that the bones and tusks of these animals are seldom found. Occasionally, one comes across the massive head bones of an elephant buried deep in the soil. The smaller bones have of course been eaten by scavengers, but a careful examination of the skull invariably reveals that the tusks have been hacked out, showing that the animal had been killed by hunters or poachers.

The truth is that the elephant, like all other game animals in this country is being rapidly shot out. Herds of fifty or 100 animals are rarely seen and considering the length of the life span of the animal, the number of animals leaving a herd to die in some solitary, isolated place are so few that the creation of a regular graveyard to which these animals retreat is scarcely possible.

Mr. M. Krishnan, the well known writer on Indian Wild Life, to whom I referred this question, replies as follows—"Mr. K. Krishnamoorthy, of the Kerala Forest Service, a keen naturalist especially interested in elephants, has an interesting theory on this subject. He has shot a few rogues and twice he noticed that the mortally wounded animal made for the nearest stream which it entered, standing in deep water to die."

A similar preference is mentioned by Sanderson and by Sir Victor Brooke. Considering the number of deep, swift streams that intersect our forest areas and their ability to dispose of all elephant remains within a short time, the possibility of finding a regular elephant graveyard is remote indeed!

THE GOD INTOXICATED MAN

(Continued From Page 53)

honestly belonged to him. I have, therefore, set apart the whole of it as Monica's share.

"I cannot hold Monica very much long now, I know. Her own destiny will have its fulfilment, which is in the making, in a separate home in any case. It's a painful thought but I resign myself to the will of the Almighty. I told you that the villa no longer belonged to me. Do you see the implication in that statement? I came into the villa; it was inconsequestial, Monica gave it a meaning. She will go. If the green signal part has been played out, can the red signal be far behind? Did I not invite you here to impress upon you what I meant by God-intoxicatedness—call it 'exalted infatuation' if you like,—to let you know at first hand a thing to know that life has a secret. Monica will tell you what she has seen of my life. I have the villa; it is not mine. I have the car; I do not use it to pursue a pleasure. I have the garden; I am only its gardener. I have Monica; she is my protegee, for her own sake. I have seen the world in all its nakedness from its utmost vantage-point than from where none surer sees—in the dying man's struggle. It is for you now to catch up with me in the know. Destiny is on your heels."

He stopped and looked at me thoughtfully, then deliberately surprised me by his last trump: "May I tell you, Sir," he said, "that Monica has provided a home for your son you had denied him and her when she was yet unknown to you. Now that you have had your feel of her, do you accept the inevitable?"

I was mystified for a minute, then accepted the [illegible]

Great Hunger

By JATISH BOSE

A winter evening. The sun has just set making room for the full moon to rear up her head in resplendent glory. There was no mist in the dark blue sky and no gripping cold in the earth below.

A pleasant time to stroll about, Ramesh Ganguly was having his daily constitutional along a Central Calcutta street. A sturdy fellow, he belied his age which was round about sixty. Suddenly he halted before a huge building in making, a near sky-scraper. He marvelled at its engineering jugglery for a moment.

In the twilight he saw a flitting familiar figure passing swiftly across him. In an instant he remembered Jatin Choudhury, his one-time chummy college mate.

Hello! Jatin, he called aloud. Fancy meeting you here.

The two friends locked themselves in endearing embrace.

The full moon, a silent witness to all the good and evils of this world, meanwhile had been running her upward course in the blue sky. She stopped awhile to shower her benediction to the embracing friends below.

They had their heart-ful of talks sitting by the side of the pond near-by and amidst very fine scenery. The ripples of water reflected in the clear moonlight to produce a silvery dream. It had a magic effect on the beautiful lights all around—somewhere efflorescent. And when they parted that night they were very much contented with having their jolly old days recapitulated and rehashed. Ramesh Ganguly gathered from his friend that he had knocked out his service some three years ago with a pension of three hundred rupees. He had now built a house of his own in Chandipur, a place about 14 miles away from Calcutta. A winding road links up Chandipur with a junction station on the Eastern Railway.

"Come along to my place one day," was his friend's pressing invitation before his hurried departure to catch the train.

Next Sunday. Winter morning mist had just cleared. The sunrise was breathtaking in its full splendour. Its glory and vivaciousness in most cases is hidden from the city of palaces. Not so is the case with man living in harmony with Nature. There the sun-god is all merciful and bountiful.

Ramesh Ganguly had a full view of the resplendent sun in all its glory as he was then on his way to Chandipur on a suburban train. The train was zigzagging its way down to destination. A motely crowd, mostly small holiday-hunters was his fellow passengers. But he was lost in the maze of thoughts hardly conscious of his noisy fellow-travellers.

Hardly an hour after, a cycle rickshawala was tearing down the *kutcha* road with his 'precious' passenger in the sunny forenoon. Jatin Choudhury was an affable personality and in no time the rickshawala knocked at his gates. His surprise and joy knew no bounds when his eyes caught the eagerly-awaited pleasant figure of Ramesh Ganguly; he hugged him so endearingly, and passionately as nothing in the world could give him such glorified vistas of unalloyed pleasure.

Ganguly was charmed beyond measure. What an ideal setting for a brooding, emotional and imaginative mind. A picturesque site for a lovely home.

Flowers have blossomed in gay profusion, a serenity pervades through the Nature in all its mercifulness.

Jatin Choudhury too was all hospitable; it seemed he had got back his youthful days. Buoyant and jubilant he had a real ring of sincerity and this touch he had passed on even to his usually sedate friend. He introduced his daughter Lila, a pretty girl in her twenties. But Choudhury was not his usual self, in fact he lost that buoyancy, when a few minutes later he called in Jogamaya, his consort. A lovely middle-aged woman she was a picture of sadness, and behind her amiable exterior lay an inert moroseness that is discernible even to casual observer. She made deep obeisance to Ganguly, but in between the conversations of the two friends she stood motionless as an image of priceless stone though modelled by an artist as an acme of perfection. Ganguly was perplexed. In his heart of hearts there was a nagging suspicion that all was not well with the Choudhury family. Somewhere there must have been a fly in the ointment.

Choudhury was not slow to understand it. He realised that his friend's lurking suspicion was getting better of him which might hasten to vitiate the air of mirth. He made up his mind to unravel the mystery.

"Ramesh," he told his friend after dusk when they were seated in the parlour, "it is a painful narrative. But I cannot ease myself until I share my sorrows with you.

I was the blessed father of two very lovely children, Ramen and Lila. Ramen was a boy of startling attractiveness, of a rare intellect and sparkling wit. He observed the utmost purity in life, an innate purity which was regaling. An ascetic bent of mind from his childhood he was the gem of his mother's eyes. The boy had an innate fondness for the wandering monks and would never hesitate to bring them down to his house even to the despair of his parents and to their loud protestations. As he grew older he devoted himself more and more to intellectual activity and serious meditation. But this also did not deter him from attaining highest success in the university examinations.

One evening toward the end of the summer Ramen returned home accompanied by an attractive-looking monk. He was then studying in the university but his mounting devotion to spirituality had been a deep source of concern to his parents, specially to his mother. The monk's charming physiognomy, his divine grace attired in flowing saffron robe, extorted admiration and respect but Jogamaya Devi, Ramen's mother, smelt in it an evil premonition. She shuddered if she would be her real self if it came true. She went to sleep that night with a perplexed mind.

Morning streaks of sunlight awoke Jogamaya Devi from her disturbed slumber. She jumped out of the bed to see the door of the room of his son wide open. A shiver ran through her. Where could his son go so early and where is the monk? Stung too deep she ran hither and thither, called out his husband and daughter. Soon a crowd gathered and search parties went about their task in right earnest. But Jogamaya could bear it no longer. The worst had happened, her premonition had come true. With a wild shriek she fell down on the ground to lose her consciousness and the thought of the miserable circumstances, she was in.

Choudhury continued: Jogamaya regained her consciousness the next day after very hard medical efforts. But from that day she stopped speaking to anybody. She has "sacrificed" her tongue for his son and one of the greatest weapons that most human beings would like to use it to swell themselves. Moving heaven and earth for my lost son last three years has not borne me any fruit.

Choudhury was in a trance. He could not reconcile himself to the position in which he had been placed by the Almighty.

After minutes of searching his inner self he went on: It would perhaps not be amiss to tell you at point something of our early life.

Though married in the fulness of time Jogamaya did not beget a son even after eight years. Her relations were almost convinced of her sterility. She had herself a great intense hunger to become a mother as is natural with

(Continued On Page 62)

in between the conversation of the two friends she stood motionless as an image of priceless stone...

A Railway Romance

By B. K. BOSE

UMLA GOPINATH of Delhi has been of late very much worried over the future of his only child, Kanta—a daughter of mature years. He has been in failing health since the passing away of his wife, a year back, and was anxious to see her married and settled in life, before the end come which, he felt, was not far off. His friend, Sohan Lal, had given him hopes that he would accept Kanta as a bride for his son, Manohar, who was then a mining engineer at Jharia, if he consented to marry.

Kanta had just completed her training as a nurse at a college in Delhi and wanted to get into the profession. But it was not so much to the liking of Gopinath who wanted to see her fixed up in marriage, first. And that was why he undertook the long and tiresome journey to Gaya with his daughter, not only to perform the last rites of his wife but also to meet Manohar who had been asked by his father to meet them at the Gaya Railway station and take them to Jharia for a short stay.

Kanta remembered having met Manohar before, but that was long ago in her early school days and her impression was that of a talkative young boy of bullish habit whom she did not like. And she said as much to her father, but he pooh-poohed her opinion of the boy, calling it a 'figment of her imagination' "These childish ideas of yours will go away the moment you meet him" he said "and I am sure you will like him" he added hopefully. "But father, dear, how I am going to look after you, if I have to live so far away."

"Do not worry your little head over these petty matters. It will all come out right in the end, if God is merciful. And do you think, dear child, I shall live for ever? Your mother has already left me stranded in this world" so saying he quietly turned his head and wiped his tearful eyes. And Kanta fell extremely unhappy at the distressful feeling she had caused by her talks.

II

Manohar Lal met them at the Gaya Station in all his splendour. He ran towards them with outstretched hands and 'Hullo, how are you all?' in his best English style to which however Kanta responded with a sober 'Namaste'. After tea they all got ready to start for Jharia, Via Dhanbad, and finding an empty first class compartment they all got into it for the first leg of their journey to the coal field.

It was the depth of winter and the sky was overcast with a strong gale blowing. By the time the train got a move the rain had started in torrents and they had to shut down all doors and windows of the compartment, Kanta was eager to see the sights from the bridge over the Falgu river but it was so dark and threatening outside that she could see nothing through the glass frames and Manohar would not let her rest at ease with his tiresome

talks of jungles and hills and his unending adventures. He related how he had walked through miles and miles of the forests where wild beasts lived and was describing a hunting trip he had recently undertaken in one of the neighbouring jungles when the train came to a halt at the small station of Manpur. They heard an incessant knocking at the closed door and on opening the same a slim young man of rather pale appearance hastilly clambered into the compartment with a muffled apology and slumped into the vacant berth opposite.

As soon as the man took off his dripping coat and hat Manohar recognising his old friend jumped up with glee, shouting 'Hullo—Narendra, how did you turn out at such an outlandish place? Narendra smiled quietly and replied "I have been visiting my friend Khanna who is building a workshop here, and I am going back to my mica mine at Kodarma which I have recently joined."

Manohar explained that their meeting in the train was a happy coincidence and that he was taking his relations, Lala Gopinath and his daughter Miss Kanta (to whom he was introduced) to Jharia.

"But why did you join mica? Surely coal mining offered better prospects". To this Narendra did not reply beyond passing a low-toned cryptic remark that they cannot all have the best of every thing. So saying he quietly shrank into his seat and opening a book absorbed himself into the pages. But Manohar would not allow him a quiet rest which he so sorely needed, after a strenuous day visiting the works, but kept up his rambling talks of this and that sometimes addressing himself to his friend but mostly to Kanta herself in loud tones.

In fact, he was very much taken up by Kanta's serene beauty. He had no idea that she has grown so charmingly attractive from the lanky school girl he had seen before, and so he wanted to show himself off.

Yes, (so he mused) she would be a fitting mate for him and he had no doubt he could show her off to his friends who would then, he was sure, envy him his good luck for finding such a charming girl for his wife. And that was why he was so anxious to make a deep impression on her.

He told him the tale in whispers and beamed with happiness when he received his congratulations.

He quietly walked over to Narendra's seat and told him the tale in whispers and beamed with happiness when he received his congratulation.

III

By the time the train reached the foothills of Gujhandi station a regular blizzard was blowing. The incessant patter of rain and flying debris striking the shutters made further talk impossible.

The train however kept on moving slowly but fitfully with constant jerks. The fearful streaks of lightning blazing through the dark sky showed up the trees on the hills bent double in the storm. The atmosphere altogether was most threatening, reflected clearly in the anxious faces of the passengers sitting inside.

Suddenly there was a big jolt and the train jerked itself to a stop with such violence that the passengers were thrown off their seats. This was followed by a grinding of brakes and to make matters worse the lights all went off. Kanta quietly picked up her father from the floor with Narendra's help; but he was not hurt, while Manohar started shouting at the top of his voice demanding to know if a collision had occurred. Fortunately nothing more untoward happened and the bogie continued to stand quiet on its wheels in pitch darkness.

The gale had, however suddenly stopped and Manohar opened the doors to find out what was the matter. But nothing could be seen or heard except the general hullaballo from the passengers in the other compartments.

After what seemed a long time, guard came limping along the track with a light and seeing the door of a first class compartment open, with a torch light burning inside, hastilly climbed in and explained to Manohar and others that there had been derailment of the engine only owing to a big boulder having rolled over the line from the surrounding hills, but all bogies were standing safe on the lines.

"But have you a doctor here? One fireman who was leaning out of the cab has fallen down and broken his leg. He is bleeding profusely and must be attended to immediately, otherwise he would die. The driver is also severely injured and needs attention."

Kanta stood up and said "I am not a doctor but a qualified nurse. I think I can attend to the case till a doctor arrives. Have you a first aid box?"

"Yes, but it is slightly damaged. In any case, we might need some more medicines and equipment but Kodarma station is over three miles from this place. Can we get a volunteer to walk over to the station and bring the medicines and also to inform the authorities about the accident and bring 'relief'" the guard pleaded in halting tones.

"Why? Surely; Manohar Babu, you can go"

"What? In this beastly weather? And in any case it is the Railway's job."

entreated Kanta looking up at him with hopeful eyes.

"What ? In this beastly weather ? And, in any case, it is the Railway's job. You should have men for this work," Manohar said addressing the guard.

"I have already told you, sir, that the driver and a fireman have been seriously injured, and are lying unconscious. I myself have received injuries, though not much. I can spare only one fireman to accompany you. If you, sir, do not feel like going then I must go and find out some other volunteers to walk over to Kodarma for the 'relief'.

At this Narendra jumped up saying he would volunteer to go and bring the medicines.

"That's very good of you, sir," the guard replied and started getting down from the compartment.

Kanta intervened and striding up to Manohar said "But Manohar Babu, you were saying just now you were used to doing such things. Why should you fall back now ?"

"Oh, if Narendra is going I can, surely, go too. But the weather is so foul and especially we have a lady to look after".

"Oh, please do not bother about me. Please accompany Narendra Babu if you want to, without further delay" so saying Kanta got down from the compartment herself to attend to the injured persons.

IV

The trio started for Kodarma over the rain soaked sloppy track, the fireman leading, with Manohar following behind. His patent leather shoes got soaked through in no time and he started limping and grumbling blaming Narendra for this mad adventure, as he called it.

Half the way up he actually stumbled and fell in trying to jump over a ditch "Oh, I have hurt myself" he cried. The other two ran back to pick him up and to see what had happened. Manohar plumped flat on the line and declared his inability to proceed any further. Just then a bright streak of lightning showed a tumbled-down coolie shed just above the line by the hill side.

Manohar looked up and said, "I think I should take a rest up there" pointing to the shed. After a while he added "And if I do not join you shortly at Kodarma then please pick me up on your way back."

V

When Narendra reached Kodarma he was terribly exhausted. He hurriedly explained the situation to the station master (who was anxiously waiting for the news) and asked for a trolley to take him back immediately with a box of bandages and some medicines.

The station master first got busy in telephoning all around and then gave Narendra a trolley with half a dozen porters and a big box of 'first aid' equipment and medicines. He assured Narendra that a light train with a doctor and arrangement for transhipping passengers would follow soon.

The party with Narendra started back immediately on the trolley and reaching half way they saw a tall well-dressed man standing astride the line waving his torch light frantically. It was Manohar. He jumped into the trolley as soon as it came to a halt.

On reaching the train with engine leaning over sideways Narendra, who was ill and lying crumpled up on his seat, quietly made over the medicine box to Manohar asking him to hand the same over to Miss Kanta. He was extremely exhausted and his heart was beating fast after his exertion. It was not possible for him to talk to anybody. And so leaving his task to Manohar he somehow crawled into his compartment and then fainted on his berth, losing all consciousness.

VI

When Manohar came to Miss Kanta she was dressing the fireman's injuries. Seeing Manohar she was glad beyond measure and said "Oh Manohar Babu, you have come with the medicines. Thank you so much. Now my task will be easy. Kindly excuse me for the rude words used. I lost my temper and I am sorry for it. I knew you would do it." She smiled and busied herself with the dressing.

"But where is our friend Narendra Babu ?" She inquired after a pause.

Manohar would not let this opportunity go to re-establish his position in Kanta's estimation.

"Oh :" he said "I had great difficulty in procuring the medicines and arranging for other reliefs which will be coming shortly. As for our friend Narendra Babu, he has gone back to his compartment to lie down for a rest. He had even no time to see you" he added with a dig at his absent friend.

Only a simple "Oh" escaped her lips.

VII

It was past morning hours and the sun was shining brightly when Narendra opened his eyes to find himself lying in a hospital bed with Kanta.

Continued on next page.

GREAT HUNGER

(Continued From Page 58)

all women of her age. She was gradually losing faith in the good human values.

I could still recall to memory her graceful figure with an impressive array of amulets swung round her both arms. She was an embodiment of penance praying to gods and goddesses both of higher and lower orders. Everything seemed to be subservient to this one passionate desire of her—to be a mother and that was the *summum bonum* of her life.

Fortunately, an elderly well-wisher relation of us wrote to me at this time to seek the blassings of a Sadhu residing at that time at Puri. That relative entertained a very high opinion about Jogamaya. Commented he" such a remarkably innocent, holy and pure girl should not taste mentally miserable life for long".

Choudhury continued: I was then in service in a Bihar district. I immediately hurried to Puri with my wife where I was awe-struck with magnificent temples and blue gorgeous sea-waves. They certainly presented evidence to show that there were spots of light even in wearisome life. I was delighted to find that my wife discarded her mental inertia for the time being.

After intensive search for about three days I got hold of the Sadhu in a corner of the Jagannath temple. It was a real hard task to find a genuine one in the midst of the preponderating fakes. An unostentatious person, his appearance showed that he was full of renunciation through contact with the Divine Being. I had no doubt in view of his extraordinary personality that he must have been a miracle-worker.

He surveyed Jogamaya as a loving father showers his affection to his daughter seen after a long time in the process. Meanwhile I told him the story of our mental misery.

'Mother', he bade her affectionately, 'you will bear this copper amulet the first thing in the morning after ablution in the sea. You will beget a holy son. A pure woman cannot ever remain mentally tormented."

Jogamaya could speek no words, so much was she overwhelmed with emotion. She fell flat on Sadhu's feet to be fondly touched on her head by him.

"Remember one thing, your son will be of great spiritual bent of mind. He may even run away from home to be ordained in the monks' order. But he cannot be away for long from a great mother. Your purity and sacrifice will cause him to return. That is my firm conviction. But your son's inner purity will sustain as a householder."

Choudhury concluded with a sigh. That was about twentyfive years ago. The Sadhu has been true to his words from the beginning, will he fail only in the latter part? This in short is the sad story of my family which is daily eating into my wife's vitals.

Ramesh Ganguly was stunned. How could he satisfy a mother's great hunger of getting her son back. A mother's unparalleled affection for her son lives through the ages, but does a son realise this always?

Before Ganguly left for Calcutta next morning he proposed his eldest son's marriage with Lila, the daughter of Choudhurys. His son is now in the provincial executive service. Like a shimmering crescent in the darkening sky, a subdued glee brightened the face of Jogamaya Devi. Ganguly was delighted. He would only pray that a mother's great sacrifice be rewarded one day in her union with her son.

RAILWAY ROMANCE

Continued from previous page.

seated by his side. The happenings of the previous night came rushing to his mind but he could not remember anything after he parted from Manohar on getting down from the trolley in which he remembered travelling back from Kodarma.

He looked up enquiringly into Kanta's eyes. She smiled back laying her soft hands on his forehead and advised him not to worry about anything but try to get a little more sleep and drink the glass of milk she offered.

"But where am I? And what has happened to others?

"Well, when the relief train arrived and everybody had been transhipped we found you lying unconscious with fever on your berth, and the attending doctor advised your immediate removal to this hospital at Kodarma. As I am a qualified nurse he kindly allowed me to attend you. There is no fever now. Therefore don't worry and have a little more sleep."

But sleep would not come. He wondered why this charming young woman should be ministering to his needs in his illness.

When he felt a little better after taking the milk he persisted in making inquiries about others.

"Is the fireman alive and safe?"—He asked.

"Oh yes, I think he will come round. Thanks to your assistance, I could stop his bleeding and dress him properly."

"And where is my friend Manohar?"

Kanta felt she must explain everything otherwise he would remain restless with his unending enquiries.

"You see, we soon found out that it was you who, in spite of great exhaustion, made the tremendous effort to reach the railway station and then came back with the medicines after getting the authorities to arrange for a relief train to follow. Manohar Babu gave us the impression that it was he who did everything. We now learn from the other fireman that he broke off after going a short distance and refused to budge further. But for your glorious effort there would have been considerable delay in bringing the medicines and getting the relief train."

I told Manohar Babu to his face that he had been telling lies all the time and have since stopped talking to him. So he got very angry and left us in a huff without any explanation whatsoever."

"But are you not betrothed to him?" and is he not going to marry you?" he enquired anxiously.

"Please do not talk about it any more. I am so sorry Narendra Babu that I practically induced you to go in this errand in this weak state of your health. I have learnt since then how you have suffered.

"We now want to nurse you back to health so that you can go back home to your people."

"I have no people of my own to go back to except the owners of the mica mine, where I work as manager. I live in this very town and I shall write to them immediately.

"But you have been so kind to me that I can hardly find words to express my deep gratitude to you" he added in an earnest desire to draw her sympathy.

He continued to stare at her face with an imploring look. Her eyes were downcast. He quietly took her hand which she did not withdraw until her father's arrival with the railway doctor.

ONE, who have roamed far and wide in the country-side and have had an intimate acquaintance with the country people, must have failed to be won over by the delightful aroma of the raw but robust humour that effortlessly flow out of the country folk. Not tainted by any touch of sophistication nor camouflaged by any twist of malice, their wit has an innocent effervescence that is bound to provoke a line of smile even on taciturn lips. It is in the artlessness of their wit and humour that their irresistible appeal lies. It is their naivety that wins.

LESS ADVICE PER ACRE, PLEASE

In England there was once a drive for improving the agricultural production. The Ministry sent out its technical experts to the countryside to teach the farmers how to do better. Each of these experts gave advice. Some of them asked that more water should be used *per acre*. The fertilizer expert advised that more doses of fertilizer should be injected *per acre*. The third expert told them that whatever they might do, better results would not be forthcoming unless more and better seeds were sown *per acre*. At last, the Minister himself thought of touring the area to find out for himself what the experts had done. A large gathering of farmers greeted him.

"Have the experts visited you?" he asked.
"Yes, Sir, they have."

"And what they have told you?"
"They have asked us to put in more water *per acre*, more fertilizers *per acre* and more and better seeds *per acre*."

Apparently feeling very happy over the performance of his Departmental Officers, the Minister humbly asked what more he could do for them?

An elderly farmer from amongst the crowd, in his artless and naive manner, ventured: "We are grateful to you and your officers for the advices given. It would be really helpful for us if you would give us *less advice per acre*."

GO BACK BY THE SAME BOAT

An amusing instance of the country-peoples' misgivings in the efficacy of Government measures relates to a visit of a Committee of Experts to a riverain territory in Bengal. Under a wide canopy, richly decorated by local officials, the meeting was arranged and villagers from far and near were assiduously persuaded to attend. The Chairman of the Committee explained in all solemnity the anxiety and earnestness of the Government to do something to resolve effectively the chronic problems of the area. But, he pleaded, he must first have the advice of the local people and consult the local experience before any schemes were prepared. He requested those present to offer their views as to how best the Committee could be helpful to them.

There was silence for some time as most of the villagers fought shy of speaking in public. At last rose a voice from the distant corner.

"Sir, it is, indeed, very nice and thoughtful of you to have taken so much trouble to come to our obscure village. Many other Committees have preceded you but nothing helpful has come out of them so far. The boat which have carried you here is still steaming. You could do us really some good

if you would leave us alone to our distress and go back by the very boat in which you have come."

Gladstone was once over-powered by the wit of a rural shepherd in a Tweedside country in Scotland. One afternoon he went out for a walk and came to a gate which gave upon the glen. It was late in November, a snowstorm was threatening, and the sheep, as is their custom, were drawing out from the barn-side to the barer hill where drifts could not lie. An old shepherd was leaning on the gate, and to him Gladstone spoke in his high manner: "Are not the sheep most foolish of all animals? Here is a storm pending, and instead of remaining in shelter they are courting the fury of the blast. If I were a sheep I should remain in the hollows." To which the shepherd replied: "Sir, if ye were a sheep ye'd have mair (more) sense." Gladstone had the heartiest laugh at the artless humour of the village shepherd.

WAGES OF SIN

Lord Tweedsmuir recounts a piece of delightful humour from a Scottish village in remote Ettrickhead. Lloyd George's Insurance Act had just then been introduced and a speaker was defending it on the ground that it was a practical application of the "Sermon on the Mount."

"Ye believe in the Bible, Sir?" a long-legged villager asked him.

"With all my heart."

"And ye consider that this Insurance Act is in keepin' with the Bible?"

"I do."

"Is it true that under the Act there's a maternity benefit and that a woman gets the benefit whether she's married or no?"

"That is right."

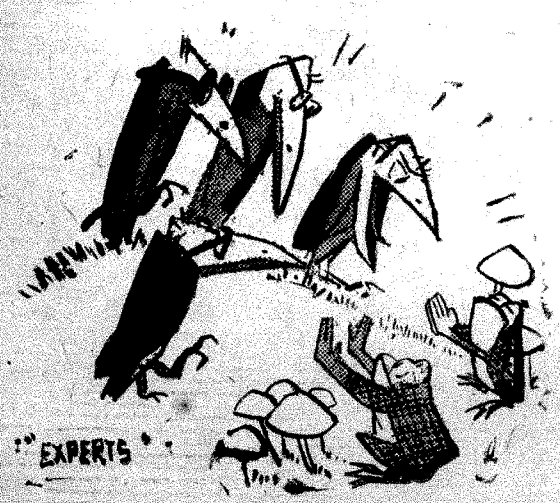
"D'ye approve of that?"

"With all my heart."

"Well, sir, how d'ye explain this? The Bible says the wages of sin is death and the Act says thirty shillin's."

BUFFALOS CANNOT BE PERSUADED

It happened in a Bengal village during the Second World War when there was a desperate demand for hair combs made from buffalo horns. Rigid specifications were drawn up by the Army authorities about the size, dimension, colour and workmanship of the combs. But the supplies were not upto the specifications. An Ordnance Officer thought it wise to visit the craftsmen who made the combs and advise them how to produce the combs according to the specifications. The craftsmen gave him a patient and courteous hearing but were not convinced as to how they could get rid of the defects inherent in the horns. At last one of them rose, thanked the Army Officer for his useful advice and then, almost innocently, said: "We shall try but the buffalos do not understand the war and, therefore, we wonder if we could persuade them to grow horns according to the Army specifications."



FOLLOW JAPANESE METHOD

Not many years back, the Japanese method of paddy cultivation was introduced in India. The Development Commissioner of a prominent State toured extensively in the villages with a view to explaining to the farmers the merits of the new method. Everywhere he received a co-operating response. But in one of the village meetings he was confronted with an embarrassing but delightful query. "We shall certainly act up to your wise advice. But, please assure us that feeding on rice grown by the Japanese method would not make our children short, squat and flat-faced as the Japanese."

MOSQUITO DE-CONTROLLED ?

It happened in a West Bengal village not long ago. The Malaria Eradication Programme was being introduced there. The Mosquito Control operations had begun. But, curiously, the menace of mosquitoes tremendously increased soon after the operation had commenced. The Mosquito Control Officer naturally felt considerably perturbed. But he had a lighter moment when an apparently simple villager accosted him: "Sir, have you *de-controlled* the mosquitoes?"

MINISTER REHABILITATED

Sometimes the rural humour smells of shrewdness too. The Rehabilitation Minister of a State shed copious tears in addressing his constituency which, incidentally, had a majority of refugees and displaced personnel. He confessed that he could not do as much as he desired for the relief of their distress. But he advised that in the larger interests of the country, everyone should be prepared for sacrifice of personal considerations. He spoke for well over an hour and when his torrential eloquence had ceased, one of the audience, who did not till then know who the speaker was, asked his neighbour about his identity.

When he was told who the speaker was, he asked innocently: "Is he not the same person who was a Minister once but lost his seat in the earlier election?"

"Yes, exactly so."

"I won't then dispute his rightful claim for inflicting the hour-long speech on us. He knows the mechanics of rehabilitation and can speak from personal experience."

There is abundance of regaling humour in the country-side. There may be rural odour about it. That makes it all the more relishable and delightful.

SOME PEACE HERE — Ranjit Gupta

TO THE FOLD — A. K. N

The Legendary Heroism of BAGHA JATIN

By

PRITHWINDRA MUKHERJEE

"YOU have heard of Jatin Mukherjee?" Sri Aurobindo once asked his disciples; and then he exclaimed in his unique tone, "A wonderful man! He was a man who would belong to the front rank of humanity anywhere; such beauty and strength combined together I have not seen, and his stature was like that of a warrior!"

Jatindranath Mukherjee is better known as Bagha Jatin because, as a young man, he had fought a royal Bengal tiger in his native village, and killed it single-handed.

Anecdotes of Bagha Jatin have become legends today. As a pioneer of our freedom struggle, his courage and ferocity in respect to the British could be matched only with a tiger's. But he had a softer side too. Giving away in charity the last piece of coin he had on him; day in and day out, nursing cholera and plague patients, cleaning their discharges by handfuls, with a smiling face; bringing home mad men from the streets, bathing them, treating them kindly with Ayurvedic oils and drugs, giving them good food and clothing; helping orphans and poor students, arranging for their studies and well-being; protecting everywhere helpless 'natives' against the wrath of the conceited 'white skins'; punishing the wicked and defending the weak and the victimised: such were the deeds attributed to him; and many of those who witnessed them, are still alive.

EARLY DAYS

Jatindranath Mukherjee was born in Jessore in December 1879. His father, Umesh Chandra, was a profound scholar, reputed for his strength of character and courage. His mother, Sharat-Shashi Debi, was a poet of considerable merit.

Jatin lost his father at the age of five and was brought up, along with his elder sister Vinodebala, in his maternal uncles' house in Koya, near Krishnagar.

At an early age Jatin showed a remarkable development of body and mind. He had physical training from an ex-service man from the North-West Frontier Provinces. Jatin caught a spark from the freedom-loving nature of his trainer. In studies as well as in innocent mischief-making, he was so brilliant that his teachers and fellow-students both loved and respected him.

As a student of the Calcutta Central College, Jatin came to know Sister Nivedita during the plague relief work. Nivedita was so impressed with Jatin's idealism that she took him to Swami Vivekananda. Swamiji liked him very much and is said to have become quite intimate with this young dreamer who was an excellent man of action as well.

During his conversations with Vivekananda, Jatin had the conviction that the spiritual regeneration of India would not be possible till India was politically free.

In 1899, while nursing a cholera patient, Jatin's mother caught the infection and succumbed to it. Soon afterwards, Jatin joined the Bengal secretariat as an expert stenographer, and had to spend half the year at Darjeeling and the other half in Calcutta. Wherever he was, boys and young men flocked round him, attracted by his personal magnetism. From a very early age, Jatin had a natural love of great writings. The Gita was his greatest inspiration. He could draw upon it at need. Wherever young men gathered round him, he would hold classes on the Gita and other sacred writings.

At the instance of his elder sister Vinodebala, Jatin was married to Indubala Debi in April 1900. Jatin's children Ashalata, Tejen, and Biren are still alive.

In 1903, at Yogendra Vidyabhusan's place Jatin first met Sri Aurobindo and J. N. Banerjee (after-

wards Swami Niralamba). From that day, till Sri Aurobindo's coming to Pondicherry in 1910, Jatin was an intimate and esteemed friend of his, whom Sri Aurobindo once called his "right hand man" while he was in Bengal. At the same time Jatin had come to know other eminent men, like Barrister P. Mitter, Satish Mukherjee, Upadhyay Brahmabandhav, Sir Jagadish Bose, Suren Tagore, Sarala Devi and a few more.

Above all, Jatin was a man of inner spiritual attainments, and a seeker. An initiated disciple of the great Saint Bholananda Giri of Haridwar, Jatin's devotion to the Divine and to Mother India was hard to distinguish. His mission was to shake the country out of its sterile torpor, and make it poignantly conscious of India's freedom, since it was the Divine's will. Jatin's disciple Chittapriya, the unforgettable hero and martyr, was a descendant of a realised *tantric sadhak*, and himself a worshipper of Mother Kali from his early childhood. On his first meeting with Jatin, Chitta asked, "Dada, can one realise the Divine by serving the Motherland?" And Jatin, in his serious tone of certitude replied, "If it were not so, I would be the last person to follow this path".

SECRET SOCIETIES

Even before meeting Sri Aurobindo, Jatin had started organising secret societies and initiating young men of the country into the creed of an armed revolution whose aim was to overthrow the foreign Government. His acquaintance with Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo helped him formulate clearly his programme of action. For, Sri Aurobindo too wanted to start a secret revolutionary propaganda and organisation of which the central object was the preparation of an armed insurrection; next, there would be public propaganda intended to convert the whole nation to the ideal of independence which was regarded, at the beginning, by the vast majority of Indians as unpractical and impossible; and then, there would be the organisation of the people to carry on a public and united opposition and undermine the foreign rule through an increasing non-co-operation and passive resistance. "At that time", writes Sri Aurobindo, "the military organisation of the great empires and their means of military action were not so overwhelming and apparently irresistible as they now are: the rifle was still the decisive weapon, air power had not yet been developed and the force of artillery was not so devastating as it afterwards became. India was disarmed, but Sri Aurobindo thought that with proper organisation and *help from outside* their difficulty might be overcome and in so vast a country as India and with the smallness of the regular British armies, even a guerrilla warfare accompanied by general resistance and revolt might be effective. There was also a possibility of general revolt in the Indian army".

When in 1908 the "bomb factory" at Manicktola was discovered by Government, and most of the leaders (including Sri Aurobindo) and revolutionaries were arrested. Jatin managed to stay out in order to keep the organisation running. During the trial, the Public Prosecutor, was trying his best to get all the accused convicted. Jatin decided to put an end to this man's ignominious existence. On hearing this, young Charu Bose, one of Jatin's dearest disciples, volunteered again and again to take the job up. Charu's right hand was paralytic. Therefore Jatin repeatedly asked Charu to wait since he had reserved something else for him. But Charu's insistence prevailed; Jatin agreed, and tied a loaded revolver to Charu's disabled wrist. Concealing his right hand under cover of a Chaddar, Charu bowed to Jatin, took his blessings, and went straight to the court at Alipur, where the trial was going on. Before anyone could notice it, Charu lifted up his right hand with his left, and fired the fatal shot. Then, instead of trying to escape, Charu stood immobile, looking at the dead body with a smile of satisfaction. Arrested on the spot, and tortured, Charu boldly said, "No sessions' trial, but hang me to-morrow. It was all preordained that Ashu Babu should be shot by me, and I should be hanged". Charu went to the gallows with his unfading smile, as Khudiram, Kanailal and ever so many revolutionaries had done.

Next came the turn of Samsul Alam, the most notorious deputy Superintendent of Police, who dreamed of an ambitious future at the cost of the revolutionaries. Jatin's disciple, Biren Dutta Gupta, came forward this time and did the job well in the open High Court. But a sudden nervousness made his escape impossible and he was arrested.

Though Jatin was very much against terrorism, under unavoidable circumstances (such as need for raising funds to defend the accused revolutionaries) he had to consent to Swadeshi "dacoities", in which M. N. Roy was one of his main lieutenants; several such "dacoities" were carried out all over the country, and the police arrested Lalit Chakravarty, one of Jatin's disciples, at Darjeeling. Lalit turned approver, and gave away thirty-two names, stating Jatin to be the unanimous leader of the entire revolutionary movement. Young Biren (who had killed Samsul) too, in a moment of bewildered weakness, faltered under the devious machinations of the police and declared Jatin to be the supreme leader.

THE ARREST

After a good deal of vain attempts, on January 27, 1910, Government at last arrested Jatin who was till then, surprisingly enough, continuing in his high post in the Bengal secretariat, directly under the personal Secretary to the Governor of Bengal. During the search in his room the police discovered one of his manuscripts, "The Scheme and Formation of the Vigilance Committee".

After four days of starvation in the lock-up and the most brutal torture, when no information could be forced out of Jatin, the police went to try their usual method with him—that of temptation: large purse, palatial home, kingly situation, finest wine, prettiest women .....

"Shut up!" thundered Jatindranath's voice with such a bang on the table that it cracked and collapsed and the Royd Street police lock-up shook with its vibrations.

Then he was sent first to the Presidency Jail, and afterwards to the Alipore Central Jail, as a convict under trial. His historic trial began as the *Howrah Conspiracy Case*. After fifteen long months of rigorous prison experience, Jatin was acquitted in April 1911, since the police failed to prove the case.

Still, Government at once dismissed the entire 10th Jat Regiment under the charge of responding to Jatin's seductions.

Released Jatin saw that Sri Aurobindo had already left for Pondicherry, in the thick of the commotion following the assassination of Samsul and foiling the Government's attempt to arrest Sri Aurobindo again on the ground of his familiarity with Jatin. Motilal Roy of Chandernagore says that Sri Aurobindo had left word with the revolutio-

naries to assist Jatin in his programme of insurrection.

Except for a few centres under powerful leaders like Swami Prajnananda, Hemendra Acharya, Purna Das, Motilal Roy, Sashibhushan Roy Chowdhury and Jatin Roy—the revolutionist organisation seemed to have been paralysed by the two great blows from Government.

But set-backs, however shocking, could not upset Jatin's plans. Through various secret sources, Jatin's conviction grew firmer than ever that Germany would be helpful to the Indian freedom fight during the World War, when the British hold on India would no doubt slacken on account of their pre-occupation with the "front". Therefore Jatin set about reviving the whole organisation by galvanising the centres.

H. W. Wilson, in his monumental history, *The Great War* (Vol. III, p 348) writes, "Bernhardi, the prophet of the New Germany, forecast: 'There is another danger which concerns England more closely, and directly threatens her vitality. This is due to the Nationalist movement in India and Egypt, to the growing power of Islam, to the agitation for independence in the great colonies .... The danger is imminent that Pan-Islamism will unite with the revolutionary elements of Bengal' ". According to Mr. Wilson, for years even before the partition of Bengal, German leaders had made a minute study of India. They knew all about the secret societies plotting against Britain.

Leaving the charge of the Calcutta centre in the hands of his able lieutenant, Atul Ghose, Jatin went to Jessore and, apparently, led a peaceful existence with his family and children, and became a very busy contractor to the district board and Government, running a prosperous business with its head-office at Jessore and two or three branch-offices here and there. But very few noticed that most of Jatin's employees were his own associates and disciples in the revolutionist movement. Under cover of his contractorship, he started moving from district to district on cycle or on his favourite horse, *Sundari*, at such a dizzy speed that often he was seen covering more than a hundred miles a day. Government could hardly suspect that Jatin's motive could be anything else than a serious desire to earn his livelihood and feed his family and children. And, as a proof of his bona fides, big bridges and new public roads were seen springing into existence under Jatin's creative hands, as had done mills and factories during the boycott days in 1905. It was all too late, however, when Government discovered what Jatin was really about.

BUSINESSMEN

In Calcutta and elsewhere too, Jatin's associates and disciples were all seen engrossed in business, but secretly continuing their real work. Amarendra Chatterjee and Ram Majumdar had opened a big cloth-shop, the *Shramajivi Samabaya* in Harrison Road. Hari Chakravarty had opened the *Harry and Sons* in Woodmund Street, to receive and supply orders. In College Square, Suresh Majumdar had started the *Gouranga Press* (from where, a few years later, journals like the *Ananda-bazar Patrika*, the *Hindusthan Standard* and the weekly *Desh* came out). Kaviraj Bejoy Roy opened his Ayurvedic dispensary in Bowbazar. Bejoy Chakravarty was sent to Chakradharpur (B. N. Rly.) to start another cloth-shop, and Saileshwar Bose to Balasore (Orissa) to open the *Universal Emporium*, dealing in cycles and watches. Similar shops were opened nearly everywhere in the country. They served as shelters and underground meeting-places for the revolutionists. Among other important shelters were the Shobhabazar home of Dr. Hemanta Chatterjee (Jatin's uncle), Dwarika Vidyabhusan's house at Mirzapur Lane, Dr. Nilratan Dhar's hostel (where Jatin would often spend his nights, and where brilliant scholars like Dr. Meghnad Saha, Jnan Ghose, Dr. Satyen Bose, Dr. Nilratan and Jibanratan Dhar first came in contact with Jatin).

On the occasion of the flood in Burdwan and Contai, in June 1913, revolutionists from all sides flocked there ostensibly for the relief-work. There, in a secret meeting, Jatin clearly stated his future plans in regard to an armed insurrection at the outbreak of the World War. All the parties assembled under Jatin's banner. The *Anushilan* of Dacca too promised their collaboration.

In August, 1914, by looting the *Roda Company* of Calcutta, Jatin's associates and disciples got hold of a good number of Mauser pistols (made in Germany, and well-known as very powerful arms), and distributed them to all the important centres of the organisation. Quite a few years before that, Jatin had thought of importing arms and ammunition from abroad and, accordingly, had sent out his emissaries (mostly as students) to Europe, America, and other parts of the world in order to arrange for foreign aids.

In the very early years of the century, Swami Niralamba (J. N. Banerjee) had gone to the Punjab and spread there Sri Aurobindo's revolutionary ideals. Freedom-loving Punjabis had at once welcomed these ideals, and men like Sardar Ajit Singh, Kishen Singh (father of the Martyr Bhagat Singh) and so many others embraced this new movement with all their ardour. It was this ardour that had kindled a flame in Lala Hardyal too, who, in 1911, carried these fire-seeds to San Francisco and, with the help of revolutionaries like Pandit Ramchandra, Barkatulla, Bhai Paramanand, Panduranga Khankhoje, Kashiram, and Sohan Singh Granthi, sowed them among patriotic Indians by founding the *Yugantar Ashram*. Soon after, he started publishing the historic journal *Gadhar* (which too means "Yugantar" or revolution) and had an immediate appeal to lovers of India all over the world. In no time, the powerful Gadhar Party came into being.

In the meantime, in London, Zurich and Berlin too Indians like Maratha, Paranjape, Suktankar, Dr. Dhiren Sarkar, Siddiki, Dr. Jnan Dasgupta, Soven, Biren Chattopadhyay (Sarojini Naidu's brother), Champakraman Pillai, Savarkar, Dhingra, Shyamji Krishnavarma, Madame Cama, and others had started organising secret societies to work for India's freedom. Among them too, there were a few of Jatin's emissaries. In course of time, Hardyal went to Berlin and met Biren Chattopadhyay who had already established an excellent relationship with the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Germans had definitely promised to help the Indian insurrection against the British Raj, in form of money, arms and ammunition. That the Kaiser himself was directly interested in the Indian freedom fight has been clearly stated in *The Great War* by H. W. Wilson: "About 1909, he (the Kaiser) opened relations with seditious Indians, and a bureau was established in Berlin to promote Indian plots ..... The Crown Prince followed faithfully in the footsteps of his father. During his visit to India persons in his suite were able to meet on the spot Indian sedition-mongers". (Vol. 10, p 387).

During the "Maniktala" years, Rashbehari Bose had occasions to become intimate with Jatin

and his doings. For some time, however, Bose dissociated himself from the revolutionary activities. But when, released from prison, Jatin once more invited Rashbehari to come and work for the imminent insurrection, he could not but join him. The way Jatin influenced Rashbehari is clearly shown by Dr. Jadugopal in his autobiography. He writes that in a secluded garden at Dakshineshwar, Jatin, Rashbehari and Amarendra Chatterjee were busy discussing the planned insurrection when, suddenly, Jatin looked straight into Bose's eyes and asked, "Fort William has to be captured. Possible ?" As though spell-bound, Bose immediately replied, "Yes. I shall do it". And he actually went and settled the whole matter with Genda Singh, the Sikh in-charge of the Fort, so that all the Indian soldiers agreed to participate in the revolution.

The first All-India direct action was to take place on February 21, 1915. But the plan fell through owing to Kirpal Singh's turning King's approver. Though a failure in India, this direct action was a unique success in Singapore where the entire 5th Light Infantry and the Malay States Guides (in all, a thousand soldiers) joined the insurrection, attacked the fort, and kept it under siege for seven long days. But getting no reinforcement from India, they had to surrender. "Probably the seed was sown by Indian agitators", writes H. W. Wilson, who returned from America at the beginning of the War and visited Singapore on their way. That the German intrigues in U.S.A. were responsible for the return of these dangerous conspirators to the East during the critical period of August, 1914, there can be little doubt". (*The Great War* Vol. 6, p. 159).

At this juncture, one of Jatin's emissaries, Satyen Sen, returned from America, via Japan where he had met Dr. Sun-Yat-Sen who showed a genuine interest in India's freedom struggle and promised active support. Along with Satyen, came two bright young revolutionaries, Pinglay and Kartar Singh (the latter was equipped with knowledge of aircraft-making), and four thousand members of the Gadhar Party. Twenty thousand more, as Satyen reported, were to join them soon, and German ships too, loaded with money, arms, and ammunition, were coming.

With the hope of collecting more money and arms, Rashbehari sailed for Japan in May 1915, while Jatin started preparing the organisation for another decisive action. Expecting the aids to come, he arranged for distributing the Gadhar members all over North India.

The 'Berlin Committee' of Indian revolution-

ists decided that, aided by the German Foreign Ministry, they would collect money, arms, and ammunition and send them to Count Bernstorff, the German Ambassador, and to Captain Von Papen, German Military Attache at Washington. Bernstorff and Papen together would arrange to send them to India by chartered ships. All the German Ambassadors and Consuls in the European and Asian countries had already received instructions to help the Indian revolutionists as best they could, thanks to which, Jatin's emissaries had always received most cordial welcome especially in Bangkok and Batavia.

In March, 1915, Jatin's emissary Jiten Lahiri returned from America with the news that the German ship *Maverick* was going to leave San Francisco on April 22, and that on its way, two more ships, *Annie Larcen* and *Henry S*, would join it, all loaded with valuable material for the Indian insurrection.

THE PLAN

One of the ships, it was decided, would stop either at Noakhali or Hatia, another at Raimangal (Sundarban). Bepin Ganguli and M. N. Roy were given the charge of taking delivery and, on the fixed date, marching into Calcutta where all the Indian soldiers would join the revolutionists, capture Fort William and all Calcutta, and hoist the Indian Tricolour. Phani Chakravarty and Bhupati Majumdar were in charge of dynamite and other explosives. The third and, if possible, a fourth ship would contain the most important consignment of materials, and anchor at Balasore (Orissa). Jatin himself took the responsibility of taking the delivery and proceeding towards Calcutta through Singbhum and Midnapore where, on his route, waiting revolutionaries would join him. Jatin would also destroy all means of communication between Bengal and Madras. Bhola Chatterjee and Satish Chakravarty were to destroy the Bengal-Nagpur and the East Indian railway lines. In response to this direct action in Eastern India, other centres all over India and the Asian countries would simultaneously join hands. The whole British Raj would be paralysed in India and, on top of it, troops of Indian revolutionaries would enter the mainland from outside. In India there were only twelve thousand British soldiers then and there was no possibility of bringing in fresh troops, since the British army could not be moved away from the frontier.

Aided by his brilliant associates, Jatin, the master-mind, had even chalked out a plan for the administration of free India. It was from the British rulers that he had the privilege to learn the secrets of administration, while he was holding a high post in the Bengal secretariat. Also, he had the prudence to forestall any possible entry of the Germans as new rulers.

At such a critical moment, towards the beginning of 1915, when the British Government had set a high price on Jatin's head, and issued his photographs in their circulars in order to help his identification and arrest, Jatin could often be seen in crowded streets. When one of his disciples protested against such recklessness, he smiled and replied, "If we should be hiding for safety all the time, why on earth did we venture upon this path ?"

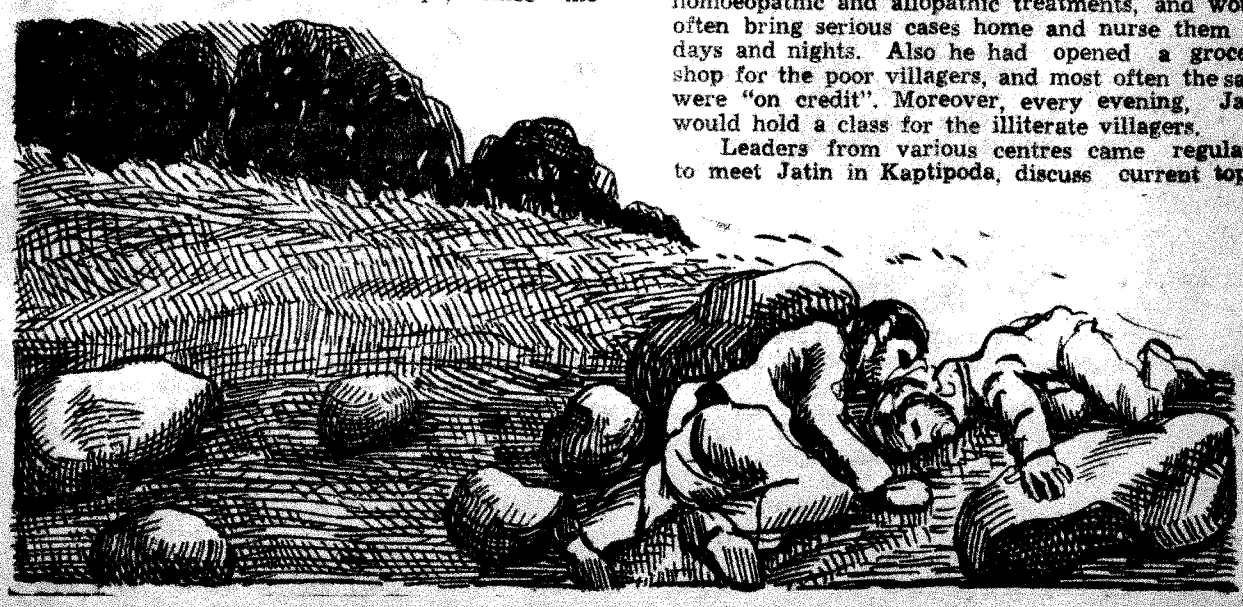
One day, while Jatin was in a secret meeting at a Calcutta centre, a shadow suddenly loomed up outside the room, aiming at which Chittapriya fired a shot. It was a spy, who lay prostrate and bleeding. Immediately Jatin ordered the meeting to disperse. But the spy did not die before he could name Jatin as responsible for his death.

As soon as news arrived that the ships were coming, Jatin decided to go to Balasore. Towards the end of March, 1915, while he was leaving for Bagnan on his way to Balasore, he was told that Mother Saradamani (the Holy Consort of Shri Ramakrishna) happened to be present at the Howrah Station. Jatin hastened to receive her blessings. In a closeted compartment he met her, took the dust of her feet, and exchanged a few words with her. When he left, someone asked the Mother, "What was the talk about?" She replied, a melancholy look in her eyes, "I saw him as a blazing fire!"

After leaving necessary instructions with Saileshwar at the *Universal Emporium* in Balasore town, Jatin and a few of his associates went to Kaptipoda, thirty miles inland, in the dense forests of Mayurbhanj, and waited for the ships.

Among the local people Jatin became very popular as *Sadhu-Baba*, and his dwelling came to be known as *Ashram*. Sadhu Baba became their idol in their weal and woe, joy and sorrow. Jatin was good at homoeopathic and allopathic treatments, and would often bring serious cases home and nurse them for days and nights. Also he had opened a grocer's shop for the poor villagers, and most often the sales were "on credit". Moreover, every evening, Jatin would hold a class for the illiterate villagers.

Leaders from various centres came regularly to meet Jatin in Kaptipoda, discuss current topics



with him, and take his instructions. In June, 1915, M. N. Roy returned to Kaptipoda after a month of tour of a few Asian countries, and after contacting the German Representative, Von Helfferich, at Batavia, on Jatin's behalf. As token of German collaboration and friendship, Roy dramatically placed a heap of sovereigns at Jatin's feet, and also a map of India with spots thereon, where the Germans indicated important revolutionary centres and other spots where the ships would anchor. Roy also reported that the German ships were already on their way. Jatin broke this piece of good news to his disciples and associates. Everybody eagerly looked forward to the arrival of the ships.

The Maverick had punctually left San Francisco. But by the time it neared Mexico—after an unusual delay due to its attempts to avoid the American sea customs—the *Annie Larcen* was captured by the Americans. Therefore the *Maverick* had to proceed all alone.

THE LEAK-OUT

It was the time when the Czech revolutionaries were hiding in America and attempting to rid their country of the Austro-Hungarian domination. The Czechs were apparently interested in the Indian insurrection, and had managed to become intimate with the Gadhar members. But when they came to know that the Indian revolutionary effort had advanced so far, they grew jealous and passed the information on to the French Intelligence Department, from where it promptly reached the British spies. As an emergent measure, under the *Defence of India Act*, the police started arresting Indians indiscriminately. The Central Intelligence Department girded up their loins to arrest Jatin. At the same time, British spy ships started following the *Maverick*. Desperate, it threw away all the important documents, arms, and ammunition into the Pacific, and was captured in Java.

The Singapore press-cuttings of this news were sent to Jatin. Without feeling the least depressed, he at once sent Phani Chakravarty and M. N. Roy to Batavia again, in August, 1915. From there, Roy and Chakravarty went to Sanghai, met the German Ambassador, and made arrangements for two more ships. In Sanghai, Chakravarty found Rashbehari waiting for them with plenty of money and material, some of which he had already despatched to the *Shramajivi* of Calcutta, through two young Chinese friends. Also he had sent another lot of arms, some important names and addresses, and valuable documents through Abani Mukherjee, a member of Jatin's party. But unfortunately, all three of them were arrested in Singapore. Seeing Chakravarty too under arrest, Rashbehari again fled to Japan.

On one of such stormy days, Jatin had a vision of Sri Krishna appearing before him. The sun was setting. The entire Kaptipoda forests seemed to have been touched by a meditative calm. Manindra Chakravarty of Kaptipoda happened to have gone out to see Jatin at that auspicious moment, and finding him in an indrawn state and tear-filled eyes Manindra quietly sat beside him. He has left a soul-stirring decription of Jatin's state: seeing him, Jatin suddenly clasped his hand and exclaimed, "Look, look there!" The touch was thrilling. Currents of lightning flashed through his limbs. But his eyes failed to see Sri Krishna. He has written, "Where shall I get such eyes ? .. In spite of Jatin's eagerness to make me see, how could a miserable person like me deserve to see Him ? But I was thrilled to witness Jatin altogether lost in ecstasy ... So many cares he had! Ever so many problems weighed heavy upon him! But he seemed to have forgotten everything ! .... He kept on sitting in that trance. We sat side by side, as though in another world, until it was dark .... Such was the trance of this great devotee ! Blessed be you, Jatin! Blessed be your name!"

THE EXPEDITION

Unable to trace Jatin's whereabouts, G. C. Denham (D.I.G., Intelligence Dept., of the Central Government), along with Sir Charles Tegart (Deputy Commissioner of Police), and L. N. Bird (Assistant Superintendent of Police) went to Balasore on September 4, 1915, pursuing a faint clue. On the 5th morning, while searching the *Universal Emporium*, a scrap of paper with the word 'Kaptipoda' written on it, fell into their hands. With a great deal of suspicion, they proceeded towards Kaptipoda, accompanied by R. G. Kilby (District Magistrate, Balasore), Sergeant Rutherford (Proof Dept., Chandipur) and E. C. Ryland (D.I.G., Bihar and Orissa), both with their contingents; also, at Tegart's request, a company of armed police from Balasore joined them.

They reached Kaptipoda on the evening of the 7th. Informed of their arrival, Jatin personally went to see and make sure that they were really his "friends", and made up his mind about what steps to take. Only Chittapriya and Manoranjan were in the 'Ashram' then. Returning there, Jatin explained the matter to them and asked them to get ready without delay. But Chittapriya and Manoranjan repeatedly requested Jatin, "Dada, don't bother any more about us. If you decide to go away all alone, who on earth can ever guess your whereabouts? If you kindly care to save yourself now, any number of insurrections can be hatched and organised at your bidding. Don't worry about anything else, Dada!" But, without uttering a single word, Jatin went to his host, Manindra, informed him of the coming of the police, and moved fast towards Taldihi, twelve miles away, where two more of his disciples, Jyotish and Niren, were waiting. When they too entreated him again to escape, Jatin replied, "I had an impression that by this time you at least knew your Dada pretty well. But is this the proof of it? To save his own life from danger, could that be the leader's first concern?"

Chitta, Niren, Manoranjan, and Jyotish—four young hero warriors, silent and resolute—moved forward, following in the footsteps of their revered leader, their loving brother and beloved *guru* who, according to Amarendra Chatterjee, "can be compared with Napoleon alone, as a warrior and a general. Had he been born in a free, Western country, he would have left an immortal name in the history of mankind." Or, in Atul Ghose's words, "A consummate military leader and devoted lover of the country like Shivaji and a sea of compassion like Chaitanya: these two together would make a Jatindranath."

On the night of the 8th, Jatin returned to Manindra's house. It was drizzling, and the sky was thick with clouds. All day long, the police had searched the entire area minutely, tortured Manindra, trying to squeeze information out of him, and kept a strict watch all around after sunset. "In spite of all these obstacles, how could Jatin come to me? It was really a puzzle!" Manindra wrote later. He briefly told Jatin about the day's experience and warned him to be more cautious, since the police had promised to the public a prize worth a few

thousand rupees, if anybody could capture Jatin or his followers. And then Manindra added, "Still there is time. If you go away in the direction of the Meghasani range across the dense forest, you'll very soon be out of danger. Please don't delay, for the country's sake at least."

"NO!" replied Jatin in a firm tone, "It is no more an occasion to keep in hiding and save our little life. The crucial moment calls for a show-down!" Then, taking some money from Manindra (out of their funds), and a rifle, Jatin went away to join his four disciples.

Early next morning, Jatin and his party reached the bank of the river Bura-Balam, near Balasore town. But no ferry agreed to take them across, since it was raining. All of a sudden, one of the boatmen shouted, "Well, these must be the dacoits. Hurry up! you'll get thousands of rupees: Dacoits! Dacoits!"

At once a terrible row shook the banks of the Bura-Balam with excitement. In vain did the revolutionaries try to convince the villagers that they were not dacoits. But, when the crowd desperately rushed to catch them, Manoranjan fired blank shots to keep them off. The crowd retreated. But, as Jatin and his party swiftly ran past village after village, the pursuers increased in number. When they were near the village Kamtana, two daring villagers pounced upon Jatin, but only to be hurled off in a split second. They, however, managed to stand up with difficulty, and urged others to run after the fugitives. None dared; and yet none gave up the chase.

After a while, when some fellows mustered courage and tried to seize the revolutionaries, Manoranjan killed one of them and injured another. At last the mob, demoralised, shrank back, and went to inform the police. Taking advantage of the position, Jatin and his party reached the Mayurbhanj Road, and moved fast in search of a vantage-point.

For a few whole days, the five heroes walked without food and any kind of rest, not to speak of sleep. Jatin realised that this could not continue for long. Something had to be given to the boys. On their way, when they found a village sweets shop, they bought a rupee-worth of muri and having no change on them, they gave the shopkeeper a ten-rupee note, and left the place.

"Mukherjee, tell me what can I do for you?"

THE ENCOUNTER

It occurred to the shopkeeper that probably these were the much-spoken-of dacoits. Again a crowd gathered. Again the chase began. By the time they reached Sahupara, they saw a company of police rushing towards them. Encouraged by the sight, the crowd grew so excited that the revolutionists had to fire blank shots again in order to scare them away. Then they jumped into the river, swam across, sped through a big paddy field, and entered a forest at the end of the village Chasakhand. Niren was ill. So Jatin selected a hillock skirted by a tank on one side and surrounded by ant-hills, climbed it up with his disciples, and asked them to be ready with their Mauser pistols and long-range rifles, and wait for his orders to fire.

Through his binocular, Chittapriya saw the British army advancing rapidly towards them in the manner of a pincer movement, on one side of which was Major Freath (Superintendent, Defence Dept.), while on the other, were Sergeant Rutherford, Sir Charles Tegart, Bird, Ryland, Denham, Khudabox, and Khasnobis (a CID Inspector).

Suddenly Manoranjan noticed a man waving a piece of white cloth from the top of a tree. The revolutionists understood the signal and shot him down. In the meantime, realising where the fugitives were, the police opened fire as they charged towards the hillock. But there was no response from the hillock.

Jatin, the strategist that he was, had deluded his enemies into thinking that his party had no long-range fire arms, and so drew them well within his firing-range. When the soldiers were about to climb the hillock, he riddled them with a volley of bullets. The firing continued from behind the termite-hill, decimating the enemy ranks, till the struggling survivors were forced to retreat. The bewildered officers sharply ordered the soldiers to lie prone. But the relentless rain of bullets gave them no respite. The regiment tried hard to advance, crawling up the muddy slopes. The British officials, struck by awe and admiration for Jatin's military tact could find no way to save their men who were falling by the dozen.

After three hours' constant firing Jyotish murmured, "Dada, the bullets are running short!" Firing with both hands equally steady, Jatin gave them the last bag of bullets. But its key could not be found, and the leather was so thick that while they tried every possible means to open it, a sepoy had already climbed a tree and fired from there. The shot whizzed past Chittapriya's head. Next moment, when the brave young hero lifted his head, a second shot hit him dead!

Jatin had received a bullet wound in his left thumb; yet he continued firing with his right hand. Seeing Chitta's tragic end, he drew the body on his lap. The stock of bullets almost over, and Chitta dead, the four heroes desperately fired

(Continued on Page 76)

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA CENTENARY

(A WORLD-WIDE COMMITTEE)

Inauguration performed by **DR. S. RADHAKRISHNAN,** *President of India on the 20th January, 1963.*

(Concluding Functions :)

- A Procession .. .. 15th Dec. '63
- A Students' Conference .. from 16th to 18th Dec. '63
- An Exhibition for one month from 20th Dec. '63
- An all India Music Conference from 23rd to 25th Dec. '63
- An all India Womens' Conference from 25th to 28th Dec. '63
- A Parliament of Religions for one week from 30th Dec. '63 (Delegates from all parts of the world are expected to participate.)

Venue : Park Circus Maidan, Calcutta

CENTENARY PUBLICATIONS :

Chhotoder Vivekananda	.50 N.P.
Swami Vivekananda	1.00 „
Divya Geeti (101 songs with intonations)	8.00 „
Vivekananda Lila Geeti	1.00 „
Yugacharya Vivekananda (in the Press)	2.50 „
Shishuder Vivekananda Pictorial (in Press)	.50 „
Swami Vivekananda Memorial Volume (in Press)	30.00 „
Pictorial Album .. (in Press)	—

- **Centenary Badges :** With Swamiji's sayings & Pictures .25 nP., 37 nP., .50 nP.
- **Centenary Coupons :** With Swamiji's pictures and sayings are available in all leading Banks of India Rs. 5/-, Rs. 3/-, & Re. 1/-
- **Patronship Fee :** Rs. 500/- : **Membership Fee :** Rs. 20/-
  For any two members of the same family Rs 30/-
  For students and persons having monthly income of less than Rs. 250 — 10/-
- **Contributions :** Big or small are exempt from Income Tax and will be thankfully accepted & acknowledged.

FOR FURTHER DETAILS ENQUIRE OF :

City Office : Swami Vivekananda Centenary **Phone : 24-4548**
163, Lower Circular Road, Calcutta - 14

BENGAL CHEMICAL'S

GOLDEN

AMLA

hair oil

FOR SILKEN-SOFT HAIR

Its superb quality and unique fragrance makes it unrivalled as a Hair beautifier.

BENGAL CHEMICAL

CALCUTTA • BOMBAY • KANPUR

REPRIEVE

By Dr. **NABAGOPAL DAS**

As the train steamed out of the Howrah station, Pranab took out Ila's letter from his pocket.

His eyebrows puckered with annoyance as he read it once more. "It is nearly four weeks since you last came here. I know this is the busy season in your office, but Dipu refuses to comprehend. He is all the time crying for you and I am at the end of my tether. Do please come this week-end so that Dipu may feel reassured. As for me, well, I am not in the best of health these days, and you know the reason. By the way, do bring a Ludo set for Dipu ; no good set is available in this god-forsaken place !"

It was this last sentence which was now disturbing his equanimity. He had clearly forgotten to buy the set ! It was not entirely his fault, though. On his way to the station, he had to drop in at Queenie's place, and everything got upset there.

His eyes lit up as he thought of Queenie. He couldn't recall what her real name was (did she have one ?), but, to him, she was, and would always remain, the queen of his heart.

Poor Queenie ! As on other Saturdays, she was looking forward to spending this Saturday also in Pranab's company. It was a great disappointment to her when he announced that he was going out of Calcutta for the week-end on urgent business of his firm. How could he leave her abruptly and rush to the New Market to buy a Ludo set for Dipu ? He had to spend some time with her—to help her wipe away her tears. At the station, however, he had bought a box of toffee : this should do for Dipu for the present.

He stole a glance at the only other passenger in the first class compartment in which he was travelling. The innocent-looking elderly gentleman was immersed in a monthly magazine : he did not appear to be the sort of person who would go on chattering and jabbering until sometimes you felt like shrieking. Pranab could weave his own dreams without being interrupted.

His thoughts again went back to Queenie. A really wonderful girl—unlike any he had met so far ; full of the joy of life, and yet blissfully unaware of their difference in age. Yes, Pranab was at least fifteen years older than she, but Queenie did not seem to care. And she had told him on at least two occasions (or was it three ?) that she felt so exhilaratingly close to him, that she was never happy in the company of young, frivolous men.

But I am not old, argued Pranab with himself. Thirty-six—that is just the age when one can regard people with greater sympathy, when one can project one's personality into (and so fully comprehend) the object one is associating with. And, oh, it is so refreshing to spend even a few hours with a lively young girl of twenty-one—particularly when that girl accepts you without question, almost with a deep sense of fulfilment.

It all happened so swiftly and suddenly. When he first met Queenie at a party, he had never imagined that he would get emotionally involved in this fashion. He had felt sorry for this girl who had to support her bedridden mother, almost a permanent invalid, with whatever she could earn. By current standards, she was well paid by the European firm in which she worked. She, however, had to spend quite a sizeable portion of her salary on her clothes and accessories and, with the recurring drain on her purse on account of her mother's illness, it was hard going for her. But she managed everything so neatly that Pranab was full of admiration for her. After he had known her for a few

night, he had offered to help, but she politely refused. Her refusal was, however, so graceful that it almost lit up his face.

Sometimes he wondered whether Queenie had not been drawn towards him on account of his social position, the job he held and his money. Once he had dropped her a hint to this effect, and, by God, he could never forget the tears that it brought forth. And she would never let him remind her that he was thirty-six—fifteen years older than herself. She had made him take an oath that he would not even mention his age so long as he was with her.

No, there was no room for doubting Queenie's love for him. How very much she looked forward to the few minutes talk she had with him every day over the telephone. At first she used to phone him up during the lunch interval when her boss was away, but Pranab was not always available then. Subsequently, it was arranged that she would give him a ring at tea time, but even that was not smooth sailing always. So Pranab had to devise a different routine. Every evening he would pick up Queenie from her office and together they would come to the flat where she stayed with her mother.

The routine was something like this. Pranab went to Queenie's mother first, enquired how she was feeling and, after exchanging a few words, came to the small living room. Meanwhile, Queenie got out of her office sari, had a wash and put on the kettle on the gas ring. When the tea was ready, she took it on a tray to her mother first. She then came back to Pranab and had tea with him. As the minutes ticked away and dusk fell, she would often forget to switch on the light. When the clock struck eight, both of them would wake up as it were and, mumbling an apology and an 'until-we-meet again', Pranab would hasten down the stairs to his car.

Queenie had never asked him whether he was married nor had he thought it necessary to bring up the subject. His wife Ila was away in Bolpur with their son Dipu: she had gone to stay with her parents, particularly as, on the eve of the arrival of a second child, her health was none too good. Pranab, however, had no difficulty in keeping company with Queenie whenever he wanted. Complication arose, however, during the week-ends when Pranab was expected to pay his scheduled visit to Bolpur. At first he excused himself to Queenie saying that he had urgent business out of town. But

She would often forget to switch on the light....

when she pouted her lips and seemed to miss him terribly (with a shock he realised that he missed her too), he decided to give Bolpur the go-by. He wrote to Ila that, as it was the end of the financial year, he was required to work even during the week-ends, and so, much as he regretted it, he would not be able to come to Bolpur for a couple of weeks. And now this had been stretched to nearly a month and hence this complaining letter from Ila. He was not looking forward to the impending meeting with Ila. Why couldn't she leave him alone even for a month? Doesn't every man have a right to his own life, to his own particular destiny? Must he be constantly reminded of his so-called duties and obligations?

Perhaps he was becoming a little too harsh to Ila. After all, they had been married for ten long years, she had borne him a son (his heart softened as he thought of young Dipu) and another was on the way. She did have *some* rights as his wife and as the mother of his children, didn't she? Oh, hell, thought Pranab, why must life be so complicated?

The sight of Ila anxiously watching him get down from the rickshaw, did not particularly gladden his heart. He replied briefly to her greeting and asked: "Where is Dipu?"

—Dipu has got a touch of fever since this morning. He is in bed.

Pranab followed Ila into the inner apartments. He first went to his parents-in-law, asked them how they were and then came to the room where Dipu was anxiously awaiting the arrival of his father.

As soon as he saw Pranab, he sat up on his bed and asked: "Have you brought the Ludo set, daddy?"

Pranab stammered in reply: "I forgot all about it, Dipu. I have got a nice box of toffee for you, though."

But Dipu was not at all pleased to have the box of toffee.

Pranab continued: "I shall bring the Ludo set the next time I come".

Dipu remarked: "That means not until another month!"

Pranab was stung to the quick by this remark of Dipu's. He said: "No, no, it won't be another month—I shall bring it next week."

Dipu did not feel convinced, but was too tired to argue. He lay down on his back and closed his eyes.

Just before dinner, Ila asked Pranab: "Is the work very heavy these days?"

With a wry face, Pranab replied: "Oh, it is hell! The new Managing Director wants everything to be done in record time and so we all are being made to work like donkeys!"

—You do look tired. Why don't you take a few days' leave and come over to Bolpur for a little change and rest?

—Impossible! My boss would not even hear of it, certainly not until the annual general meeting is over!

Ila could not suppress a sigh. That meant that her husband would not be near her when the new one arrives. She looked pale and dejected.

Pranab felt a slight irritation travelling through his nerves. Why must Ila make all kinds of impossible demands? And look at her! She was meeting her husband after a month and yet she had taken no pains to groom herself. Presenting herself as a tragic figure, she sought to invoke his pity, his sympathy. This was what Pranab hated most—this kind of subterfuge. Why couldn't Ila be more direct and straightforward?

Ila continued: "Even conceding that you are unable to come every week-end to Bolpur, can't

you at least write regularly? Poor Dipu so looks forward to his daddy's letters!"

Pranab protested: "But I have been writing to you twice a week. Isn't that enough? And what can I write? That I am simply choked with files and statements, that, even so, I am doing well? One gets tired of writing such hackneyed things."

"But even two years back you used to write every day," Ila said feebly.

Now, this is nothing short of blackmail, thought Pranab. Why must he write everyday when there was nothing special to say? After all, they had been married ten long years. In such a situation, one didn't write to his wife even once a week. By comparison, he had been almost an angel—he had been writing at least twice a week.

He, however, did not wish to enter into an argument with Ila. He simply said: "Let us go and have our dinner."

Throughout the following day (Sunday), he avoided Ila as much as possible. He talked for a while with his father-in-law and devoted a good bit of his time to Dipu who was already feeling better. Towards the evening, he went out for a long stroll: he could not stand the close atmosphere of the house any longer.

By the time he returned home, it was well past eight. He was to catch the first train to Howrah in the morning. So he had an early dinner and retired to his room.

As Ila came to share his bed, she asked: "Don't you love me any more?"

Pranab almost sat up.

—Why do you ask this question?

—You know why. You have come after a month, but not one kind word, not one word of affection has slipped out of your lips! Have I ceased to be your wife, the mother of your children?

Ila was on the verge of tears.

—Now, now, please try to understand, Ila.... Pranab pleaded....Believe me, I have been up to my neck in work and too tired to think of anything else. I am really sorry if you have found me a little cold, but I tell you I am as fond of you as ever.

Pranab put out his hand over Ila and gave her a pat of reassurance. In a few minutes, Ila was fast asleep.

Sleep, however, seemed to have deserted Pranab. As he looked at Ila lying by his side, in calm content, deep pity arose inside him. He wondered if he should not cut off all connection with Queenie.

But the very thought of saying good-bye to Queenie made him smart with pain. How could he be so utterly selfish when the poor girl depended so much on him? Would it not simply break her heart?

And yet facts must be faced one day. Sooner or later, Queenie would come to know about his wife and children. With this knowledge, would she love him still? Certainly not!

For hours Pranab tossed about in bed, but could come to no final decision.

He was woken from sleep by Ila.

—Do get up. It is past six already—time for you to start for the station.

Pranab got up in haste, quickly brushed his teeth and collected his week-end suitcase.

—I have already called a rickshaw to take you to the station.

"Thank you, thank you so much, Ila," stammered Pranab.

Dipu came up rubbing his sleep-laden eyes. He said, "Please don't forget to bring the Ludo set next Saturday."

Ila asked: "You are coming on Saturday, aren't you?"

Pranab had no time to make a reply to either of them. He hurriedly got into the rickshaw and asked the puller to run as fast as he could.

That same elderly gentleman was in the compartment again. As Pranab got in, he took his eyes from the magazine and nodded to him in recogni-

(Continued on next page)

Pranab had no time to make a reply to either of them.

HEROISM OF BAGHA JATIN

(Continued from Page 71)

away, with all their might. In a quick succession, Jatin received a few bullets in the abdomen and armpit. Hot blood gushed out and streamed down on the soil of Chasakhand, the blood that sanctified the spot into a centre of pilgrimage for generations to come.

Niren, Jyotish, and Manoranjan too were badly injured. But, unable to bear their beloved Guru's fatal wounds, they quickly tore their *dhotis* into shreds and sought to give him some first aid. Looking at them, Jatin said, "I am leaving you three behind. Before you die tell the people of our country that we were never dacoits. Let them know about our unfulfilled mission, so that posterity may take it up!"

In the meantime, British officers and soldiers gathered around and captured them! Hats off before Jatindranath, the officers bowed in respect, and arranged to remove him immediately to the Government Hospital at Balasore.

Before the operation, Jatin said by way of a dying declaration, "I alone am responsible for all that has been done till now. My associates are mere boys and they are innocent, mere tools in my hands. . . . . Please see that they are acquitted."

The operation was successful. But on the morning of September 10, 1915, while Mr. Kilby was busy nursing Jatin with a brotherly care, Jatin tore off all his stitches and bandages. And again blood gushed out. Jatin smiled and exclaimed, "So much blood left still? . . . . Fortunately, every drop of it has been shed in the worship of the Mother!".....

Jatin's elder sister Vinodebala had once written to him, "Jati, take care that we may never have to hear of the lion being caged."

No! stone-walls could not make a prison for him, nor iron bars a cage. He smiled at all the care the alien Government were taking to keep him alive.

Charles Tegart, who had known Jatin for years, eagerly came to him and asked with all his sincerity, "Mukherjee, tell me, what can I do for you?" With a beaming smile Jatin replied, "Thanks, Charles. All's over. Good bye!"

And he passed away.

Such love for the country, such a great sacrifice moved the British officers so much that, with tearful eyes, they stood round Jatin's bed. Sir Charles Tegart later said, "I have high regard for him. I have met the bravest Indian. But I had to perform my duty."

The glorious death Jatin died at the end of a glorious life of 35 years, made all the lovers of freedom weep for him. Men like Deshabandhu C. R. Das and Rabindranath Tagore (who knew Jatindranath personally) joined in the country's silent homage to the memory of this invincible harbinger of national freedom and glory. Poets and bards down the decades sang of the deeds of Jatindranath Mukherjee; and inspired patriots like Bhagat Singh of the Punjab, Suryya Sen of Chittagong, and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose followed the trail he had blazed, and carried on the torch of Revolution right on to the portals of our Independence.

REPRIEVE

(Continued from previous page)

tion. For some inexplicable reason, Pranab blushed to the roots of his hair.

Throughout the journey, Pranab made no attempt to strike up a conversation with his fellow passenger. He remained immersed in his thoughts —about Ila, Queenie and himself. He had made up his mind: he would not see Queenie at all—he would speak to her over the telephone and say good-bye to her.

But his determination slackened as soon as he entered his familiar office. And when the expected phone call from Queenie came in the afternoon, he readily agreed to pick her up from her office as usual.

The atmosphere in the flat was certainly soothing to Pranab's jaded nerves. What exhilarated him most was Queenie's obvious pleasure in his company. She behaved as if she had met him after a long separation.

Playfully, she said: "I have found out where you were during the week-end."

Pranab's heart started thumping against his chest.

—I met Mr. Roy of your office on Saturday evening. He told me that you had gone to Bolpur. Then I saw in the Sunday papers yesterday that they were having the new year *mela* there. At once I knew that you had gone to see the *mela*. I am very annoyed, though—for your not having even offered to take me with you!

Pranab breathed a sigh of relief. It had been a narrow shave, indeed!

But shouldn't he avail himself of the opportunity to make a clean breast of things? Pranab was half inclined to go right ahead.

He said: "You are right, Queenie. I did go to Bolpur, but not to see the *mela*....."

Queenie nestled against him and said: "I know, I know. A busy man like you would never make a trip all that way to Bolpur just to see a *mela*: of course, you combined business with pleasure. And that is why I have forgiven you this time."

Reflectively, she added, "Can't you ever get away from work? I warn you, you must give the whole of the next week-end to me—I shall simply not stand any excuse!

As if to seal the arrangement, she brought her lips closer to his.

Is it humanly possible to make a confession in such a situation? Pranab stopped deliberating and gave himself up to Queenie's embrace.

No, he would not say anything to Queenie, certainly not today. Let events take their own course. He would much rather have his sweet reprieve than rudely tear asunder the veil of the future and step into the harsh world outside.

The Golden Phantom

By DEBESH DAS

"FOOLISH girls keep diaries, clever ones don't."

I immediately turned sideways to notice who made this bright statement. You too would have done the same.

But it is not possible to glance sideways for long. This is not done. In England the conventions amount to tyranny. This very moment I keenly missed the element of individual freedom we enjoy in India.

Why should I not be able to cast a longish glance towards the glamour girl sitting at the next table? Anyhow, I was all attention.

Her companion, I guessed, was on the right side of forty. I have been noticing him for the last few days occupying the table next to me in the banquet room of the hotel. On his very first appearance here he had broadcast a bland genial smile towards all and sundry in the hall. He alone knew what percentage of that smile was intended for me. But the pleasant old waiter who looked after my table credited the whole of it to my ledger.

After collecting his tips from the next table Joe came over to mine. While discreetly arranging jam and croissant for my coffee he said, "Sir, did you notice his moustache?"

"Noticed indeed! A lot of planning must have gone into this cultivation on his lip."

"You are right, sir. Your description is as typically Indian as his moustache is typically American in its forward look. Seems to fly forward like the latest model Cadillac."

A very nice metaphor indeed. Hotels in Mayfair have a reputation for the frozen attitude of their formal waiters. Nothing but heavy tips would melt it. But Joe here was oozing with admiration for this mustachioed John Bull.

I am a foreigner not used to talking in measured phrases and with cold intonations. Every Saturday I leave a decent tip by the cup of my morning coffee on the breakfast table. So the famous Joe of Mayfair has a special fondness for me but my moustached neighbour has won his heart at the very sight. Probably even without tipping.

Joe said, "Sir, have you noticed his suit? It must have been stitched by the best of the Saville Row tailors. It fits him like a pair of gloves. Or like the skin of a snake as you may describe it in India.

Yes, your description is admirable indeed!

I started wondering why Joe brought in the question of a snake's sheath. Was it because India is supposed to be a land of snakes, mendicants and Maharajas?

The waiter was bubbling with enthusiasm and remarked, "Not only that, Sir. He is so full of life. I'm sure he goes out riding every day in the Rotten Row.

The Rotten Row is the famous riding spot in Hyde Park. I was wondering whether next week I should increase Joe's tips or reduce them.

Next morning Joe again perched near my table as soon as the neighbouring table fell vacant. He

brought his mouth near my ears while trying to polish the spoon hard. He whispered, "Sir, you don't come in here either for dinner or supper. That's why you don't know. But last night I got all the dope about the Colonel."

A hard day's work lay in front. These few minutes I could take easy. So let me hear his story.

Joe's eyes almost closed in admiration as he said, "The Colonel had earned a military cross during the war. A real combatant. Not only brave but very rich also."

I commented, "Sure! Why else would he come to this hotel? After all he isn't staying here on Government account but on his own. . . . . ."

Joe cut me short.

"No, no, the Colonel's also staying here on Government account. Last evening, while he was mixing soda with his whisky he whispered a few words while it was bubbling over. But I heard them. He operated in the secret service. Has a top secret assignment. That's why he is putting up here for a few days and not in the hotel run by his own Company."

I now got up. I had to attend a conference in time.

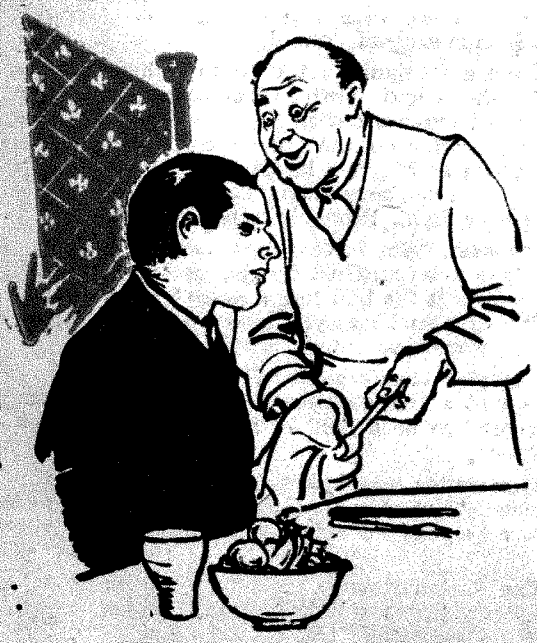
Next day I saw this lady coming to the breakfast table arm in arm with the Colonel. At first I didn't pay much attention. But her smart comments came to my ears. "Foolish girls keep diaries but clever ones don't." After that, how could I be inattentive to her?

I was all ears.

The Colonel was telling her, "Even then, darling, as you are now my Private Secretary and are going to be my wife you have to keep a diary. Oh, the number of engagements, the races, the boat race, the fashion parade, the hunts. You have to go to all these. If you don't note them in a diary you might miss some."

The girl replied, "You bet I won't miss anything when I am no longer a miss."

"Even then you have to note down things. Just see, you are in love with your hats. In one week you have bought no less than five hats from the same shop but not one of them fits you well. I mean none of them has returned your love."



"I got all the dope about the colonel."

"But you have. That's all I want."

"You are right, darling. In the Ascot races I meet so many ladies and countesses near the royal box. I don't make a mistake about them. But the first mistake I made was about you."

"Even then, darling, as you are going to be my wife you have to keep a diary."

"Amazing! I am a very ordinary girl."

"No, you don't know how extraordinary you are. The first evening I met you your conversation was stunning. I had never come across a sophisticated girl like you. The next day on my way to your flat I went to a florist for a bouquet. He picked out two, one for a blonde and the other for a brunette."

"And what did you say?"

"I was not sure what the colour of your hair would be that evening. I bought both."

"No, no. You're just kidding me. When did I become so clever? Of course, I have in stock a few catchy expressions and phrases. But that's merely for table talk."

"To me and to all connoisseurs you are extraordinary. That's why I want to marry you quick. Before other connoisseurs discover you."

"But where's the hurry, darling? I have agreed to all that you want. I have even come to stay with you in this hotel. But you mustn't spend like this after marriage. I don't like wasting money.

"Don't you worry, darling? Only the expenditure is a waste which isn't useful to your wife or sweetheart."

I could hardly resist the temptation to steal another glance towards the girl who was thus stumped by such protestations of love.

Next day Joe again came up to my table. He had some hot news to whisper. The Colonel and his girl had been out on a driving spree yesterday. A brand new car of champagne colour awaits their pleasure twenty-four hours. Its polish is as shiny as her beauty. They are going to wed very soon. To-night one of the well-known jewellers of London was coming to have supper with them. The menu ordered by the Colonel would be a matter of envy for even a Maharaja of my country. Would I care to go through the menu?

"No. It doesn't interest me in the least."

In the meantime, the Colonel occupied his chair with such a benign smile that it was not possible

to continue the narration of their story. Eavesdropping might be more rewarding. I kept my ears pricked.

The girl was saying, "Yes, darling. It was great fun indeed. The entire day seemed to be on the wheels. And how fast you drive. Only one thing I didn't care for much."

"Which one. My moustache waving with the breeze?"

"Good Heavens! Your moustache is the right expression of your personality. It goes well with your big business. The only thing I didn't like were the curious looks of the sentries when we were passing that big jail. Why did they wave towards you?"

"Oh, only this much! You know, I often go there for welfare work. You know I like to reduce the burden of the people afflicted."

"I hope, darling, you won't consider me a burden."

"You? Never, never, dearie Other girls are attracted towards me for what I possess, not for me. But you are not that type. We two are meant for each other. I have got nobody to call my own; nor have you."

"Only that I shall become yours. It's said that the mother-in-law is the referee in the fight between a wife and her husband. The M-i-L naturally sides only with one party. We won't have any such handicap. No relations to cast their shadows on us."

"That's why I am telling you. Probably a very big jeweller is coming to dine with us to-night. He is a connoisseur of both jewels and beauty. Last night I told you stories about a lot of historic jewels known all over the world. Don't forget to garnish your conversation with them now and then. For instance, the Kohinoor, the Cuilinan and other diamonds."

"But why?"

"You know these big brass are rather high-brow. But you must impress them that you know all about the best of their wares. I am going to buy jewellery worth so much from him and he must understand that you appreciate their value. Of course, your value cannot be judged in terms of diamonds and rubies, my dear."

Putting the brooch in his pocket, the colonel held the lady's arm tenderly.....

"Oh dear, both your glamour and flattery are equally irresistible."

I fully agreed with the lady. I had no doubt the Colonel would beat hollow all other men in the smart set.

I was in a hurry for two mornings and finished my breakfast in my suite. I didn't know how far this drama had progressed. As I was going to undress at night there was a knock at the door.

Joe looked both sad and excited. Something dreadful has come to light. The moustache of the Colonel was not genuine. Joe was speaking in riddles. I asked him to cough it out straight.

The Colonel's private party last night was stunning. Champagne and chicken were served in the most exclusive fashion. A statuette of a fairy was set on the middle of the table for three with a fountain of golden light streaming out of her lips. They had their supper in mellow light and the dinner for three ran up to nearly fifty pounds. The waiters got a cash tip of five pounds while other diners looked on.

Next morning the Colonel and the young lady went to the jeweller's shop and made a special selection of jewellery worth fifteen thousand pounds. Ultimately jewellery worth twenty thousand was purchased. But the Colonel would take delivery of the stuff in the hotel only after the cheque had been cashed by the jeweller.

But there was a select lunch party at the Dorchester and could the lady put on the diamond brooch for the party? The cheque could be cashed in a matter of hours and the brooch was valued at only about one thousand pounds. One thousand only out of a lot worth twenty thousand.

Now everything depended on the jeweller's chivalry. A business-man has hardly an opportunity to show such chivalry. Besides, the golden hangover of last night's champagne was still there. Putting the brooch in his pocket the Colonel held the lady's arm tenderly and put her in the swanky car. Back in the hotel she was dressing up cheerfully. The Colonel would himself put the brooch on her when she was dressed.

In an hour's time the jeweller came running to the hotel and stormed at her door. In his hand was no casket of jewellery but only a cheque. A cheque dishonoured at the bank.

A few minutes later somebody called from the motor car people. Such an expensive car and its hire for the second week had not yet been paid. As things got doubtful, the hotel bill also was presented to her. A bill for both of them. Everybody knew that she was due to get married to him.

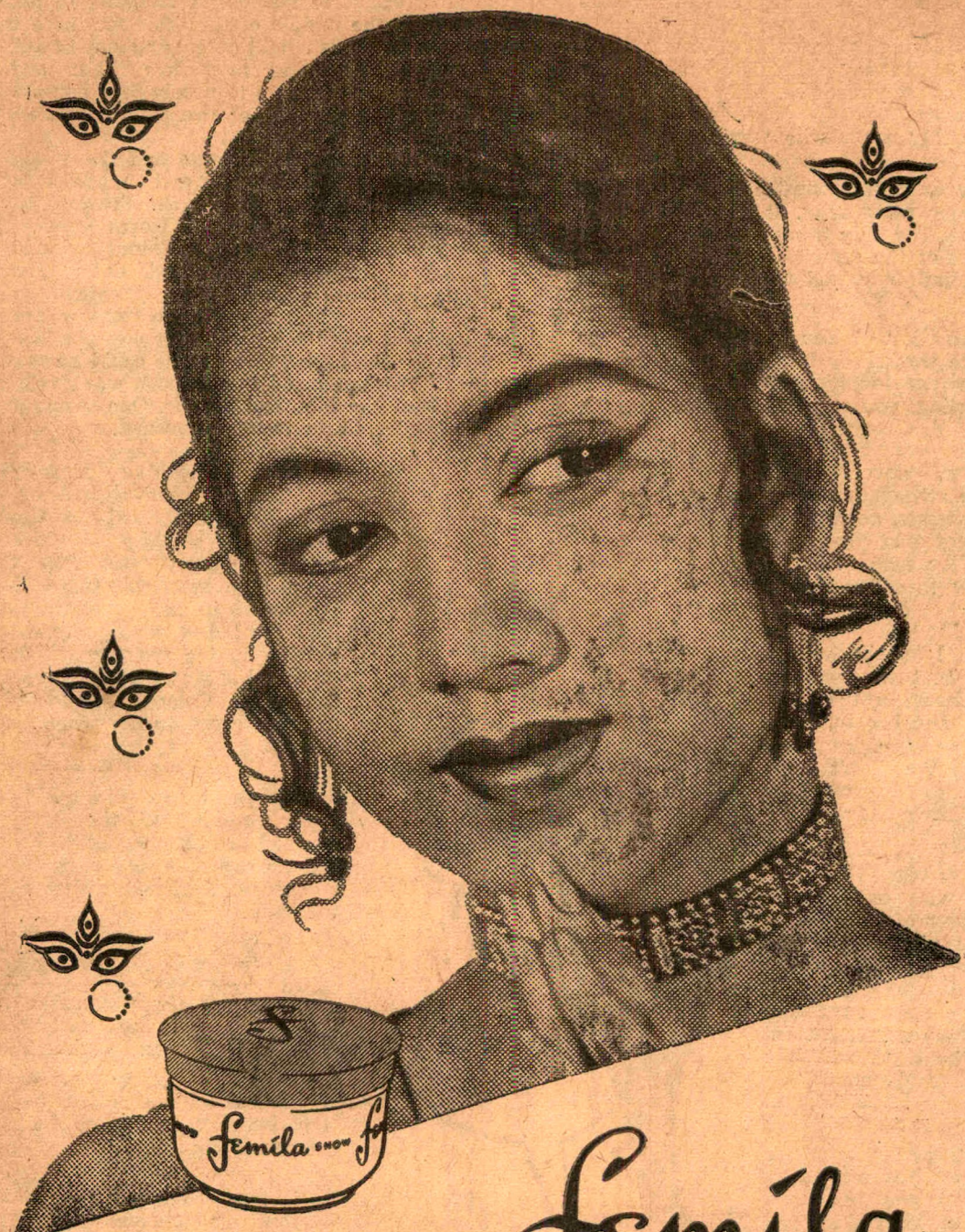
I was completely taken aback at this development. Of course, I thanked Joe for having taken the trouble to tell me such an interesting story so late at night. I even thought that it would look nice if this week's tip were made a little bigger.

But Joe didn't move away and kept standing. Probably he had got something more up in his sleeves.

Ultimately he coughed a little and said very plaintively, "Sir, can I say something?"

I immediately became cautious. The sentries at the jail had waved at the Colonel. He might be one of the jail birds. The way he had led this girl up the garden he was a clever man indeed. Why was Joe asking for permission to say something while telling me story of such a scoundrel? Probably

(Continued on Page 96)



Puja's Best... femila SNOW

A G. D. PRODUCT

Justice

By
SYAMAPADA CHATTERJI

IN an interior village in West Bengal Harihar lived peacefully with his small family. He had a few acres of land which he cultivated with great care, and was satisfied with what he earned by hard labour. He had a native sense of justice, and it was his own. He did not meddle in others' affairs nor did he like that others should poke their noses in his.

But the world is not always what one likes it to be. While Harihar loved peace there were others whose love lay elsewhere. Anybody else's peace may sometimes become their eye-sore.

Banamali was Harihar's cousin. He was junior to him by five years. The scarcity of food and other necessaries of life during the last decade opened the gate of fortune to some people, and Banamali was one of them. He had earned a lot of money during that period. He came back to his native village with the money, began to purchase the land of distressed cultivators, and soon had a brick-built house of his own by the side of the mud house of his cousin. He had his well-wishers in the village, who brought to his notice that grave injustice had been done to his father by his grand father. The paternal property that had fallen to the share of his father and had been inherited by him was less than the share Harihar had been enjoying. And one day Banamali called upon Harihar and told him that their paternal property must be divided afresh.

"It was grandfather who divided the property and not we," said Harihar, "so we have no right to undo what had been done during the life time of our father and uncle."

Banamali left the place without any comment. He forcibly took possession of some portion of the land so long occupied by Harihar. Then suits and counter suits were filed. First criminal, then civil. Both of them had friends and well wishers who proved extremely faithful in keeping them excited.

That day was fixed for hearing. Banamali was seated under a tree near the Court with his witnesses. He distributed some bidis among them, lighted one himself, and puffing out a coil of smoke said, "This is not an age of fair deal, Uncle Sripati. I went to Harihar with a proposal for compromise. But he won't give me an inch of land, he said."

Sripati was a professional witness. One who was in need of a witness and had none was sure of his help for an adequate fee. He could break through the cross-examination of the shrewdest lawyer. "Harihar went to me," said Sripati, "he requested me to be his witness. He thinks that everyone is a rogue like him. Haven't I taken money from you? Can an old man like me leave the path of virtue?"

"The day will soon come when he will repent," said Nitai. "He has already mortgaged a portion of his holding to meet the expenses of the suit."

At that time came the pleader's clerk with a paper in his hand.

"Babu wants some money," he said.

"How much?" asked Banamali.

"Rupees thirty for today's expenses," answered the clerk.

Banamali's face became dark. "But are you

sure that the case will be heard today?" said Banamali hesitatingly. "I've brought so many witnesses."

"Why not?" answered the clerk. He pocketed the money and went away. Harihar was also waiting under another tree.

"You're the lion of our village," said Panchanan, one of his witnesses. "He thinks he can do whatever he likes with money. He has seen the dove, not the trap."

"What a man!" said Harihar, "No respect for his father and uncle and grandfather! He has got some money, and thinks the world is nothing but an earthen pot. I'm not a man to tolerate this."

"You're the true son of a good father," said Bipin. "He'll soon learn what it is to tread on the tail of a cobra."

A good amount had been spent at the hotel for the mid-day meal, and pans and bidis were supplied liberally, yet the court did not call them out during the first half. The judge left the court-room and entered his cabin for tiffin, and the witnesses were also to be served with tea, sweets etc. At last they were informed that their cases would not be heard that day. Sihipur, their village, was thirty miles from the town. There was only one bus to their village in the afternoon. So both parties had to board the same bus. The bus was not overcrowded, and all of them had ample space to sit comfortably. In spite of this Banamali and Harihar picked a quarrel over a trifling matter. Uncle Sripati came to the bus late. He was going to take his seat by the side of Bipin, who told him tauntingly, "Why by me? Go and take your seat by the side of your boss."

Uncle Sripati did not take it seriously. He smiled and sat down by Bipin as if he had heard nothing. But the words pierced the heart of Banamali. "How can I be the boss," he replied in an angry voice. "I'm an insignificant man. One who can falsify the truth and can't suppress his greed is fit to be a boss."

Harihar was smoking. He threw away the half-burnt bidi, and cast an angry look at Banamali. "Everybody knows how you have earned money. Every brick of your new building is a proof of your dishonesty."

Banamali sprang up from his seat and sat down again. "I know you have not a wink of sleep since the day I began the building. You may make your own building if you can. Who obstructs you?" Saying this he remained silent for a few seconds and then said, "Or you may sell your mud house to me, and make your house elsewhere to keep my house out of sight and feel no sting of envy."

The bus had left the town. It was running at great speed. There was no chance of their having a hand to hand fight. But as soon as the bus stopped at Sihipur, and they got down from it, Banamali gave vent to his subdued emotion. He gave a good slap in the face of Harihar, who sprang upon him like a tiger. Banamali fell down upon the ground and Harihar sat upon his chest gripping his neck. It was very dark there, and none could see what was really happening. When they fell upon the ground some men tried to separate them. But they held each other so firmly that they could not be separated. Just at that time came a boy about twelve years old with a lantern in his hand. "Where's father?" he asked one of the bystanders. "Mother has been attacked with cholera."

His words had magical effect upon the fighters. They left each other and stood up abruptly. Banamali moved towards his son and said anxiously, "When?"

"In the afternoon."

When Harihar reached home he found his wife seated in the verandah surrounded by her children. A dim lamp was burning there. Kali, his wife lifted her eyes and looked at him gloomily. Rabi, his eldest son said to him, "Has Uncle Banamali come?" "Yes," said Harihar dropping the bundle on the floor. The two houses stood side by side, and there was only a low partition wall between them. It would not take much time for the disease to scale that weak barrier, and enter their house. "I'll start for my father's tomorrow morning," Kali said gravely. "You should also go with us." Harihar glanced sadly at his wife, but said nothing. It was

"You are the lion of our village," said Panchanan, one of his witnesses

true that Banamali's wife was not a very good woman. She was proud and ill tempered. And Banamali was henpecked. It was she who instigated Banamali to bring a suit against Harihar. In spite of all these Harihar could not but feel for her. After all she was a woman, and his brother's wife. Harihar knew how helpless Banamali would be without her. He had a number of children. There would be none in the family to look after them if she died suddenly. Sudhir, his eldest son, was only twelve years old.

Rabi did not like the idea of leaving the village. "This is the time for cultivation. Who will work in the fields if we go away from the village," he said.

Kali knew it. She cast her pensive glance at her son and said, "Who knows what will happen tomorrow? Live we must, then we'll think what we should do to live."

Harihar and his wife could not sleep. They only drowsed. That spell was broken by the loud wailing which came from the adjoining house.

"Do you hear?" said Harihar to his wife.

Kali left the bed and lighted the lamp. "She is dead, I think." "What should I do?" asked Harihar.

"I'm arranging everything," replied Kali. "We must leave the village before dawn. Go and ask the carter to be ready with the bullock cart."

Harihar was annoyed. "I'm not thinking of how and when we'll leave the village," he said, and then muttered as if to himself, "Banamali is in distress. Should I keep aloof from him? He is my near relation and junior to me. I should have endured his slap."

Kali was astonished. "How is it? Did he really touch your body? Are not you older than he"? She concluded her speech saying that no wrong remained unredressed in the kingdom of God.

"The question of right and wrong may be decided afterwards," said Harihar in a firm voice. "I must go there and see how the matter stands. The dead body should be removed without delay."

Kali stood in front of the door and obstructed the passage by stretching her hands. "No need of showing any compassion. I can't allow any one to go to that cursed house." It was nearly midnight. The night was dark, and not even a soft breeze was blowing. The wailing in the adjoining house was heard no more. An ominous silence seemed to reign in the village. Harihar and Kali sat upon their bed silently and uneasily. The children were sleeping, but Rabi could not sleep. He once wanted to go to the house of his uncle, but his mother said sternly, "Do lie down," and he lay down at once. "No sound is heard in the house," said Harihar breaking the silence. Will not Banamali make arrangement for her cremation during the night?"

"Who will come out of their house in the midnight?" said Kali.

Then another period of silence. Harihar pricked his ears for any noise to indicate a funeral march. Suddenly he heard his name called out in the adjoining house. It was the voice of Banamali. "Are you awake, Haridada?" he said in a trembling voice. "Yes, I'm," replied Harihar softly. "How is your wife?" "Oh, she's no more," wailed Banamali, "and two of the children have started vomiting. Will you not kindly call in the doctor?" Harihar wore a worried look, and said, "Don't be anxious, my brother. Nothing will happen to them. I'm coming."

He sent Rabi to call in the village doctor, and entered Banamali's house himself.

The wife had died first, and then one by one all the children except Sudhir, the eldest son. The

"My end is drawing near. See if you can save the boy."

outbreak soon took an epidemic turn and many died. There were new cases every day.

Kali had gone to her father's with her children. Neither Harihar nor Rabi accompanied her. "How can I leave my brother at this time," he said to Kali. "And Rabi? No, he'll not go. I don't want that he should leave his father and uncle and flee away to save his own life."

Harihar remained in the house of Banamali, nursed the patients, and did whatever he could. Rabi helped him calling in the doctor, bringing medicines and preparing food.

At last Banamali himself was down with the fatal disease, and before death could relieve him from the sorrows and sufferings, his only son Sudhir was also infected. Two patients, and Harihar was alone. It became difficult for him to look after both. He had no sleep, no rest. He could not leave them even for a moment. The boy groaned with pain. Banamali was always wanting water. "Haridada," said Banamli in a feeble voice when Harihar was trying to feel his pulse, "my end is drawing near. See if you can save the boy. And I've some thing to tell you. Grandpa was not inconsiderate. He did justice to both his sons. He gave some money to my father in consideration of the larger share of land he had given to uncle without the knowledge of others. It was with that money that father started business in the town. I knew this. But I was misled and have done great injustice to a brother like you. And what do I gain? The curse of God. Who knows whether Sudhir will survive me to light the lamp of the family, or—or—" his voice was choked with emotion.

"No, no, both you and Sudhir will survive me," said Harihar subduing his tears.

"I want to execute a will. If God be so kind as to spare Sudhir's life then think him as one of your sons. You have four, and he will be one more. I want to bequeath four-fifths of my property to you and the remaining one-fifth to Sudhir if he survies you."

Harihar burst into tears. "Both you and Sudhir

will survive me," he said. "How can I live if I lose a brother like you?"

Banamali breathed his last, and Sudhir recovered slowly. The disease withdrew its claws, and at last disappeared.

Weal and woe, hope and fear are the concomitants of life. Love, hatred and all other emotions are concentrated to it. We have nothing to do with death. Death is the thing of the past, and life is concerned only with present and future. Grief does not last long, and nature does not like it. So in course of time the village became normal again, and people got time to think of worldly affairs, both good and evil. Kali had returned with her children. After all she was a woman and a mother. Her motherly feelings overflowed at the sight of Sudhir. She took him in her lap and wept.

Harihar sighed a sigh of relief at this sight.

Everyone in the village heard of the will of Banamali. Some admired Harihar for his tactfulness, others blamed Banamali for his foolishness. There must have been some foul play, said uncle Sripati. The compounder was the writer of the deed, and the doctor was the witness. He was sure that they had got a good amount of money from Harihar for what they had done for him. He, however, consoled himself by thinking that things might turn otherwise when Harihar would apply for probate. Sudhir had his maternal uncle, who must come forward to take the side of his minor nephew. He would see that Harihar did not enjoy the property peacefully.

Day after day, month after month passed, but there had been no change in the financial position of Harihar. He did not redeem the mortgaged property, but sold it. This astonished everybody. But people were not fools. They soon discovered that Harihar was no other than a hypocrite. In order to hoodwink others he had sold a portion of his property. He had been now in possession of all the property of Banamali:; what if a portion of his own was sold?

Sudhir and Rabi read in a High school, which was situated at a distance of three miles from the village. Sudhir had a bicycle on which both of them rode. When they passed the Matriculation examination Harihar said to them one day, "'Tis beyond my means to bear the expenses of higher education for both of you. Sudhir should go to a college, but Rabi, you're to seek a situation." "I don't want to continue my study if Rabi does not," said Sudhir. "But where shall I get money?" said Harihar helplessly. "And you? I can't allow you to discontinue your study. People are apt to think otherwise if you discontinue."

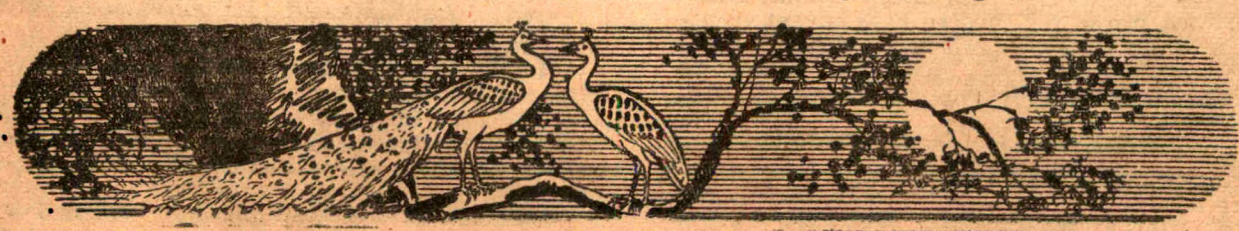
But Sudhir could not realise the difficulty of his uncle. He meant what he said. So both of them were sent to college, and Harihar again sold another portion of land without the knowledge of others. Years rolled by and in course of time their college education was also over. But Harihar's health broke down in the meantime. He lost his appetite, and was growing weaker and weaker every day. In spite of this he had to work hard in the fields, and drag his body homeward towards the evening. One day he returned from the field and said that he was feeling unwell. He lay down on his bed. Kali felt the temperature of his body and said, "You've got fever again."

It was not their practice to call in a doctor or take medicine as soon as one fell ill. The doctor was called in on the fifth day. He examined the patient and said gravely, "'Tis a very serious case. Let me, however, see what I can do." "You may do whatever you like," said Harihar to the doctor, smiling. "I also have something to do, and this must be done with delay. You were one of the witnesses of the will executed by Banamali. I've executed another. Please put your signature in it."

Contents of the will and a sale deed surprised everyone. The property which Banamali had bequeathed on him was returned to Sudhir, and the land which Harihar had to sell for the education of his son was sold to Sudhir by a registered deed. Harihar gave Sudhir the will, the sale deed, the Pass Book of the postal savings bank and an account book, and said to him, "You'll find everything in the account book. The cash left by your father was spent for your education. There had been suits with your father for a portion of my land. The land really belonged to me. I have, however, sold it to you."

Sudhir was puzzled. He remained silent for a few moments and then said with tearful eyes, "Am I not like a son to you? Why should you behave with me in this way? What right have I to take back what had been given to you by my father?"

Harihar smiled. "What your father did he did with due deliberation, and I'm not less considerate than your father. Do you think that you've any right to judge the action of your father and uncle?" Sudhir was going to say something in reply to this, but had to stop by the direction of the physican. "Oh, what a relief," said Harihar as he closed his eyes never to open them again.



STRIP-TEASE

A STORY BY
PARASURAM

"WHAT's your intention, Urvasi ?", enquired Lord Indra. "You are quite hale and hearty in this heavenly abode enjoying a well-furnished house, beautiful gardens, costly dress and a high salary. Discarding all these, why do you like to go to the world of mortals below ? King Pururaba is no longer there to adore you. In heaven you are blessed with eternal youth. Here you are admired and worshipped by gods. But on earth you will very soon grow old. Nobody then will take notice of you despite your carefully done toilet".

"My Lord, I'm disgusted with life here"—Urvasi replied with a bow. "I have won the heart of all the males in heaven. I am now fed up with their hackneyed flattery and constant adulation. The moment I shall land on earth, numberless admirers would flock round me. Money too would start pouring in. If I ever grow old and infirm, I will come back again".

"Are you so puffed up with pride ? Is there any dearth of such admiration here ?"

"Men will surely receive me more warmly", said Urvasi. — "A poet of the mortal world sang in praise of me: *Munigan dhyan bhangi deyae pade tapasyar fal, Tomari Katakshapate tribhuvan Yaubanachanchal* (Ascetics wake up from their divine contemplation and offer at your feet the fruit of their austere penance. And the three worlds are thrilled with a glance of your eyes)! Can any poet of this heavenly abode write a poem like this ?"

"Poets use to write a lot of lies. If you can prove that you have won the heart of all the males here, I am then ready to let you go. Can you overcome the great *rishis* among gods and men?"

"Pooh ! they have long been overcome".

"Well, let me test you. Have you ever heard of any men with god-like powers ? I mean those who move freely from heaven to earth and earth to heaven ? Sanatkumar, Sanatan, Sadananda, for instance, who are known as the spiritual sons of Brahma ?"

Lord Indra went on: "I am not going to disturb them, as they are extremely hot-tempered munis (ascetics). But three other ascetics have recently come here on a visit. They are Kutuka, Parvat and Kardam rishis. They are very calm and quiet. Can you win their heart ?"

"If they are males, I can win them."

"They are no mere males, but males extraordinary".

"Then I will overpower them extraordinarily".

"Very good. They are the friends of sage Narada," Lord Indra said. "I'll tell Narada to invite them to my court to witness your dance performance."

* * * *

On receiving Narada's invitation the three rishis were very pleased. They said. "So long we have seen only peacock-dance, wagtail-dance and also dance displays by monkeys and bears of the forest. But never in life have we witnessed any

dance performance by the fair sex. So we are very eager to see the dance of Urvasi.

"But, is she a woman?" enquired one among them. "We have heard she is a celestial nymph?"

Narada replied: "Yes, she is a woman for whom 'one's heart suddenly loses itself in the bosom and the blood begins to dance in veins'. You will simply be charmed by her dance. So please be prepared to visit the court of Lord Indra."

Rishi Parvat's beard dangled down to his throat, that of Rishi Kardam to his breast and of Rishi Kutuk up to his knees. They put on as far as possible their best attire and got ready for the journey. Parvat was clad in bark; Kardam had no garment of bark. So he put on merely a Koupeen (loin-cloth), Kutuk the great sage had renounced everything. He had no bark nor had he a piece of loin cloth. So he remained stark naked. Looking at him Narada observed:

"Well, Kutuk, you had better wear a girdle of of hay".

"No need," replied Kutuk. "My knee-long beard will surely serve the purpose of my dress!"

Indra welcomed the three newly arrived hermits. With due hospitality he was all attention to them. He offered water to wash their feet and requested them to take their seats. Addressing the three revered ascetics, who had attained great spiritual heights by austere contemplation and subjugation of the senses, he humbly said:

"Today Urvasi, my chief court-dancer, is going to display a unique dance for your entertainment. It is a "slough dance" which is called "strip-tease" by the 'mlechhas' (non-Hindus) of the western part of the earth".

He then turned to gods like Agni, Vayu and Varuna, the divine sage Narada and the like, great hermits like Agasthya and others and said: "You have all assembled here. Celestial nymphs Menoka and others also are present. We are gratified by your presence. Now would you please permit Urvasi to begin her dance performance?"

As a spokesman of the three rishis, Kutuk, the great sage, spoke out:

"Oh yes; be quick, we are eager to see her dance".

Suitably dressed for the lascivious dance and covering herself with an outer garment, Urvasi then presented herself at the court of Lord Indra. She bowed to the audience with folded hands and said:

"Gracious gods and fiery rishis, I am today presenting to you the 'Strip-tease'. In course of performance I shall have to cast off my dress by stages. I hope, you will not object to it".

"Why should we?", said Kutuk shaking his long beard: "Like the bodies of other creatures, yours too is a compound of five elements. We are eager to see wherein lies your womanhood?"

Urvasi again said with all humility: "If you find anything indecent or indecorous in my dance display, please tell me. I will stop the performance then and there."

Urvasi then cast off her cloak and showed her bright, gaudy and dazzling dress studded with gold, emeralds and jewels. She then started dancing. After a while she slipped off her loose scarf.

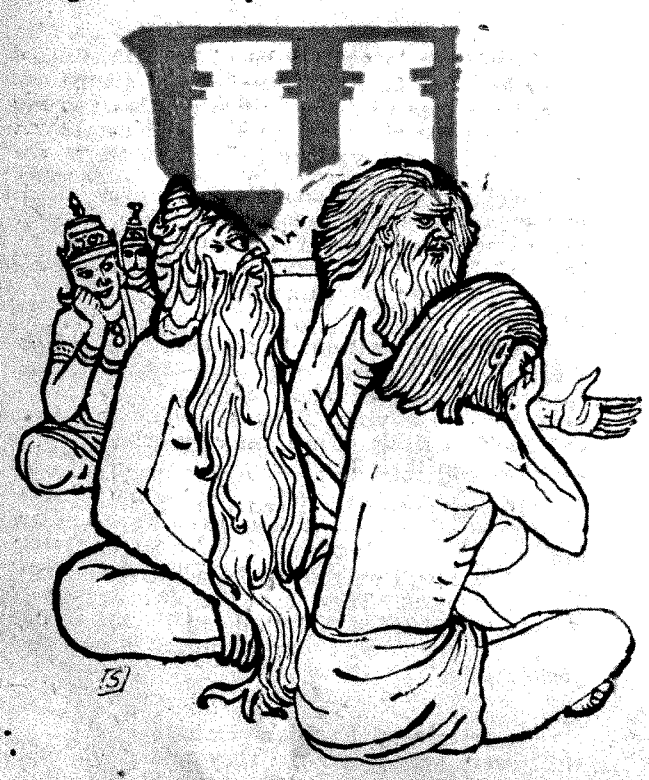
Sage Parvat raised his hand in protest and cried out: "Stop it. I find your dance lacks very much in decency. We don't like to witness such heart-afflicting dance performance". The great sage Kutuk snubbed him.

"If your heart is afflicted, what is that to us? "You may shut your eyes. But let the dance continue."

Urvasi said to Indra aside: "My Lord, Sage Parvat is floored".

The dance went on. Sage Parvat closed his eyes

(Continued on Page 90)



"Stop it. I find your dance lacks very much in decency."

In Quest of Beauty

By
NARENDRA NATH MITRA

IT was a year since Satadal had started a correspondence with Roma. Satadal Chakraborty was the assistant editor of "The Bloom," a monthly published from Calcutta. Roma was a teacher in a girls' school in Basirhat, Nivanani Girls' School to be exact. Though teaching was her line, Roma also tried her hand at writing verse which Satadal was kind enough to publish in his magazine. What is more, he had written a little note of encouragement to the aspiring poetess from which grew a regular exchange of letters. Satadal was the only editor to favour her so, Roma wrote, full of gratitude. The poem he found worthy of publication had been on an unsuccessful voyage among many periodicals — she confided. Satadal wrote back, an even more encouraging letter, expressing his sympathy. Do not give up — he advised. Proceed with patience and perseverance, for life itself is a long struggle. You have to work your way upwards — which is not an easy thing to do, but that is why it is worth the try — don't you agree? Roma wrote, "Your notes are absolutely enchanting. Are you sure you are not a writer?" To this Satadal philosophised. "Some write for millions of readers, some to please a particular person. All of us are not destined to be writers. Some will write while others would correct the proofs — such are the ways of the world."

Roma thought this was evading the question. "It is no use trying to fool me", she wrote. "I can see quite plainly that you have the makings of a writer. Do you write under a pseudonym? Or perhaps you have stopped writing. Why did you do so? Are you unhappy? But isn't sorrow an incentive to creative writing?"
So the letters went on.

The editor and owner of the Bloom was a man of considerable means. Satadal took care of the editing part though technically he was only an assistant editor. The publishing concern had among its other employees, a few proof-readers, a cashier, an accountant, two salesmen who worked at the counter. A partition stood in the middle of the room. Everybody in the office knew about the letters and joked about the blue envelopes which arrived at regular intervals.

Jatin Dutt, the young proof-reader, teased Satadal about the appearance of a certain poetess's work in the monthly almost every other month. Very often he mockingly threatened to tell his wife about those letters.

Satadal was forty, not particularly young or romantically inclined. A married man with a family of three children he had to look for sundry other occupations. The pay of an assistant editor was not enough to keep them going. So he took part time jobs such as writing notes for school texts or articles on the international situation in the yearly almanac, not respectable pursuits, but the money always came in useful. To make both ends meet was a constant struggle. Beset with domestic and financial worries Satadal had at least found a temporary respite. In his busy schedule he made time to write to this girl he had never met, twice or thrice, a month, four times if he felt particularly gay. He would be sentimental and philosophic in these letters, but carefully keeping away from the dangerous ground of love. No, on no account must they contain anything identifiable as love, it might mean

losing his job. Satadal was not unaware of all the implications of corresponding with an unknown lady who was not related to him in any way. The maturity of his forty years sat heavily on his conscience. Passion must be given the innocent look of friendship. He was not the daring type who challenged the norm or took undue risks. Safely, he chose the middle path. At the same time he hungered for whatever happiness could be extracted from life without going to extremes.

And the girl was careful not to say anything which might excite unlawful emotions. In carefully chosen words she advised him to resume writing. She was sympathetic but showed no inclination to become more than a friend. Still they kept writing. Satadal kept a part of himself in the background. Satadal the family man did not intrude in the letters. He wrote about the unrealised ambitions and little failures of a mildly frustrated man — vaguely impersonal, yet not without charm which the young lady found difficult to resist. "I do not know what I have wanted to be. I do not suppose I tried hard enough for any definite end so who can I blame except myself? Only I wouldn't like to admit it. Were I an old fashioned fatalist I would have blamed my stars and got some peace of mind that way. I could very well blame society, but I'm no political thinker. I don't believe in heredity. So the question of accusing my ancestors is ruled out. Alas, I don't even believe in the theory of rebirth. What is the way out for a non-believer like me who have even lost faith in himself? I have a horrible feeling that ground is slipping from under my feet. I'm now floating, now sinking, groaning all the time. You see I am never the same person, I change. My letters mirror those various transformations of my personality."

Roma was not so nebulous in sentiment. She knew perfectly well what her trouble was. For instance she realised she could have got a better class in her Master's examination if she had not been sick just before it. She was really not stupid enough to get a third class, but it was her misfortune to get an ill tempered man for her examiner. With tolerable grades Roma was sure to get a teaching job in a college somewhere in the suburbs of Calcutta, or for that matter even in North Bengal, her home. Nothing worked out for her, so here she was rotting in a girls' hostel in a small provincial town with a batch of vicious females as co-workers. There was absolutely no scope for ambitious girls here. The meanness of everybody around was stifling to her spirit. Even the letters Satadal wrote did not escape criticism. They provided a good source of entertainment to the gossip-mongers. Inquisitive and meddlesome, these peeping Toms even opened her letters. This was what women were really like, for the information of chivalrous and ignorant poets. You have to be a woman to know them through and through. Roma was thoroughly disillusioned by now — she understood her companions for what they were — combined products of hatred, greed and jealousy. No wonder Roma never got along with them. She was different. All she wanted from her companions was to be left alone, but would her two room-mates ever let her rest in peace? Thrust in the same room with two of the worst specimens of humanity she suffered silently. When school was over, work had to be brought home, heaps of excercise books for grading. On top of that her two room-mates made life unbearable for her. They were always teasing her for her weakness for writing. The poetess — they call her, Satadal's sweetheart, Satadal's darling — there was no end of their vile talk. Roma would very often laugh matters away, but these silly jokes got on one's nerve. Placed in her position Satadal babu might have found these too trifling to care. Perhaps Roma annoyed him with her common tales of woe. But even flea-bites can drive one mad. Whether physical discomfort or mental anguish — one suffers just the same. Roma could not very well complain to the headmistress like a school girl. Neither could she pray to god for vengeance on the evil-

doers, as her grandmother might have done. What was she going to do? Could Satadal babu help in any way, like taking her away to the city? Roma was willing to take any job provided she could live her own way, undisturbed by stupid people. There she could write to her heart's content.

Satadal had once enquired about her family, showing curiosity unbecoming in a man; oddly enough Roma was never keen to pry into his domestic life. Roma came from a family of means, her father being a lawyer who owned house and property. But Roma was much too independent to stand the affectionate interference from her parents. Against the wishes of her parents she took a job, for she wanted to be on her own. Her parents insisted even now, that she should come home. But what did they know of her needs? The trouble was they didn't even know that they didn't understand her. Besides, Roma had opinions of her own in certain matters, not to be disclosed in a letter. If they ever met she might let it out, but what was the use. There was nothing Satadal could do about it. And it would be wrong to bear the burden of the whole world, the very idea is foolish. When her burden grew too heavy she secretly wept. Then realising the futility of it she poured her grief in verse, in weak, old fashioned lines. She knew she was a bad writer, but she could not help. If she did not write she would die.

These outbursts held something special for Satadal. He wondered if these letters could be published in The Bloom, of course after careful editing. Not the ones where she complained about her colleagues but when she wrote about her mysterious grief and of seeking solace by writing. On those occasions she suddenly excelled herself. Her writing and the bluish paper she wrote in were equally impressive.

From her letter he tried to figure what she looked like. Young, unmarried (the letters showed) a slim and dark beauty of twenty-four or so, from the year of her graduation it was easy enough to calculate. And just a shade of sadness in her big dark eyes. This was the general picture gathered partly from the letters but coloured a good deal by his imagination.

The time soon came when the question of a possible meeting was brought up. Invitations were followed by counter invitations. Finally a date was arranged. Roma had an aunt in Tollygunj. She always stayed with her when she came to Calcutta. But she would not dare to meet Satadal in his office. Too many people, Roma was afraid of the stares, so could he kindly come to the bus-stop at 3-30 that Saturday afternoon? She would recognise him at once. Wouldn't he? She felt they knew each other well enough by now — so finding each other out should be no problem. Roma would have a couple of hours at her disposal. She hoped Satadal babu would be willing to waste that much time for her. They could go to a tea-shop and from there to a lonely spot in a park where she would read some of her poems to him. If Satadal babu could bring some of his poems, she would be doubly grateful.

Satadal found the prospect of meeting a new face most exciting. He felt like an explorer voyaging to an unknown destination. He at once wrote back his approval of the plan. Though the situation did not necessarily call for amorous sentiments, Satadal felt the inner thrill of a young lover. During the day he was excited and nervous, which he had no reason to be. Arriving at the meeting place he searched among the passengers. They were dispersing quickly. Two women got down, their faces hidden in veils. No, they could not be she. Then a woman appeared, dangling a handbag with Manipur designs. She stood uncertainly, casting little sidelong glances like Satadal. Then boldly she strode towards him, "Excuse me, are you — ?" "Yes". Satadal stared at her in disbelief, "And you — ?" "Yes, you were looking at everybody else", she said a little reproachfully.

His disappointment was immense. Satadal said not a word. This was not the girl of his imagination. Hefty for her age, and quite plain — her features were a practical joke of the creator.

"Let us go", he finally managed to say.

"Where to?"

"To a tea-shop for the present. From there wherever you wish". He tried to put a little warmth into his voice but it did not come off.

"I am not particular about any place", Roma said. "I leave that to you. After all I came to meet you. I am your guest".

They entered a crowded tea shop. The small enclosures were all occupied, so they waited outside. Roma said, "I often think of making a trip to Calcutta but this crowd is what keeps me off. But what's the matter with you? You look so passive. You know, that is not at all the way I pictured you."

That was an exact description of his feelings. How did she know — he silently wondered.

In about ten minutes a cabin was vacant. A young man came out wiping his lips, followed by a girl, quite strikingly dressed. She looked attractive nevertheless. Her clothes looked well on her, Satadal could not help noticing. An unfavourable comparison with Roma came to his mind.

They entered into the curtained privacy of a cabin. He ordered cutlets. "Is there anything else you would like to have?" He asked her.

Roma said, "I've lost my appetite. You don't have to order, I don't think I want anything."

"Why" Satadal demanded, but he was visibly hurt.

"I haven't come here to be fed. But you don't seem to be in a talkative mood."

"What rubbish, we'll talk as we eat. But first let me have your poems," Satadal said with forced gaiety as he held out his hand.

"Some other time," said Roma. "I'll send them to you".

"You suddenly look spent out, what is wrong'? asked Satadal.

"I am always spent out," Roma smiled wanly.

Suddenly Satadal was seized with remorse. He felt angry at himself. Why did he make his disappointment so obvious — she must have understood. All right, she was plain, but Satadal was not a handsome hero either. Middleaged, grown old before his time, temples turning gray—was he such a pleasure to the eye'? Besides, they had no right to expect looks — among friends, beauty should not be a deciding factor.

Determined to make amends, he spoke up energetically, "The last poem you sent was rather well-written. It was appreciated here. One thing strikes me as odd. The cult of unhappiness you have built round yourself — you seem to luxuriate in it — somehow it seems all wrong." Roma looked up.

"Why do you think it is a luxury?"

"What else? You could not have known much unhappiness at this age". "It is so difficult to make

(Continued On Next Page)

STRIP-TEASE

(Continued from Page 86)

with both hands. But he could not check his curiosity. He began to look at the performance stealthily through the chinks of his fingers.

Urvasi began to strip the upper part of her body. Sage Kardam closed his eyes now and cried out: "Stop Urvasi, stop your very seductive dance. Otherwise, we would lose our asceticism".

"Why should she stop?" Kutuk took him to task: "If you can't stand it, you better quit the place".

With smiling eyes Urvasi signified to Indra that Kardam too had been overwhelmed by her dance.

Urvasi then stripped body completely of her dress and ornaments and cast them off on the floor. At last she stood still like a marble statue baring her 'jasmine white body'.

"Bravo! Well done!" exclaimed the gods and, sages, divine and great, assembled at the court.

"But, why do you stop, Urvasi?" spoke out Kutuk: "Go on dancing. Cast off more and more slough." "Where will she find any more slough?" exclaimed Narada: "Urvasi has already cast off all her covers". "Why, don't you see that reddish white slim covering all over her body like lotus-petals?" enquired Kutuk.

"Well, that is nothing but the skin of her body" Let her cast off that skin too".

"Have you gone mad, Kutuk?" Narada questioned. "Skin is a part of one's body. That is not her cloak."

"May be, but is it not a slough? Let her cast it off also. Let me see what is inside it".

"Listen, then," said Narada. "Under the skin there is fat, under the fat there is flesh and under the flesh there is the skeleton".

"What is there inside the skeleton?"

"Nothing".

"Wherein, then, lies the womanhood of Urvasi, under whose magic spell the heart of the male loses itself all on a sudden and the blood begins to dance in the veins?"

"Her womanhood lies in her dress, in her ornaments, in her body, in her gestures and in the heart of adorers. You are a passionless fellow, Kutuk,— free from all attachments. You have eaten your heart and soul. How would you see it?"

"Have you invited me here only to deceive thus?" Kutuk, the great sage, flared up. "That Urvasi is an animal having no substance within. Is there any difference between her body and the body of a she-goat?" He then turned to his companions:

"Well, Parvat, well Kardam, let us go. There is nothing here to see."

Menoka, Ghreetachee, Mishrakishi and other *Apsaras* (dancing nymphs of the heaven) clapped their hands in glee at the discomfiture of Urvashi.

Kutuk, Parvat and Kardam walked off the court of Indra. Urvasi then cried out and said: "Lord God, why did you insult me this way? I will not stay here in this abode of the immortals. Neither shall I go to the earth. I shall practise religious austerities."

* * * * *

Thereafter Urvashi shaved off her head, put on a wreath of holy basil, wore marks of sandal-paste and went to the holy Golak in order to take shelter at the feet of Lord Hari.

Translated by Nikhil Sen

IN QUEST OF BEAUTY

(Continued from previous page)

others see your point. I told you so already. Remember the famous lines we read in School — you don't know until the snake bites. It is perfectly true".

Satadal was speechless. After a while he changed the subject. "Have you made up with your father?"

"It is beyond that."

"Why do you say so?"

"Father wants to marry me off to anybody. A fat bundle of money goes with me. I would never marry someone who would take me for the sake of my money. Why, he'll run away even before our honeymoon is over."

Satadal felt amused at the way she talked. "But you are so talanted, what are you afraid of?"

"Talents? Who cares for talents? Eyes are funny things, they restrict your vision so. One

"Talents? Who cares for talents? Eyes are funny things, they restrict your vision so . . . . people only go in for looks."

hardly gets to see the other things. People only go in for looks. But it's no use blaming others — have I not suffered enough for these demanding eyes of mine?"

"What do you mean?"

"You see I am always running after people I don't deserve. But I can't compromise for less. I couldn't marry any blind, lame or pudgy old gentleman who came along. I just couldn't."

Her words cut him like a sharp knife. Satadal sat mute, not knowing what to say. "Isn't it strange," she went on, "people like us have absolutely nothing to offer, yet there's no end to what we expect from others, by way of looks." When she looked up her eyes were moist. For a moment Satadal forgot they were round and small and ugly.

Noise wafted from other cabins. Voices, laughter, clatter of plates. "Two curries in number three, two omlettes in number four," shouted the restaurant boy from somewhere. In the tiny den sat two people facing each other, so unequal in age and experience, mourning for a common human failing, yearning for perfection to which it did not have a claim, and the uselessness of it all.

When the boy entered with the food the spell was broken.

Translated by Enakshi Chatterjee

By SWAMI PRAJNANANANDA

MUSIC is a fine art, because it awakens aesthetic consciousness in the depth of man's mind and bestows on him unbounded joy and happiness which enable him to enjoy the intrinsic beauty of Nature and the transcendental calmness of the Soul as well. The sweet and soothing vibrations of tones and tunes of music bring into him the glorious memory of man's real entity and nature at once immortal and changeless.

Music as a fine art unlike literature, sculpture, painting and architecture employs sound as the medium of artistic expression. Though literature, sculpture, painting, architecture and music fall within the category of Fine Arts, yet the art of music excels all other arts as a mode of man's response to the call of the Beautiful. Well has it been said by Prof. Sir George A. Macfarren: "Music, then, is that one of the fine arts which appropriates the phenomena of sound to the purpose of poetry, and has a province of its own in many respects analogous to but yet wholly distinct from that of each of the other arts".

MUSIC EXCELS ALL OTHER ARTS

Prof. Macfarren has beautifully differentiated music from other arts because of its highest art-excelling quality. While comparing the art of music with other arts such as literature, architecture, sculpture, acting and painting, he says: "Whereas literature, whether in verse or prose, describes or states emotions or perceptions, or impressions; whereas sculpture imitates the outward forms of animated beings, and physiologically, either in the face, or to speak more broadly, in the moulding and attitude of the entire figure, displays personal character and the effect of passion upon it; whereas painting vitalizes with colour the forms of sculpture, and extends its range of subjects from animate to inanimate nature; and whereas acting adds speech to the written words of the dramatists and enforces or even qualifies their meaning by vocal inflexion, and illustrates it by changeful gesture, thus giving mobility of life to the forms of sculpture and painting; music embodies the inward feelings of which all those other arts can but exhibit the effect. * * In the matter of expression also, architecture may be compared with music in the earlier stages of its development, since representing and also prompting a general idea of solemnity, or grandeur, or gaiety, but music left architecture far behind when, in later times, it assumed the power of special, individual, and personal utterance of every variety of passion. The indefiniteness of musical expression furnishes no argument that music is inexpressive, but is one of the qualities that places it on the highest level of art-excellence, enabling it to suggest still more than it displays, and to stimulate the imagination of the writers as much as to exercise that of the artist".

But, though music in essence transcends the limitation of phenomenal changes, yet its gross and earthly form or expression is subject to evolution which means growth and decay, and from this viewpoint it is phenomenal. In the most remote

past, it existed in the primitive society in a very crude and gross form, carrying with it the power of charming, healing and pleasing. The primitive and savage tribes of all countries of the world loved dances and songs and those were their means of rest, consolation and peace. Men on the march, says Prof. J. A. MacCulloch, used to keep time to the songs sung. "All feasts partake largely of a musical character, whether at marriage or funerals or upon other occasions. At all these feasts, and, indeed, at many religious ceremonies, dancing occupies a prominent place, and it is accompanied by singing, playing of instruments, rhythmic, clapping of hands, and movements of the limbs and head".

RHYTHM & MELODY

The rhythm is undoubtedly the first element of music, though melody or *raga* is recognised as the vital part of music. The concept of rhythm evolved perhaps from the clapping of hands and stamping of feet, which were common in the primitive music. The Sanskrit word *tala* seems to be derived from *tala* or *karatala* or the beating of the palms. The large family of drums, cymbals and bells is the logical development of the concept of keeping of rhythm by clapping of hands or stamping of feet, or striking of wooden or bamboo sticks. Different units of duration or time between the clapping or stamping gave rise to the concept of tempo or *laya* which was divided into three, slow, medium and rapid (*vilambita, madhya* and *druta*). In truth, the principles of rhythm and tempo are the controlling as well as balancing factor of music of all nations of the world.

Religion, magic and music went hand in hand in the primitive society. The religions of the primitive tribes all over the world were very simple and crude in form and connected with their domestic and daily life. "As many savage dances," says Prof. MacCulloch, "are of a religious or ceremonial character, it is obvious that music, even on this ground alone, must play a large part in religion. The words of the songs or hymns and the swell of the music, as well as the rhythmic motions of the dance and the fact that so many are taking part in the same action, heighten the religious feeling. Other ritual acts of a communal character *e.g.* processions round fields and the like —are largely musical".

MUSIC AMONG THE PRIMITIVE TRIBES

There was a great variety of songs among the primitive tribes. There were songs for dances and feasts, for funerals and wild processions, for war and chase. There were also love-songs, songs of labour, songs in praise of the Nature and the supernatural, and the like, and the themes of their songs were woven round the trifle and simple events of their daily life. Their gods were either the wind or the sun, the forest or the sky, and the forefathers or the ghosts. Sometimes their dances and songs were accompanied by crude forms of drums or flutes, sometimes again, they used to sing without any musical instruments. The rhythms of the dances and songs were kept by mere clapping of hands and nodding of head, beating the ground with feet or striking the sticks together, and sometimes by beating of the drums. Their dances and songs naturally differed in character, some being more elaborate and some simple in design, 'and were mostly of rhythmic or recitative nature, the same line being constantly repeated by the bard and then sung by all in a kind of chorus.' Profs. Hose and McDougal have said of the Purans as for example: "The finest songs are sung without accompaniment, and are of the nature of dramatic recitals in the manner of a somewhat monotonous and melancholy recitation."

DRUM, BOW & FLUTE

Prof. MacCulloch has further said that in the primitive society, the undeveloped musical instruments were divided also in three classes,—percussion, wind and stringed. Regarding the evolution of crude forms of musical instruments he says: "As the instances among peoples without musical instruments would seem to show, instruments of percussion—some form of the drum, which is well-nigh universal—may have been invented first. Stringed instruments probably came next—the hunter's bow, as with the Damaras, being easily convertible into a primitive form of these. Wind instruments, at least in their more elaborate forms, were probably invented last".

Such is also the opinion of J. F. Rowbotham. While speaking about the three stages of development of music in the prehistoric times, he has said that music passed through three stages of development each characterized by a separate class of instruments, and the analogy of existing uses in barbarous nations tends to confirm the assumption. "Instruments of percussion are supposed to be oldest, wind instruments the next in order of time and of civilization, and string instruments the latest invention of every separate race".

In India, the *bhumi-dundubhi* or the drum, carved on earth in the form of a pit and then covered with the skin of the wild animal, was very primitive. It can be assumed that this method was in practice among the primitive tribes of all the countries of the world. The drum, *dundubhi* was somewhat a developed form of the *bhumi-dundubhi*. There were also some primitive percussion instruments like *bhanda-vadya panava* etc. The *puskara* form of earthen or wooden drum came next, and *pakhwaj, dholaka, tabal,* and *bayan, mardala,* etc. came last. Different kinds of *veena* (lute) were made of bamboo and wood, and they were fitted with gut strings, made from the entrails of the wild animals. The primitive forms of *veena* were of the bow-shaped type, shaped after the hunter's bow. Gradually their shapes were somewhat developed and shaped in the form of the Western harps, the representations of which are to be found depicted in different cave-temples of India. The whistles, pipes or flutes were made of bamboo, wood or animals' bone, the evidence of which were found in the prehistoric mounds of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa.

FOLK MUSIC : EVOLUTION OF SCALE

It should be remembered in this context that the folk music of different nations of the world are very ancient. We find also some strata in the evolution of folk songs. The most primitive type of folk songs were possessed of only one high note, or two notes, high and low, and they were monotonous. The evolution of musical notes was undoubtedly in the descending order, and the order of evolution of notes was from the high to the low. Gradually the folk music with three notes evolved, and they were high, medium and low. The same also happened in the case of evolution of the high type of classical music. Most of the folk songs of the present time of many countries are to be found with three or four notes which go to prove that they are persisting in their old type and pattern.

The music with five notes certainly evolved afterwards. The scale of five notes are to be found

in both folk and formalised classical music in most of the music of ancient nations of the world. In India, most of the Vedic music (*samagana*) were in pentatonic form, possessing the scale of five notes only. The six notes and sometimes seven notes were in use in the Vedic music. In the music of Mongolia, China, Japan, Cambodia, Siam (Thailand), Burma, Java, Sumatra, Bali and other countries tunes were mostly pentatonic, although some of the tunes of some countries were hexatonic or heptatonic in nature having the use of semitones. Regarding the origin or evolution of music, myth first prevailed, and then it was replaced by history.

ORIGIN OF MUSIC

In India, we find, the myth about the origin of music first evolved in connection with science, and then was garbed by religious myth. As for example, it has been described in the ancient scriptures like the *Siksa* and the *Pratisakhya*, that the friction of air (*vayu*) with heat (*agni*) is the cause of the sound, both musical and non-musical. The first originated sound (*nada*) is the basic and causal one, and when after evolving gradually through the plexus of the spinal column manifested through mouth as gross but sweet and soothing one, it is known as the 'musical sound' (*svara*) or tone. As the musical notes are sweet and attractive, they are known as 'tones'. The tones are the outcome of soothing vibrations of the sweet musical sound-units. In the Epic period, the mytho-philosophical conception evolved in connection with the theory of origin of sound, and the conception centered round the prime principle of Siva-Sakti or Laksmi-Narayana. Certainly there were influences of both Saktism and Vaisnavism upon the conceptions of the prime principles, Siva-Sakti and Laksmi-Narayana.

NOTES OF ANCIENT TIMES

It has already been said that in India, the Vedic music—*samaganas*—were sung in different modes with different notes. In the *Sama-pratisakhya*, *Puspasutra*, it has been mentioned that there were different Vedic recension: *sarvah sakhah prthak prthak*, and the followers of those different recensions used different numbers of notes in their songs. Specially the followers of the Kauthuma-recension (Vedic *kauthuma-sakha*) used in their songs seven notes.

In ancient Mesopotamia, Babylonia, Chaldia, Assyria, Greece, Egypt, Rome, Arabia, China, Persia, England, America and other civilized countries, music with four to five and sometimes six notes were in use. And it is the opinion of many of the historians and scholars that the scale with seven notes are of later origin. Though we find, in different countries, various types of lyres and lutes, possessed of four to sixty-four strings, yet four, five or six notes were used in them.

The evidence of culture of music in the most ancient times is to be found through the medium of musical instruments, and ancient sculptures and paintings of musical instruments are found in the tombs and cemeteries. Well has it been said by Prof. Carl Engel that not only "have we become better acquainted by means of sculptures and paintings, with the musical instruments of several ancient nations, but in some instances the actual instruments have been discovered in tombs or other places, where, protected from the destroying influences of air and damp, they had remained almost unchanged during a marvellously long period".

Concerning the music of the Assyrians, Egyptians, Chaldians, Mesopotamians, Romans, Greeks, Persians, Arabians, Hebrews, and other ancient nations, little or no genuine evidences are forthcoming regarding the musical literature excepting the names of a few musical instruments. Very few musical instruments have also been excavated in Mesopotamia, and most of them, says Curt Sachs, were found in the royal cemetery at Ur, Abraham's native town. However, there are many reliefs and plaques, seals and mosaics, from a period extending over three thousand years, that depict players with musical scenes. The cuneiform written texts in Sumerian contain a number of names of musical instruments. Regarding the most ancient music of the Indians, the same statement holds good.

Most of the discovered monuments of the Assyrians, whereon bas-reliefs of musical instruments are represented, are at present exhibited in the British Museum. "According to the opinion of the most competent judges of Assyrian history," says Prof. Engel, "the period in which these monuments were executed commences about 1000 years B.C. The musical instruments represented thereon must of course be older, and may have existed many centuries before that time. This appears the more probable when we consider that they were used at religious and popular ceremonies, and in representations of historical events of earlier times."

But vocal music, regarded historically, takes precedence over instrumental music, says Prof. Engel. Because there "exists even at the present time a few savage tribes who, though possessing a number of songs, are almost entirely unacquainted with musical instruments. If they accompany their vocal effusions at all, it is only with the rhythmical sounds produced by clapping of hands, or by beating pieces of wood together". Generally, however, the most primitive peoples, at present existing, employ for their purpose some rhythmical instruments, specially the drum and the rattle, and it has already been said that the earliest musical instrument almost of all the nations of the world was the drum.

A BATTLE STIMULANT AND PRAISE-SONGS

Curt Sachs has said that the drum was indispensable in the life of the primitive tribes; no instrument had so many ritual tasks, and no instrument was held more sacred. Finally, the drum became the warrior's instrument. It has already been said that in India too, the most primitive drum was the *bhumi-dundubhi* and the *dundubhi* which were used first for the purpose of signalling the imminent attack of the enemies, and were afterwards used as a stimulant in the battle fields among the savage warriors. In ancient Korea, hymns for 'the sacrifice to Confucius' were in practice. In ancient Mesopotamia, psalms and lamentations were sung against gods for scaring and flooding the land, for the thoughts of the people, says Dr. Farmer, were with their herds and harvests. This kind of psalms in the form of hymns were also in use in India in the early Vedic period. In early Egypt, we find the 'Songs of Lamentations of Isis and Nephthys'. From Dr. Birch's **Introduction to the Study of the Egyptian Hieroglyphs** (London, 1857), says Prof. Carl Engel, "We come to know that the existence of a considerable number of works in the native language was not unknown to the Greeks, with whom they passed under the name of those of *Hermes*." Clement has mentioned two books of *Hermes*, one of which contains a series of hymns to the gods. "There were also ancient lyrical poems, containing the praises of the gods and ancient heroes, and sung at ceremonies and entertainments, and deaths, when "therenes" or

funeral dirges, composed in rhythm, were chanted for the deceased. Among the encomiastic odes is mehtioned one in honour of Sesostris, which differed from the historical accounts. Hymns were also addressed to the rising and the setting sun, and to Amman, to obtain his oracular responses in the Oasis. Of these the most important were the **Therene**, i.e., the dirge or lament for Maneros; another addressed to Saturn; and a chant called the Genethlia, or Birth of Horus."

The hymns, addressed to the rising and setting sun, and to the sky, known as Varuna in the Rigveda, and **Kshiroda-samudra** i.e. 'the ocean of milk' in the *Puranas* remind us of the daily religious prayer of the Hindus in the Vedic time, in India. In the music of Bible too, we witness mainly three kinds of songs; (1) Songs of Praise; (2) Songs of Partition, and (3) Songs of Thanksgiving. These three types of psalms were used to be sung in the Solominic Temple in Egypt. Prof. Henderson says that in early Greece, music used to be practised as an ingredient of magical medicine, and its festival occasions and formal conventions were often religious. In the Iliad, music had the status of an art, and over and above it was in the character of mere ritual. In the Odyssey, we find the apotheosis of the professional kitharoedic bard. In the archaic community as a whole, we also find professional bards, who used to recite or sing the songs of lamentations. In India, the professional bards used to recite or sing the songs of laudation and lamentation, and they belonged mostly to the Suta class, the historical tradition of which is maintained to this day by the Kathaka class of priests or singers, who relate the religious and mythological episodes of the Great Epics like the *Ramayana, Mahabharata* and the *Puranas* and *Bhagavata* in the form of songs.

Prof. Macfarren says that the classic Greeks used music in rhapsodising or chanting with vocal inflexions the epic poems. They used to employ it in religious rites and to accompany military evolutions, and prizes were awarded for the performances of music, both vocal and instrumental at the Olympic and other games. "It belonged essentially to the drama, which had its origin in the dithyrambic hymns; these were gradually developed into the tragedy, which took its name from the tragos (goat) that was sacrificed to Dionysus during the performance." In ancient Rome, the choristers in tragedies were numerous and included both male and female singers, and they used to be accompanied by a large number of musical instruments of which trumpets were most conspicuous.

RELIGIOUS PRAYER-SONGS

The ancient Jews were also accustomed to singing the psalms like *al-hizana, hallel,* etc., which were sacred and religious. They were, in truth, the religious prayers or prayer-songs with tunes. Regarding the Jews in Palestine and Babylon, A. M. Rothmuller has written that they composed many tunes to the customary prayers, and they bound themselves to come together at prayer-times, to sing and read those prayer-songs. "The difference between the *hizana* and the enjoined prayer (*salat*) is that the enjoined prayer is rendered without a tune ; it is read by the synagogue reader alone and no one accompanies him ; but during the *hizana,* many accompany him with shouting and singing, and help him in the tune."

Much earlier St. Hieronymus (330-420), who knew the Jewish service of Palestine, relates that in their worship the Jews have a solemn singing of psalms, namely the group of the 'Songs of Praise' (Hallel-Psalms 113-118). "Singing was prominent feature of other ceremonies of a religious nature, as we learn from Nathan ha-Babli, a Babylonian Jewish savant who went to live in Africa about 950 C.E. * * He relates that in this ceremony, 'a choir, of noble youngsters, endowed with musical voices,' took their places, 'the *chazzan* (cantor) of the synagogue struck up the devotional hymn."

It should be remembered in this connection that throughout the period immediately following the destruction of the Temple there was a continuous tradition of vocal music as a prominent feature of the synagogue service among the ancient Jews, and that in particular many of the traditional tunes for the psalms and prayers and reading of the Torah were passed down from generation to generation of worshippers in the synagogue and religious students in *Chedarim* and Yeshevot."

Thus from a comparative study of the religio-mythological accounts of the early civilized nations of the world we learn that the socio-religious character of their songs and hymns were almost identical, and there was an uniformity of tunes, temperaments, melodic forms and rhythms among them. Dance invariably accompanied music, and musical instruments were invented to follow the tunes of music. In the classical as well as in the mediaeval period, music of all civilized nations was developed in form, quality and technique, and was systematically recorded in the history of their culture, and was scientifically analysed and explained. The innovation of new types of dance and song upon the frameworks of the old ones marked different epochs of renaissance of music culture of the nations. In fact, dance and music were regarded as the indispensable factors in the lives of the peoples of all countries, as they used to derive sublime inspiration, joy, consolation and peace of mind through its pursuit.

CRISIS

By MEERUTLAL

SATKARIBABU had a really happy family consisting of his wife Anandamayi and his only son of twenty-five, Panchkari.

He was in his fiftieth year. Somewhat quick-tempered, he was, nevertheless, a tender-hearted man. He might be called sentimental. If he received any severe shock, he was disturbed even during his sleep. His sentimentality and quick-temperedness conspired to create great havoc in his otherwise peaceful life.

Once at night, while sleeping, Satkaribabu started to murmur deliriously, 'Sabitri, do not misunderstand me; dear Sabitri, please. . . . .'; his wakeful wife, lying by his side, was fanning her delirious husband amidst the sweltering heat of the Jaisthya night. The devoted wife's ears immediately caught the words of poignant entreaty of her husband,—'Sabitri, do not misunderstand me.' She sat up and straightened herself; she was struck by his enigmatic utterings.

Repeatedly she pronounced within herself—Anandamayi—Anandamayi—Anandamayi. She wondered,—was there any similarity in sound between the names Anandamayi and Sabitri? No. So what?

The whole world seemed to land its weight upon her head; "Is my husband, then, devoted to a girl, Sabitri?" Her nerves were strung with excitement. "Am I to shake off, now, the belief,—that I have hugged so long,—that my husband is absolutely faithful to me, for which I have adored him so much? My beloved! Has he transferred her affection to a girl at this age? She sobbed silently.

The husband slept quietly innocent of this all. His wife shed tears that moistened the bed. She was so chaste and loyal to her husband that she concealed her sentiments from him and did not ask or even complain of anything. Her wounded feelings and sorrow, kept within herself found an outlet only in her convulsive sobbing in the loneliness of the night.

Her face mirrored her mind in distress. She was always sullen. It was painful to Satkaribabu more so because he was unable to trace the reason of her sorrow. Son Panchkari was also worried about it. He tried his best to soothe his mother with gentle words, but nothing came out of it. He was an emotional youth. His emotional nature found expression in everything—in his way of talking, in his manners and even in his examination scripts. One or two emotional poems were often discovered in his college notebooks. This attitude of his added much to the family crisis.

Once in the morning, Satkaribabu discovered the cause of his wife's melancholy in a letter that was lying on the table in Panchkari's room. Panchkari was sleeping at the time. Satkaribabu hurriedly read the letter.

My dear Jyotsna,

I do not know the language to express, in this brief letter, how admirable is this combination in you, of an unthinkable sweet nature and a flawless demeanour. I cannot describe the great pleasure your companionship gave me.

I shall never forget you, however remote you may be from me. I cannot be ungrateful and I shall wait to see you again.

Please do not forget to send me a reply.

Yours lovingly,

Panchkari.

An open envelope was kept beneath a paper weight by the side of the letter.

After reading the letter Satkaribabu flew into rage. With his eyes fixed on the envelope, he thought, that the son must have felt too much sleepy and so could not put the letter in the envelope and write the address on it. He went straight

After reading the letter Satkaribabu flew into rage.

to his wife and gravely commented, "I have realised the cause behind your anxiety. When you found that your son had gone to the dogs, why did you not inform me, instead of spoiling him by indulgence through your false pretence? I would have thrown him out of my house and seen how he carried on his love affairs!"

Anandamayi was dumbfounded. Satkaribabu showed her the letter from a distance and said, "Look here, he has written a love-letter." With this, he ran into Panchkari's room, pulled him out of his bed and burst out, "you wretched, idiot, scoundrel, I am maintaining you and giving you education by my day's toil and labour, and you are wasting your time on love affairs? Clear out of my house at once."

Panchkari dropped from the heavens, as it were. What is all this about?

Anandamayi rushed in with tears in her eyes, "What are you doing to my darling? Is he alone to blame? Think over quietly once more."

Just then, a friend of Panchkari was knocking hard at the door of the outer room. When it was opened, the young fellow breathlessly gave out, "Panchkari, I am finished. Jyotsna, after entering my house, has suddenly bitten his tongue so that a fleshy part of it is dangling out."

Satkaribabu interposed in solemn tones, "Who is Jyotsna?"

The friend was startled by the grave voice, and answered, "Well, he is our great friend Jyotsna Mohan Chakravarty, recently introduced to us. I mean, he is in service at Lahore, but suddenly on leave has come to my house and this incident occurred within half-an-hour of his arrival."

Thus Satkaribabu discovered his mistake and stammered out, "Then, then, let me also go with you to meet Jyotsna." One hour after they had left, there came a letter addressed to Satkaribabu. Anandamayi was still suffering from that pain in her heart that had started since that fateful night. The affair of her boy had increased her anxiety but that was over. She opened the letter and went through it—My dear respected Satkaribabu,

I was discourteous to you. Other people misled me. Kindly forgive me. You are superior to me in age, service, everything, still I failed to show you due respect. On the contrary, through inducements I had taxed your patience and exploited your goodness.

When the boss refused to grant my application for leave extension sent from the mofussil, I had to come back. A colleague of ours induced me to believe that it was you who influenced the boss to refuse the same. This made me behave awkwardly with you and I talked a lot of nonsense. But when you went away on leave, I came to know you had no hand in the matter.

I have realised my mistake. When you come back I shall throw myself at your feet and seek your forgiveness.

Yours affectionately,
Sabitri Kumar Basu.

Anandamayi regained all her joy and melted into tears.

THE GOLDEN PHANTOM

(Continued from Page 79)

not just an innocent request. I was not sure what was cooking in his mind.

"Sir, the young lady is in tears, crying hard."

With a show of indifference I replied, "Only natural."

As Joe still kept standing I added, "Those who run after a golden phantom have little to worry about themselves."

Joe, of course, did not know the reference to the golden stag of the Ramayana, how the phantom of a stag deceived Sita, Rama and Lakshman and decoyed the latter two. But Joe found some inspiration. He broke into a smile and said, "Right, you're, sir. A golden phantom is all that's required. Do, do some magic, sir. Astrology at least. Kindly do take pity on the girl and tell where that rogue of Colonel could be got hold of. She may be saved all this trouble."

I kept quiet.

Joe probably sensed some glimmer of hope in my silence and said, "Kindly at least read her palms if that helps."

I laughed. There was an appeal in his eyes but laughter on my lips. Poor Joe. He was trying to come to the rescue of a damsel in distress. He was ready to take the help of anybody from India whether a palmist or an astrologer or even a magician. It was hard to disappoint him bluntly.

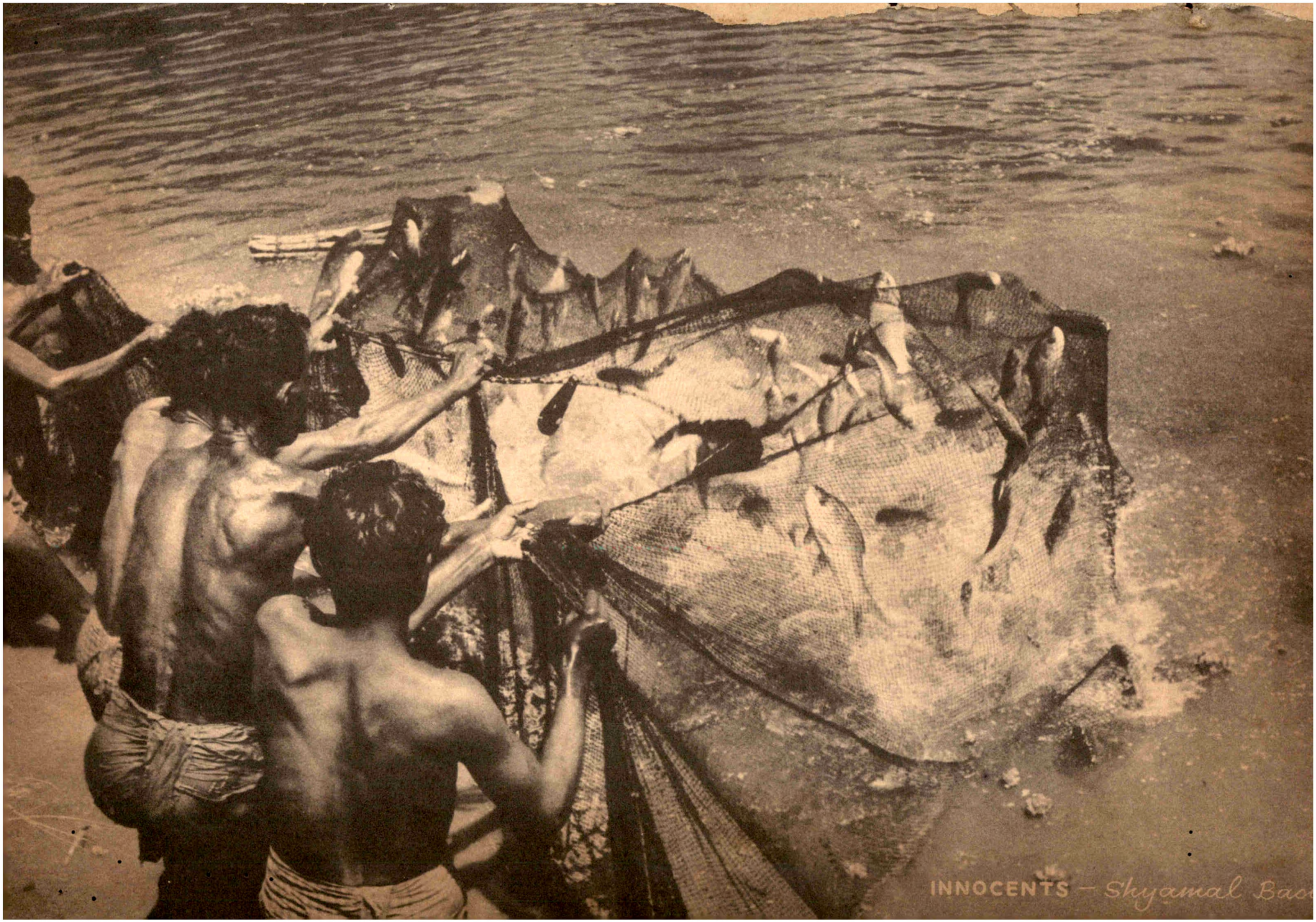
I only said, "Golden phantoms have vanished in this age. That's why palmists and astrologers also have forgotten their art. Just see, even the live and loud moustache of your Colonel has disappeared.

"Then, sir."

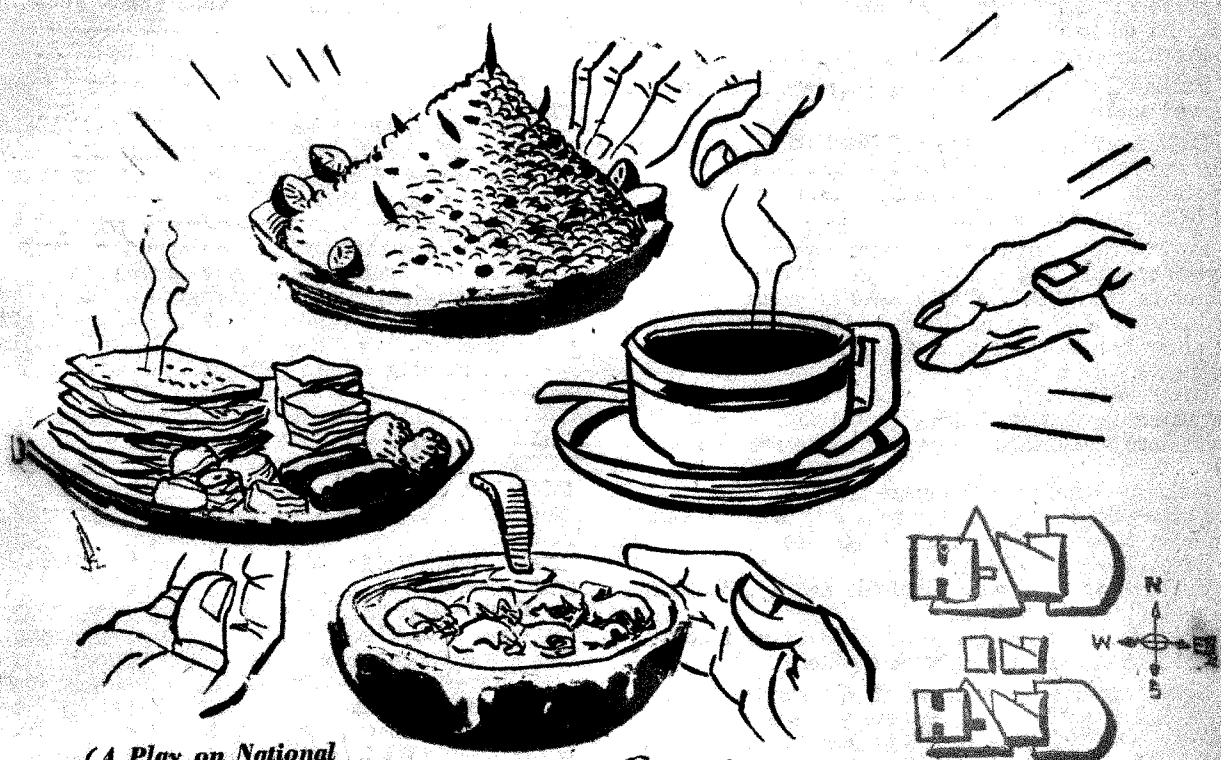
"Then I can only say good night."

"Good night, sir."

Poor Joe went down the corridor with drooping shoulders. Suddenly I had some compassion for him. I opened the door of my suite and watched him going away. In the dim light of the long corridor the bald patch on his head was shining like varnished gold. Put him in touch with the golden hart I could not, but I came across a golden heart.


INNOCENTS – Shyamal Bas

DIGNITY OF LABOUR
- Jutu Gupta



(A Play on National Integration)

Rev Prof Sushil Mukherjee

AN important Railway Junction Station. Time—Present. A busy scene. Just now a train has left the station. The sound of its whistle is still audible. In-coming passengers are leaving one by one. The cries of the vendors are gradually dying down. There are four of them now—Purbaprasad, Paschimkumar, Uttarlal and Dakhinranjan. They live on the four sides of the Station—Purbaprasad in the East, Paschimkumar in the West, Uttarlal in the North and Dakhinranjan in the South. In fact, they belong to these zones of the country. They have however come to this Railway Junction at the Central Part of India to earn their living. Purbaprasad is a vendor of tea. Paschim Kumar sells Puri and sweets. Uttarlal carries a basket of Chanachur on his head while Dakhinranjan's stuff is Dahibarah. Often they quarrel among themselves over the sale of their respective stuffs. One's prospective buyer is snatched away by the other leading to a violent clash. So they have now decided to mark out their respective areas beyond which they would not go. But this agreement is not always scrupulously observed. It has not been observed this afternoon at least and there is a fresh outburst.

As the train steams off the vendors' cries are heard for the last time—

Purba—Tea! Tea! Hot Tea! Hot Tea!

Paschim—Puri Mithai—Puri Mithai—Rasgulla—

Uttar—Chanachur — Chanachur 'garam'—Fresh stuff—Come along—

Dakhin—Dahibarah—Come, have a taste of it—Dahibarah!

The Station is now quiet. Others have left.

Dakhin—Hey! Pubprasad! Again you encroached on my jurisdiction!

It's only yesterday that I asked you not to do so—didn't I?

Purba—That's all right, my dear friend! But why did Uttarlal enter my area?

Dakhin—That's his affair—ask him. Why should I bother about that? I'll only see that none sets his foot on mine. I will not allow anybody to come South.

Paschim—That's exactly what I am determined to do. No violation of my territory! How strange! It's not yet one full day that we all agreed among ourselves that we shall sell our stuff within our own jurisdictions and none will enter another's—and even now we break the rule that we ourselves made! Now I tell you for the last time—I belong to the West. The western side of the Station is mine and I mean to keep it to myself. I declare solemnly that I shall not enter any other's area and I will not tolerate any body's encroachment on my area either. You may make a note of that—I tell you—

Purba—Then you mean to say that a passenger in the western zone of the station will have no tea!

Paschim—No.

Purba—Good heavens! What will he do, poor fellow, if he is tea thirsty?

Paschim—How do I know? Let him take something more substantial — the stuff that I sell in the west — let him buy Puri — as many as he

wants—and then I have sweets to offer—Mithai—

Purba—Yes Mithai! Your hard Mithai...that refuses to go down the throat. Two nice things that hang midway and block the passage! Cold Puri and hard Mithai! Now, look here—when these would get stuck in the poor passenger's throat what would he do to clear the blockade?

Paschim—Why? Flush it with water . . .

Purba—But who is to bring that water to your reserved southern kingdom?

Dakhin—Why? It's the old Bharatram that has been supplying water to the thirsty passengers in this station for the last 50 years or so! Bharatram will bring water as usual...

Purba—How can he now—after you have divided your zones? Ask him where is his home—in the East or in the West? Where does he come from—ask him. Is it North or South? Only then would you allow him to enter your area to carry water for passengers. Isn't that so?

Uttar—Certainly. But the difficulty with Bharatram is that he listens to nobody. He goes everywhere and brings water to all who are in need of it . . .

Dakhin—Where does he come from?

Purba—Strange—he never tells it! When asked he simply laughs. I asked him yesterday . . .

Paschim—What did he say?

Purba—Ask Dakhin. He had heard Bharat's reply. Tell it Dakhina. . .

Dakhin—What shall I say? Bharat said nothing but just started a song with a smile . . .

Bharatram's song is heard at a distance.

I have my brothers everywhere
My home is Hindusthan
I go and seek and find my friends
And love them as I can . . .

(Bharatram enters singing with Bharati, a young girl following)

Purba—(Interrupting) Yes, go and seek your friends where you can. But be sure of one thing. You have no place here . . .

Bharat—(laughing) No place here? Why? Strange to hear that after having spent fifty years of my life here! Listen Bharati . . . listen to their wild talks'!

Paschim—(Protesting) Wild talks?

Bharat—Certainly. For the last fifty years I have been bringing water to the thirsty passengers here in this Junction Station. My father did the same for a still longer period—seventy years, if my memory serves me all right! And now you say . . .

Paschim—Yes, now I say that you shall have to leave this place and go . . .

Bharat—Where?

Paschim—The place you come from . . . where you were born . . . you understand, old fool? Declare your home, your birthplace and go that way. If you are from the North you shall have to confine yourself to the North. If you belong to the West you are welcome to my side. Here in the west will you live and work . . . Come with your water jug and all that.

Purba—But if your home is in the East cross over to this side where I am standing. Here you and I shall work together. You will cool the passengers with your water and I shall warm them up with my hot tea . . .

Dakhin—Tell us old man, where is your home?

Bharat—(with a smile) I don't know. Do you, Bharati?

Bharati—(confidently) Yes, I do.

Bharat—(expressing surprise) You do? How? How do you know where my home is?

Bharati—Why? You were telling me the other day, grandpa'....

Bharat—I? I was telling you? I don't remember.

Bharati—(laughing) Forgotten so soon?

Bharat—(laughing) No wonder. After all I'm getting old . . . Tell me what I said.

Bharati—You said that your home is everywhere . . .

Uttar—(protesting) How can that be? One man and so many homes? Nothing can be more absurd than that . . .

Dakhin—Mean to bluff us, you rogue? We are no children. Bluff that girl there, but not us . . .

Paschim—Old hypocrite! Is it a clever trick or just a sign of senility?

Purba—Home everywhere! That's well said, yea! Trying to have the best of both worlds! Excellent! So much intelligence inside that small head?

Bharati—Why not? My grandpa' is not so empty-headed as . . . as (looks round and then pointing to Uttarlal) . . . as Uttar Kaka . . . (laughing loudly) . . . nothing there except a big patch of baldness . . .

Uttar—(taken unawares) How? How is that? I have my cap there . . . I mean . . . on my head . . .

Bharati—(still laughing) Yes . . . yes . . . certainly the cap is there . . . but only to hide your baldness . . . (clapping) The cap suggests baldness and . . .

Paschim—(taking the cue) . . . and baldness suggests money . . .

Purba—(taking the cue) and money suggests cleverness. A clever fellow that Uttarlal, indeed! Has made enough money by selling Chanachur . . .

Uttar—(angrily) What of that? You may as well earn it—nobody has prevented you! Petty jealousy! Failing to make money yourself you now find fault with others that have earned by the sweat of their brow!

Paschim—Excuse me friend, not by the sweat of your brow anyhow . . . but by a clever blending of sand with your chanachur . . . Is it not?

Uttar—(protesting) Who says that? Who mixes sand?

Purba—Uttarlal. Who else? And why sand only? There are so many other things to mix . . . you know that . . . .

Uttar—(challenging) Hold your tongue, Purbprasad or you shall rue it . . .

Purba—Whom shall I fear so long as I speak the truth?

Uttar—(Ironically) Truth? The very embodiment of truth is here standing before me . . . Yudhistir in this Kali Yuga! What does this Yudhistir mix with his tea?

Bharat—(jokingly) Only water . . . and nothing else! And this water . . . I mean, plenty of water,

he takes from my drum . . . and that in my absence. (Everybody laughs) . . . Did I know it? No, I only noticed that my drum of water placed there, you know, in that corner (points) became empty rather too soon. How it happened I couldn't understand. Anyway, this old man had to go to the tubewell once more and fetch water to fill up the drum so that he might help the thirsty. This went on for a pretty long time . . . till at last (looking at Bharati) one day. . . . .

Bharati—(laughing) I caught Pubkaka redhanded.Isn't that so? As Pubkaka was drawing water stealthily with his back towards the door I entered quietly and while his kettle was filling up I shouted . .

Purba —(gibing at her) Shouted! And who asked you to do that excellent piece of work? But can you tell me, you pert girl, how can you have tea without water?

Paschim—Is it only water that you mix with your tea, nothing else?

Purba—(with injured innocence) What else? What do you mean? (fumbling) Granted that in my preparation of tea the proportion of water is slightly more than what it ought to be. But then, Paschim Kumar, I do not mix either stone powder or bone-powder with 'Atta' before preparing 'puri' for hungry customers! You can take good credit for doing double service to your buyers, your patrons . . . You are breaking their teeth with stones and robbing them of their pride of caste-purity by a judicious supply of bones of animals, who knows of what particular variety?

Paschim—So I am a villain and you a saint: But may I ask them who is it that mixes leather-powder with tea-dust? Is it Bharatram?

Bharat—Excuse me Paschim Kumar. The only thing that Bharatram mixes—and knows how to mix—is camphor, with water and nothing else. As for leather-powder, your friend, I mean our Pubprasad, makes a double use of it. After using it to increase the weight of his tea what little remains of the powder he makes good use of it on his face. Don't you see how his face shines . . .

(Everybody laughs)

Purba—(Angrily) Put a check upon your tongue, old man. Don't you tell an outrageous 'lie. Still the sun and the moon rise in the sky. Don't you forget the punishment of God. If you tell a lie you will soon cease to speak. Remember that.

Bharati—This is no lie, Pub kaka—and of all persons you know that best—is it not? Is it not a fact that only last Monday I found you mixing some blackish powder with your tea? And didn't you try to bribe me with a few pieces of biscuits —(laughing) and they were not good at all, appealing to me not to divulge the secret to any one?

Purba—(outwitted and angry)—And so you ate the biscuits all right and then carried the tale to your grandpa,! Thou little scorpion. . . . .

Dakhin—Then you admit that after all! And yet so long you were posing innocence! That's what you are . . .

Purba—Brother, why see the mote in other's eye not seeing the beam in your own? Thou can't afford to throw stones at others living in a glass-house yourself. Pub Prasad knows well how Dakhin Ranjan prepares his Dahibarah. Shall I expose you? Come, shall I?

Dakhin—What is there to expose me? Instead of indulging in useless talks mind your own business. Protect your own area. Look, Bharatram is already there. Beware, that old man would upset everything. I give you this timely warning.

Uttar—That's true. Just see how he has not yet told us where his birthplace is. Very shrewd, isn't it?

Paschim—You are perfectly right, Uttarlal. Look, as we are quarrelling the old man is just laughing!

Uttar—And why are you laughing, Bharatram?

Bharat—And why should I not when you say something which naturally provokes laughter? I have not yet forgotten to laugh though I am over sixty. And look how Bharati too is laughing—and she is only sixteen . . .

Uttar—(to Bharati) And what makes you laugh?

Bharati—(laughing) I don't know. I am laughing because Dadu is laughing—that's all.

Purba—That's funny! The grand-daughter laughs because the grand-father laughs. Then if I laugh Uttarlal will laugh. And if Uttar laughs Dakhin will follow. And seeing Dakhin laugh Paschim will roll in laughter. So the wheel of laughter turns and turns and turns . . . Laughter all round!

Paschim—But the question is why this laughter? Why should Bharatram laugh at all? We have marked our respective areas so that none may encroach upon it. This is a life and death question for us. And that old fool laughs . . .

Purba—True! Now Bharatram, tell us seriously why—you are laughing!

Bharat—Just because you have asked me a funny question the answer to which is not known to me. You have asked me where is my home. Now the fact is that I do not know. Had I known it I would have told you.

Paschim—Strange! You don't know your own home! And you say that you are over sixty. ....

Bharat—Perhaps just because of that I have either forgotten it or I do not bother about it. The only thing that I am concerned about is the supply of water to the thirsty passengers in this station—and who is there that does not feel thirsty? When in the scorching heat of Chaitra or Baisakh passengers get down here and look for water to quench their thirst and call out 'Hey, where is the water supplier' and so on, do I first ask them as to where do they come from—East or West, North or South —and then give them water only if they happen to be from my native district or village or do they ask me similar questions before accepting water from my jug?

Purba—There, of course, you are right.

Paschim—Still you must have home somewhere, —I mean your birthplace where your father or your grandfather . . .

Bharat—(interrupting) My grandfather was in the East but married a girl of the West. My father was brought up in the West in his maternal uncle's house and then married in the North. I was born in the North but came to the South to earn my living. I have been nourished with the food of the South. Now tell me how can I say that I belong to this or that zone exclusively. Then look at that girl (pointing to Bharati). She is known as my grand-daughter. How absurd!—grand-daughter of a life-long bachelor! You know that I just found her. A gem of a girl as she is, she is unfortunately a foundling. You remember Uttarlal how she met

rescued from among the debris after that serious railway accident that year.

Uttar—Yes. That we all know.

Bharat—I don't know whose daughter she is. I regard her as the daughter of you all. Isn't that so. Bharati?

Bharati—Exactly. I like Puri and sweets and yet I cannot check my temptation for Dahibarah. And as regards your Chanachur, tell me Uttar Kaka where have you seen a girl who does not love to munch it. And what is Chanachur worth if it is not accompanied with tea? Don't you agree, Pub Kaka?

Uttar—She speaks very fine . . .

Paschim—(Ironically) Only she is ripe beyond her age . . .

Dakhin—And talks at random . . .

Purba—Not she, but you. And now, will you go and enquire why is the train so late? It's already half-an-hour passed and no sign of it! What's the matter? In the meantime my tea is becoming almost ice-cold.

Bharati—Why don't you give me a cup before that, Pub Kaka? I admit I can't drink cold tea—a bad habit certainly! But I can't help it. Give me your glass, Dadu. That will do in the absence of a cup just now. Tea is the thing, not the cup . . .

Purba—And you want it free? That's very clever of you . . .

Bharati—How clever? After sometime you will have to throw away your tea. None will pay for it. Isn't it better that I drink it before that?

Purba—That's true indeed! Come, bring your glass . . . have it. . . '' (pours tea)

Bharati—No more . . . no more. That's all right. (To others) Won't you have your tea?

Uttar—Certainly it would be very nice if we can have it after so much of waiting. As for me, it would be thrice welcome since I have a head attack of cold. Hot tea would be very refreshing.

Bharati—Then help yourself without making further delay. All right, wait. I am pouring it out to you. Hold that glass . . . (she pours tea)

Uttar—(after one sip) Ah! very cheering. (To others) Come, have it. . .

Paschim—Yes, but not before you distribute your Chanachur . . .

Uttar—(laughing) My Chanachur, you want it? Here it is . . . come take, as much as you like. . . Why hesitate? Have more. Come, Bharat Maharaj . . it's as fresh as anything.

Bharat—Alas . . . also! How shall I manage your Chanachur without teeth? Don't forget I am over sixty now. I have left my Chanachur days long behind . . .

Paschim—Then have my Puri and Mithai and after that drink a cup of tea. You can take your own time. There is no hurry. The train is running late. Come here is my Puri . . .

Bharat—No, my dear friend. Even that will be difficult for me to negotiate. I would rather satisfy myself with the soft stuff of Dakhin—his Dahibarah, soft and manageable . . .

Bharati—All right. Then all of you please sit down. I shall serve (They all sit and begin to eat together).

Bharat—(while eating) But what has happened to the train?

Uttar—It's never so late . . .

Bharat—Any further delay would very much affect the people of the North, you know. You all know about the flood-havoc in the North. About one thousand villages have suffered from the ravages of the flood. People are in terrible distress, without food, without clothes, without the other necessities of life. These were due to reach the North by this train that we are expecting here now. People would die of starvation if the train is held up anywhere for any reason. . .

Bharati—(much concerned) Suppose the train does not arrive—what would happen then?

Bharat—That can never be, my child. It will come no doubt, only it may be a bit delayed. Consider the long journey, from the farthest South to North and there are rocks and rivers and forests and thousand other things. . .

Bharati—But suppose the engine has gone of order. Then?

Uttar—Don't worry. The mechanics are there to set it right. Moreover before the train starts everything is thoroughly checked. . .

Purba—Still you never know the vagaries of machines and engines. They have a peculiar knack of going wrong without notice. . .

Bharat—No, no. The engine of a running train does not behave so oddly as you sometimes do.

Dakhin—But how do you explain the delay in its arrival?

Paschim—There may be many reasons.

Bharat—Whatever that may be the people there in the North are anxiously waiting for food. And you know how to a starving man an hour seems an age.

Purba—Don't I know that? Have I not myself experienced the pinch of starvation? Having lost everything as a result of the division of the country I was going about from door to door for food and shelter. Then I met Uttarlal by pure accident and he it was that brought me here and helped me start this tea-vendor's work at this Junction station. He advanced money from his own pocket. Thanks to Uttarlal that I am still somehow maintaining myself.

Bharat—Why then do you lose your head and quarrel over what you call encroachment on your respective areas? How foolish!

(The sound of a train coming is heard)

Bharati—(elated) Listen. There comes the train. Can you hear it, Dadu?

(The whistle of the train is heard)

Uttar—Yes, we can all hear that. Look, the signal too is down. . .

Paschim—Ah! There comes the train! Clear the platform . . . Quick!

Purba—(starts his usual cry)—Tea! Hot Tea!

Uttar—(following) — Chanachur! Fresh Chanachur! Come one, come all

Paschim—Puri Mithai . . . Rosgulla . . . Puri . . .

Dakhin—Dahibarah! Dahibarah!

(All cry at the same time—Noise)

Bharat—Look here! Why are you shouting like that for nothing? Have you forgotten that it's a goods train and there are no passengers to oblige you by purchasing your stuff?

Dakhin—It's just a question of habit, old man, The very sound of the whistle is our signal to begin the cry; and if we don't we feel rather uncomfortable. Isn't it?

Purba—Don't worry Dakhin Ranjan. There comes your customer Chotelal, the driver. I know he

is very fond of your Dahibarah coming as he does from the South. He is your kin. Entertain him.

(Chotelal enters)

Come Chotelalji, refresh yourself with Dakhin's Dahibarah .....

Chotelal—Stop all this nonsense. I am in no mood for your silly jokes .....

Purba—(still jokingly) Temper? Hot? Hotter than your engine?

Chotelal—Don't talk rubbish. What do you know of hot engine, hot tea being your limit?

Bharat—(trying to pacify) May be. But what's wrong with you Chotelal? Why so out of temper? Must be very thirsty! Come, have a glass of water and cool yourself. Then tell me what has happened...

Chotelal—What else? Have worked for ten hours continuously instead of the scheduled sight — and even then I am now asked to continue for two hours more. Why? Isn't an engine-driver a human being? I don't care whether your train runs or not. Somebody was to take over from this station and now it appears that somebody has not put in his appearance .....

Purba—Why?

Chotelal—How do I know? The excuse is that blessed fellow is out to enjoy a holiday. This is, so I am told, Viswakarma Puja day and none is in a mood to work. In fact, none is willing to work lest Viswakarma, the lord of machines and all that should be angry! A fine excuse for holidaying! And if anybody is to suffer, well poor Chotelal is there! But I too know my job! I have told them straight that I am not going to work a minute more. Let the train have a perpetual halt here. I am not concerned.

Uttar—Why so angry, my friend? Come, you must be hungry — have some fresh Chanachur and then refresh yourself with a cup of Pubprasad's tea and then drive the train to its destination. Come .....

Chotelal—Well said! I have a severe headache and I feel feverish. I cannot work. Besides, the engine of the train requires a bit of repair here and there and there is not one mechanic present here.

Dakhin—That's rather odd. This is a Junction Station and everything and everybody is expected to be in readiness for all eventuality. Where are they gone?

Bharati—I saw all the workers going that way on the other side of the dam, all in a crowd, singing and shouting .....

Uttar—That's right. There they will have their Puja this night; and then entertainments — songs and dances and all that, you know .....

Bharat—Yes, I know Uttarlal. But without the help of the mechanics how will the train run now? How will it take its food-consignment to the hungry North? How many men, women and children are in anxious expectation of its arrival! What to do Chotelal?

Chotelal—What do I know? Ask the Sardar. He is just coming there. See how he has freshened himself with a bottle even now ..... Ask him how the wheels of the train will turn .....

(Sardar enters. He is slightly drunk)

Sardar—No ..... no ..... no turning of the wheels to-day! To-day is Lord Viswakarma's own day ..... and we are his devoted subjects ..... loyal and faithful to our Master! No work to-day. This is our holy day and this is our holiday. Glory be to Lord Viswakarma .....

Purba—Drunk even now? Couldn't wait for the night?

Sardar—That I do everyday, my dear friend. A long waiting for the whole day and then a little drinking at night! That's a routine affair. But this is a special day ..... a day of festivity ..... and hence a little early start. Don't you see that? Have I done anything wrong, Bharat Maharaj? This is a day of merry-making .....

Bharat—May be for you. But what about others who are facing a disaster?

Sardar—Disaster? What disaster? Whose disaster? Come, have just one peg and you will forget everything. Everything will be all right.

Bharat—Stop all this wild talk, Sardar. The engine requires a repair .....

Sardar—Quite natural. engines are meant for repair. Do away with the engine and you won't have to repair any more. No engine, no repair! No head, no headache. Cut off your head and there will be no headache, no trouble ..... Cut off your head first .....

Bharat—What nonsense are you talking, Sardar? Call your men; start your work and let the train begin its journey, please .....

Sardar—You are forgetting Bharat Maharaj that this is a holiday. This is Lord Viswakarma's day. No touching of instruments to-day. We can't afford to antagonise our Lord. Can we? Viswakarma will be angry. Don't you see?

Uttar—That I know Chotelal. But on the other hand, if the train does not carry the essential foodstuffs and all that to the North immediately thousands will die there.

Sardar—Doesn't matter. Let them die. Those who are destined to die let them die quickly. That will solve all problems. After all, they will die once, not twice. The quicker the better ..... (laughs)

Uttar — Listen Bharatramji, listen to his drunken ravings .....

Bharat—Look here, Sardar, please talk sense; otherwise I shall pour this cold water on your head and your drunkenness will end forthwith. There, on the one hand thousands are dying of starvation and here on the other one man is enjoying himself with a drink forgetting his own work. This is the way of the world! Why don't you speak to him, Chotelal, and try to make him see reason?

Chotelal—That's no part of my job.

Uttar—Don't you see so many men, women and children are on the point of death as a result of the terrible floods that have swept away everything they had? These people .....

Chotelal—(interrupting) Belong to the North. How am I affected if they die? I belong to the West. I am not concerned with what happens in the North.

Sardar—Well said, Chotelal! I come from the South. I shall see that everybody is quickly despatched to the southern gate of Yama, the Lord of Death. That will easily and quickly solve the problem of rise in prices. Why have the prices, of all things and of drink in particular increased? Increase in population ..... greater demand, but no supply! And everybody wants to drink—but there

is shortage of the stuff itself. Let the North be empty. Let there be less of men and the prices will come down.

Purba—Do you hear that Paschim Kumar? What do they say — this Chotelal and this Sardar? Have they no human feeling in them?

Bharat—Sardar, I appeal to you, please set your hands to work. Please call your men and see that the train runs again. For heaven's sake, let not these unfortunate people die of starvation with plenty of food rotting in the wagons there. Please see that the food reaches those who need them so urgently. Those starving men and women ..... some are perching on the tree-tops, some hanging perilously on the roofs of crumbling huts ..... many have been already swept away by the mad rush of the water ... please think of them ... have pity for them, Sardar. Try to save those who are still somehow alive. They are your own ..... They belong to your country. They are not different from you in any way. Nor are they distant from you. They are your own brothers and sisters, your own children ..... Save them, Sardar ..... Sardar, save them. There is yet time .....

Sardar—Please stop babbling like that, you old and garrulous fool! Don't disturb me. Let me enjoy my tipsiness. I had to spend for it.

Bharat—Chotelal!

Chotelal—What can I do?

Bharat—You are the driver of the train. You can do much. Just imagine how many people are looking forward to you ... waiting for you to drive that train into their station, fully loaded with food and clothes and medicines and so many other things that they need .....

Chotelal—But why should I take the trouble for them? I am suffering from a severe headache. I feel I am going to have temperature soon. Who are they to me that I shall forget my own pains to be of help to them?

Sardar—Yes. Who are they?

Bharat—They are your brothers, Sardar. They are your brothers .....

Sardar—Brothers? (laughs cynically) Brothers, you say? What kind of brothers? Chanachur fraternising with Dahibarah? Neck-tie calling Dhoti as brother? Pooh! No. I have no brother. I am alone ..... I have no brother, I say. I have none. Only: myself I know. I am here and I have no one else.....

Bharat—What do you say Sardar? Have you forgotten everything under the influence of drink? Have you no brother?

Sardar—No. No.

Bharat—You have forgotten everything. You are drunk.

Sardar—May be, but I have not forgotten anything. I remember everything.

Bharat—What do you remember?

Sardar—Why shall I say?

Bharat—I challenge you that you have forgotten everything.

Sardar—No. I remember everything.

Bharat—I say you do not. You cannot tell anything. You are drunk.

Sardar—I can tell everything. I can tell you, you old fool, that I had everything but ..... but now ..... now I have nothing. I have lost them all ..... all those who were by my side once. One by one they fell ..... In just two days' time all was over. All lights were extinguished ..... and I was left alone in the midst of darkness. In the wake of flood came epidemic in our village. No house was immune. Lamentations were heard here, there and everywhere. Whole families became extinct in the course of a day or two. Many fled away to save themselves. I could not. There was my old and invalid mother. There was my old father who had lost his eyes in a mine accident. I could not run away leaving them to their fate. Then there was my ..... my wife who was expecting a baby any day — a sick woman. And ..... and ..... (looking at Bharati with tearful eyes) there was my daughter too ..... my only daughter. And one day they all fell victims to that fell disease ..... cholera ..... I too was no exception.

Yes, I had a brother ..... a sturdy young man. I had nourished him myself and built him up, ... and that brother ran away to save his own life! He turned to nobody — not to his old parents, not to his own brother. He fled away. I remained with those helpless unfortunate beings ..... all of us sick, all of us helpless. In silent agony I stayed alone in that dark room. None came to our rescue. Lying there, too weak to move, I could perceive people evacuating the epidemic-ridden village. Those who could leave the village perhaps saw life again ..... I don't know. Those who remained, died. Before my very eyes I saw all my dear ones dying one by one ..... my mother, my father and then ..... then my wife too. I took my daughter ... my only daughter ..... I took her from her mother's lap and clasped her tightly to my breast as if to hold her back from death. I tried ..... I tried to hold her back ..... I was determined to struggle ..... but then ..... I found her gradually falling asleep in my arms ..... Yes, falling asleep ..... but she woke no more ..... she woke no more. .....

(In the meantime Bharati has come forward and held his hand)

Who is there? ..... Who touched my hands? Who is it? I felt the same soft touch I felt many years ago? Who is there?

Bharati—I am Bharati ... your daughter .....

Sardar—What? My daughter?

Bharati—(softly) Yes. Your daughter.

Sardar—My daughter? No. I have no daughter. My daughter is dead. I have none who is my own ..... no daughter, no brother .....

Uttar — (interrupting) I am your brother, Sardar.

Sardar—You Uttarlal! You are my brother?

Bharati—And I am your daughter.

Sardar—You Bharati! You are my daughter? No, no ..... you are none to me. Leave me alone ..... What is this? What are you doing? Why do you come so close to me, Bharati? Why do you hold my hand? Leave it. I say do please leave it ..... Ah! what has happened to me? Am I breaking down? Why do I feel so uneasy at heart? What a wave of new feeling sweeps my barren heart? Bharati, please let off my hand ..... Uttarlal please let me go .....

Bharat—None will let you go, Sardar. None will leave you. They are all your own. Look who are around you .....

(Purba Prasad and others have all come close to Sardar)

This Purba Prasad, this Dakhin Ranjan, this Chotela! ..... they are all your brothers.....

Sardar—No ..... no ..... my brother left me

(Continued on page 106)

IN THE JUNGLES OF MAMUNDI

By

DHIRENDRA NARAYAN ROY

IT was a winter evening. A round of tea had already been served. Arjun Sen lighted his Burma cigar and began to tell his shikar experience. Among the interested listeners were Valtu, his assistant, myself, and Acharya Mahashya.

Sen went on: That year, when my leave fell due, I planned a trip to the Jaintia Hill. But Valtu put in his objection. He put forward an uncalled for suggestion:

"Sahib, why not go to the Dooars? It is rich in forests as well as wild games."

At first I was inclined to ditto his proposal but then I remembered the tedious journey to Dooars now-a-days. So I dismissed his proposal summarily.

A Marathi friend of mine was at that time in Mamundi near Shahjehanpur. He was writing to me frequently for a visit to his place where games were abundant. I at once made up my mind and said:

"Do away with your Dooars—we shall go to Mamundi and there shall see plenty of wild life."

Valtu knew what to do and when. He did not say anything but held before me the Railway time-table.

Within a few hours, we sped for the railway station, got in the train and reached Shahjehanpur via Sitarampur. From there we had to take a jeep for the next thirty miles for our destination.

I had already sent a wire to my friend Jaswanta Rao who along with his wife gave me a rousing reception. He had reserved a full suite of his spacious bungalow for me and I felt very comfortable there.

At the tea table, Mrs. Rao provided us with frequent bursts of laughter. She was a smart young lady, very sprightly and was unsophisticated in her manners. When I enquired of Mr. Rao the cause of the laughter, he winked at his wife and in reply Mrs. Rao whispered something in his ears.

With a subdued glee Rao said:

"My wife is rather charmed by your unwieldly moustache and she is enjoying it very much."

It was not only at the tea table that Mrs. Rao enlivened us with her hearty laugh but next morning she also showed her worth in other fields. She had been up from bed very early in preparations of our shikar. She also managed to rouse Mr. Rao from bed. She knocked out slumber even from the bearers, the cook, the Mashalchi and in fact from all the inmates and attendants of the house.

I heard the thumping steps of Valtu on the verandah in front of my bed-room. He too seemed to be very busy. When asked to explain the cause of hurry, and whether he had heard the call of the tiger, Valtu stood before me saluting and replied:

"There the Memsahib is coming."

I looked forward and saw that she was comming to me.

"Good morning, madam."

"Good morning. But do please hurry up, we are all ready."

I was astonished. There was no news of any shikar, neither any arrangements had been made now there comes the call for a march.

I enquired where her husband was, to which she replied:

"Well, he is already up and is now busy dressing himself. We shall start after breakfast. We have got three horses and two elephants. Do please come to the table as early as you can.

We decided that Mr. and Mrs. Rao and myself would go on horseback. Valtu and Jamadar Damu would ride one elephant and the other one would be occupied by the bearer and the boy servant with our lunch.

We started in a few minutes. My rifle was fastened crosswise on my back. The two elephants followed us in a leisurely fashion. Mrs. Rao took her position between me and Mr. Rao and exuberantly went on chatting—she was so full of life. Her husband had scarcely any chance to utter a word.

About a mile from the Bungalow, there was a rivulet with sandy tracts of land on the bank overgrown in places by long grass. I was first disappointed on coming to the spot. There was no such jungle as to harbour our much expected game. I told Mr. Rao about my reactions at which Mrs. Rao vehemently put in a protest:

My wife is charmed with your unweldy moustache and she is enjoying it very much.

Oh no, no, don't you think so, Major Sen. The beasts of these places are sufficiently cunning and deceitful. You can never be sure about their sudden attacks.

Mounds of sands were noticed here and there overgrown with shrubs. There were of course a few tracts of cultivated land and at that time maize and tobacco were the crops. Foot marks of wild boars and deer were also noticed besides various kinds of birds. In front of us there was a sand-hill around which bush and thickets were having luxuriant growth forming a real approach to the jungle which indeed had been selected for our hunting campaign.

Gradually we came to a spot where the rivulet was flowing in a serpentine way on the other side of which was the dense forest. Sunlight seemed to be totally absent there.

I felt a queer sensation all over my body. The air had a peculiar smell and an uncommon grimness. My experience at once made me realise that there was a big game near about, and that game could not but be a tiger.

Jasowanta Rao looked at me and made a definite gesture to assure me of the spot where big games would not be lacking.

That I had to admit but where were the arrangements for shikar? The tiger won't come if we did not beat the jungle.

So let us wait till the elephants come. The peasants too might be called in the meantime if they would like to join us.

We three got down from the horses. Beside us there was a big pipul tree with an extensive shade below. We went to rest under it as also to have a talk on what we should do then. A few cultivators also, out of curiosity, left their work and assembled near us. I was going to light a cigarette when I noticed that a peasant boy, out of fun, stood near the forest and began to throw stones at the same.

No sooner had the young boy thrown three or four stones at the forest, than we heard a loud roar from there. We were much agitated and we found that the peasants who had assembled there were greatly terrified, they began to tremble and were dumbfounded.

The incident was so sudden and unforeseen that for a second, I too was puzzled. Without losing a minute, we hid ourselves behind the tree. In a moment, a tiger jumped out of the jungle. It was almost a grown-up animal though the dark patches on its body were not yet very vivid. In the twinking of an eye the tiger pounced upon the wretched boy who at once lay prostrate on the ground.

Mrs. Rao began to shout from behind me: Fire, Major, hit the tiger at once. Please don't delay.

Jasowanta Rao was rather in a fix—he was hesitant to use the gun lest the boy was hurt. Further if he missed it no body would be spared.

Strange. The tiger did not pay any heed to the boy but instead, like a cat playing over a mouse it began to look this way and that as if to take stock of the surroundings. Its long tail moved in the air and a pungent note of angry disapproval was heard.

We too could not for a couple of minutes decide what to do. But then it was time for me to rise to the occasion and my gun did its work. The shot was direct and pierced the bosom of the beast. Like a black of stone, it glided aside and lay on the ground.

Mr. and Mrs. Rao were greatly excited and their congratulations at my superb performance were really difficult to bear. The villagers also congregated around me. I rushed towards the tiger but very cautiously. It was well-known that one should not go near a cunning tiger without being fully assured of its death. I picked up a lump of earth and threw it on the tiger which however remained still as before. Coming near it I saw that the peasant boy was senseless. I pulled him out and soon he came to senses. He had not been seriously injured, only scratchings made by the paw of the tiger were to be seen on his body which was besmeared by the blood oozing out from the tiger.

Just at this time, the two elephants were seen hurrying towards us. As they came near us, Valtu jumped down from the back of the elephant and

running straight to me gave me a hearty salute which was his habit after a big 'shot' of mine.

Then the necessary works were done to bind the tiger on the back of the elephant.

Mrs. Rao proposed, "We shall have our lunch on our return to Bungalow."

No sooner had she finished her words, than a second roar from the jungle was heard. The peasants began to flee hither and thither. Jasowanta opposed any further move that day, saying:

"Let us stop now. We shall retire to-day and take our chance later.

But this was another challenge to me—how could I leave it behind? I prayed to my friend to return with Mrs. Rao and others. For me there remained the only way and that was to follow the track of the tiger and meet his challenge.

Mrs. Rao implored me in her sweet voice:

"You have not yet taken your lunch, that would certainly cause you enormous hardship. How I feel for that!"

"Oh, that's nothing. It would be quite nice if you kindly give the tiffin-carrier to Valtu."

I called Valtu who at once got upon the elephant with the tiffin carrier in hand. I too followed him. Mr. and Mrs. Rao got upon their horses and I took leave of them and started on my mission.

Soon we were lost in the jungle.

Our elephant was well-trained in hunting but in the absence of the usual driver he was reluctant to follow our advice. But, perhaps, there was some reason behind it. As we proceeded a few yards in the jungle, we heard another deep roar. Instantaneously the elephant became exceedingly restless and swinging its ears on both sides, raised its trunk and wanted to flee away. The mahout tried to control him with all his powers, goading it with the hook, uttering unintelligible words of remonstrance but the elephant paid no heed to these at all.

But how could I blame him? Firstly, he was a brand new hand and was hardly acquainted with the ins and outs of the elephant. Secondly, the elephant was alone in the jungle confronted by the roar of the tiger. It is extremely difficult for even a trained elephant to move in cool brain in that situation. So our carrier also went straight out of the jungle.

Coming to a comparatively open space, the elephant sighed a relief. I too got down from the elephant and began to caress him on his trunk but still it seemed to be in the grip of fear that was so vivid in his eyes.

Now listen to me what happened next. Naturally I was not a man to let matters go so easily. Valtu was also my able lieutenant. I asked him: "What should now be done?"

He was very prompt with his reply: "I always agree with whatever my master wishes."

"Then, come with me".

We two proceeded on foot. We had to stop for a while for there was a huge ditch caused perhaps by earthquake or any such freak of Nature. Through it flowed the river, having very scanty water, not even knee-deep. Beyond a large tract of sand rose gradually high up to the plains from where the jungle had again become dense.

Holding the rifle in hand, we two marched ahead laying a close scrutiny on our surroundings. Suddenly, through a thick bush by the side of the river-bed, something striped flashed out with the brilliance of a velvet. I spoke in the ears of Valtu:

"Let us go down."

We advanced a few steps on tip toes when the tiger slipped out from the other side and attempted to cross the river. Just on getting him within range, I fired and

Just on getting him within range I fired . . . . . .

the tiger toppled down in the water and then again rose up from it and began to run along the sandy river-bed.

I too lost all balance of mind and was seized by a peculiar craze to run after the tiger. But I was mistaken for I soon realised what penalty I had to pay for this folly. I thought that as the tiger had been hurt, it would not be able to go far. We had gone a great length extremely hungry, the tiger still eluding our grasp.

I was going to suggest something to Valtu when suddenly he dropped down.

The day in the meantime, had come to a close, and evening darkness was fast enveloping us.

What was to be done now?

Valtu began to pant asking for water.

I had really fallen into great trouble. A decision was very difficult under the circumstances.

Still I tried this way and that to find if any locality was nearby but no trace of any human being could be had. So it remained for us to depend on fate. I returned to the spot and attempted to rouse Valtu to some sort of activity. After a few minutes' effort, he somehow managed to stand up and cried pitiously.

"Let us go!"

"How's that', It is getting all dark. To advance that way is nothing but inviting death."

A pale smile was noticed on Valtu's lips. He looked at the sky and showed me that the moon was up in the sky and suggested that in that pallid moonlight we would proceed on.

We went on reeling and on reaching the river, Valtu pointed out to me,

"Look there, the elephant—the mahout must have come in search of us.

There was water in front of us. Valtu quenched his thirst with it and seemed as if to drink it to the lees. I too had a hearty drink.

As we reached the other side of the river, the mahout remonstrated us severely, saying. "How strange!. Have you indeed no fear of life?"

Valtu has got to be given a credit. In that condition, he most easily contrived to get on the back of the elephant by crawling on his hind legs and signalled the beast to sit down.

The elephant too was sympathetic and sat down immediately. I got upon the animal but suddenly felt a severe shivering as if the malaria of the Dooars had caught me in its grip.

I had to suffer a lot that time and could not leave my bed before three months.

* * * * * *

Arjun Sen paused for a moment and then said:

—Well, I have just finished a very interesting tale and should rest for the night before I go to my next.

HAND IN HAND

(Continued from page 102)

alone in the very jaws of death and fled to save himself .....

Bharat—And would you do the same thing, Sardar? Would you leave your brothers in the same way and stand still here to see them die. You are so angry, so upset because your brother did not stand by your side in times of crisis. Now think of the crisis of hundreds of your brothers in the North, poor and helpless victims of flood. Think of the starving men, women and children. Think how they are waiting eagerly for you in the hope that you would help the train reach their food and clothes. The train will move only when you set your hands to it ..... you and your fellow-workers. You are so upset just because you lost your one daughter. Now think of hundreds of fathers like you who are holding their daughters tightly to their breasts to save them expecting a providential rescue every moment.

Bharati—(in a soft voice) Come father, call your men. Let us all go together. It is already late. Father .....

Sardar—(overwhelmed) F - A - T - H - E - R ! The same affectionate call that pleased my ears and soothed my heart years ago! F-A-T-H-E-R! Tell it once more, Bharati ..... Call me by that name once more, my daughter, my darling .....

Bharati—Father!

Uttar—Brother!

Sardar—Ah! How soothing! After how many years I hear these sweet calls. Yes, I shall go ..... I shall work ..... I shall make the train start once more. My daughter calls ..... my brother calls ..... Can I remain indifferent? Call the workers back ..... let us all put our shoulders to the wheel. The train will run ..... the wheels will turn. To-day is the day of our real work. This is no holiday. We shall work.....

Bharat—And it is through work that you will truly worship your God. Work is worship. God accepts that offering which is made by all standing together, hand in hand, in the unity of heart, in love and friendship. And it is not only that God is pleased, but the country thrives also ..... and that means every one is benefited .....

Chotelal—Come, Sardar, let us join hands to make the train run again (Pub-Pascim Uttar-Dakhin) (All together)—And then we too shall cry .....

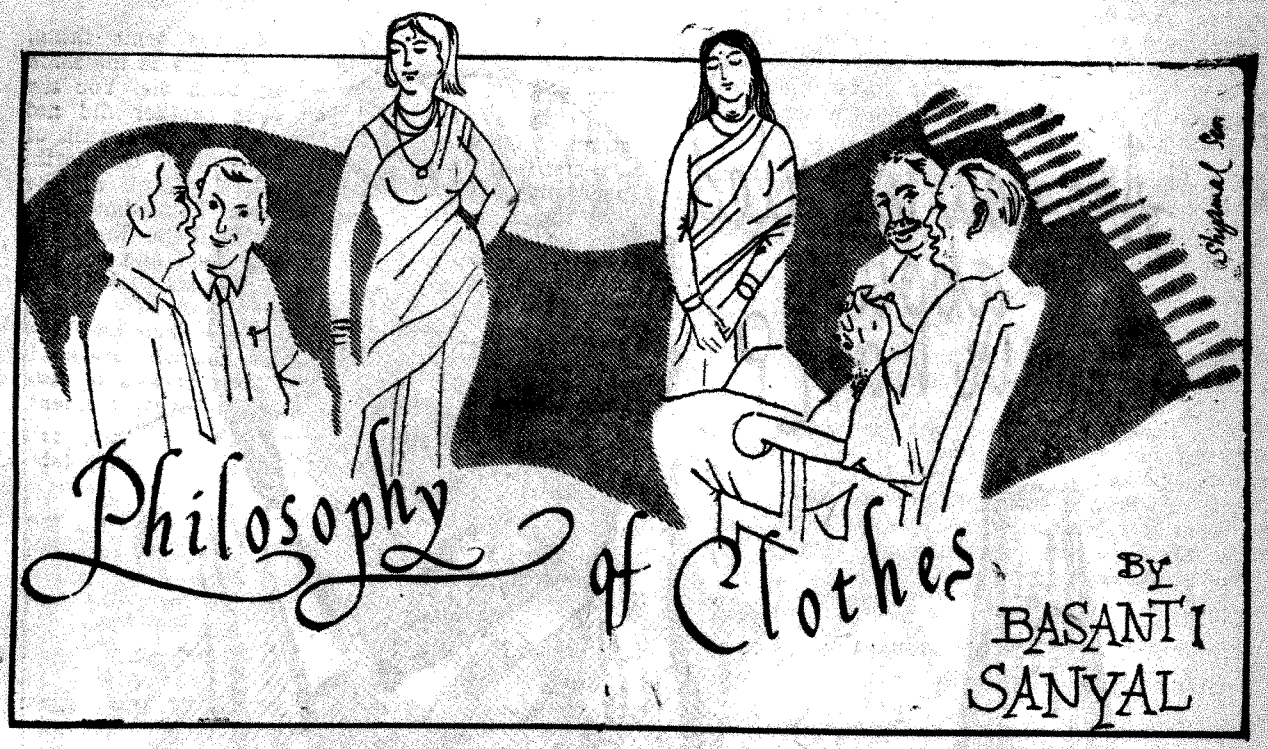
Purba—Tea! Hot Tea!

Paschim — Puri Mithai ... Rosgulla .....

Uttar—Chanachur ..... Chanachur 'garam' Chanachur .....

Bharat — (pleased) That's the right spirit. Jai Hind :

Chorus : Jai Hind :



Philosophy of Clothes

By BASANTI SANYAL

MY aunt's philosophy of clothes was no mere abstraction but a practical principle of which her own life had been a standing example. Irrespective of what prof. Teufelsdroch would have had to say on the matter, she firmly held that in the present century it was clothes that made the man. The old adage of a person being known by the company he kept had had to give way to the new one of his being known by the clothes he wore, what with the science of psychology coming to the fore and the company kept being no longer a matter of volition but determined in strict accordance with one's station in life.

As an example of what a judicious application of her philosophy could achieve she was never tired of relating the circumstances that led to her marriage to uncle. Of hundreds of girls it was she alone who achieved the miracle of conforming at once to both uncle's and my grandfather's conceptions of a bride, which meant performing a feat of no less a magnitude than bringing the Poles together. All she did was to appear before the old man in a simple, white saree with broad red border—an apparel so strongly reminiscent of the household goddess Annapurna—that it almost brought tears to the old man's eyes. Subsequently, however, when she was meeting uncle and his friends, she had changed into a borderless georgette and a blouse cut low, an ensemble which showed her curves to advantage and proclaimed her to be the then last word in modernity. So it was that the choices of the orthodox father and the modern son tallied wonderfully.

Even as she was being interviewed aunt had noticed that uncle needed some education in clothing to which task she set herself assiduously even before the echo of the wedding bells had worn to silence. To quote her very expressive terms, she had his "pillow-case" Kurtas replaced by gailyprinted Hawaii shirts, and his "maternity" bush-coats by streamlined lounge-suits. His "shopping-bag" corduroys were given away to the sweeper, while his "pyjama-cord" neckties were made use of as such. Shortly afterwards uncle got a raise in office. The good luck was attributed to the bride's auspiciousness. But my aunt herself modestly declined to be associated, however favourably, with anything that smacked of the superstitious, and, scientifically, ascribed uncle's promotion to his smart turn-out which carried an impression of efficiency.

Thereafter she tenaciously adhered to her philosophy of clothes applying it in all vital matters in life like making friends, choosing tenants and lending money. And when, in spite of taking every precaution, friends betrayed, tenants gave trouble or borrowers did not pay, she went to a lawyer who wore the most tattered gown—a sure pointer to his long experience in the line.

When I took to her my problem of choosing a groom from amongst a number of equally eligible suitors aunt's method of tackling it was characteristic. She invited all the suitors to dinner, an occasion, she maintained, which called for the best in a person's clothes' sense and hence gave him away the most. The idea also appealed to me. It was to

(Continued On Page 110)

Are you worried about your hair?

Use **Lakshmibilas** — a medicated and perfumed hair oil with **Century Old Tradition**, for all your hair troubles. It helps luxuriant growth of hair, revitalises the roots of hair and keeps your brain cool. A regular use of at least three months will produce the desired effect.

LAKSHMIBILAS

HAIR OIL

M. L. BOSE & COMPANY PRIVATE LIMITED

LAKSHMIBILAS HOUSE · CALCUTTA-9

IN THE LAND OF NO SERVANTS

By AN AUSTRALIAN CORRESPONDENT

THE question was first asked by a special Bengali friend in Madras: "How do your Australian women manage without servants?"

I have been often asked the same question by Indian friends. There is a short, easy answer: "Australian homes manage to do all the work themselves because employment is so high that servants are either too difficult to obtain or too expensive to maintain."

Indian friends feel the question is partly unanswered, or not to their satisfaction.

This, I suppose, is because the servant has become such an important unit in the Indian home, even of those in the lower middle income brackets, that they can hardly imagine a home able to afford servants being without one.

But it is a fact that the average Australian family, including those in high income groups do without servant help of any kind, whether washerwoman, cook, sweeper, gardener, message boy or any other domestic help.

The Australian housewife, except in rare cases where the family is very large or her husband is compelled by his position to entertain a lot, can get along without servants.

I have discussed the social implications of such a phenomenon with Indian friends (although Australians, I must point out, do not regard it as a phenomenon).

A servantless country surely must reflect the natural ability of its people to manage with a little bit of extra industry and organisation. The fact is that Australians have never been used to servants. The society is more or less a servantless society. There is no sign of class barriers, although the men in richer incomes prefer to mix with those enjoying the same high income, they do not regard salary grades as measures of inferiority.

That is why I am so proud to be an Australian, to have been brought up in a home without servants (although we could have afforded to) and to have developed our parents' view that there is a lot that can be done by oneself, and with advantage to the soul. "God helps him who helps himself" has application in this servant question.

There is an economic factor which has important bearing on the servant question in Australia.

Australia has a high living standard, and the laws lay down a minimum basic wage of round about Rs. 300 a week to any worker skilled or unskilled. There are, of course, gardeners who are employed on a day-to-day basis and naturally enjoy a high measure of comfortable living. There are also domestics attached to hospitals and other public institutions. But the average home couldn't see its way to paying such an amount for work which they feel can very well be done by members of the family.

This, in turn, has reduced the number of people seeking work as servants in private homes. They prefer to seek other work, just as highly paid. There are exceptions. Elderly couples sometimes employ a domestic help, but these people class themselves as good as their employers.

The position in India could not be more different. Here the servant, or servants, would seem to be indispensable. There is underemployment, and servants are easy to get, and their wages are low. It appears to me that in many Indian homes, one servant could quite easily do the work of three or four, but here again there is the Indian custom or tradition or unwritten law that the work of the cook must be strictly separated from that of the sweeper, or the nursemaid.

What effect does all this have on the resourceful attributes of the Indian girl? Indian society accepts the servant, so the daughters of the house naturally refrain from doing work that can easily be done by the available servants. And why do they work, if you employ servants to do it? It is a fair question, but has it any application to the changing times?

An Indian girl when she marries expects to

have the same servant attention as she did before she left her parents' home.

Indian husbands have discussed this problem with me on the grounds that their wives are sometimes too demanding in their servants' requirements. One or two have even hinted that it would be better if their wives were more occupied in household chores than have such time to fret and complain about their hard lot. The husband must sometimes look to the economic costs. If he could cut the servants' bill, it could mean money spent to better advantage elsewhere—better schooling for the children, perhaps, or a better holiday.

I marvel at the ability of the Australian women to manage without domestic help, and yet not suffer physically or temperamentally. It is a question of all members of the family doing their little bit. The husband will cook and help with shopping. The daughters of the house will do the household washing and cleaning and dusting. They'll clean their own shoes, iron their own dresses.

Certainly the high standard of Australian living includes quick washing gadgets. But the washing has to be placed on the line, and the household linen has to be ironed.

The marvel of it all is that the Australian housewife having done without servants has time to spare from household duties. If she is not gardening, she is out playing golf with other housewives.

She can find time for a round of golf, and get back to prepare the evening meal for the family.

After the meal, she settles down to watch the television, while other members of the family, including Dad, wash the dishes and tidy the kitchen. They will even prepare the next day's breakfast.

So the Australian housewife doesn't miss servants. I would say she enjoys doing the work herself. Admittedly, she likes a rest from household chores now and again, with a holiday at an hotel or guest house for instance.

But she loves to get back to her home and household duties.

Indian husbands sometimes doubt, sometimes express wonderment when I discuss the servantless Australia.

Some have even said that India, in her ultimate planning, will become less dependent on servants. It could perhaps be something good for national morale.

As I said before, "God helps those who help themselves."

PHILOSOPHY OF CLOTHES

(Continued from page 107)

be something of a modern version of the time-honoured Swayamvara.

My aunt's silence when the guests had left was ominous.

"The businessman's son was very well-dressed." I remarked, wanting to draw her out.

"Over-dressed," she pronounced, "Which means over-anxiety to display wealth. Even if you were to laze all day like the princess in the fables with body on a gold bed and feet on a silver one, you surely couldn't marry a person who showed lack of culture."

"The Zemindar's nephew, then ?" I asked hopefuly.

"His suit looked good."

"My dear, you are too simple," my aunt laughed derisively. "Didn't you notice it sat clumsily on him, and he seemed to feel awkward in it, the way he

"Over dressed" she pronounced.

kept shrugging his shoulders ? He had evidently come dressed for the occasion in borrowed plumes. It was more than probable that at home he went about in shabby pyjamas, good for nothing except puffing at the hubble-bubble."

"The I.A.S. ?" I asked, somewhat dubiously this time. "Well, he.....he was too correct," aunt returned. "He had dressed too carefully to be convincing, as though he was afraid of giving himself away. He certainly hasn't an aristocratic background."

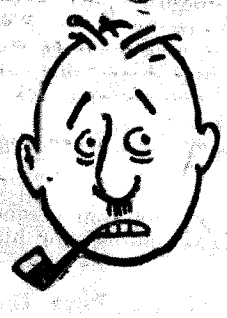
"The Army Officer," I said, nervously now as I came to the end of the list, trying not to sound like a person snatching at a straw. A uniform, at least, which had to be strictly according to regulations, could, by the very nature of the case, afford no loopholes.

Aunt was silent once again, but I failed to interpret the silence.

"Why should he have come in a Battle-dress," she rapped out at length, "if it wasn't that he couldn't afford a Barathea ? Plain as water, he has relatives to support and, very likely, sisters to marry. A husband with extra-marital liability is worse than one who has extra-marital affairs."

A wise spinster, saved from committing a life-long folly, I am now an ardent votary of my aunt's philosophy.

SRIPATI SAMANTO



By BONOPHUL

HE overcrowded train had hardly a breathing space inside any of its compartments. Passengers were practically huddling inside the Third-classes; Inter-classes were packed to suffocation; all the berths of the Second-class compartment were occupied. Only a First-class compartment was empty, except for a gentleman dressed in the European way occupying one of its seats.

The train halted at a station; it was about eight in the evening. Sripati Samanto shuttled from one end of the platform to the other in a futile attempt to manage even a foothold. Yet he was determined he would travel by that train in a sleeping state, and he had a ticket for the third class.

Everyone is not a Napoleon, and Sripati was not even a scratch of that great hero. He therefore could not make what was 'impossible' possible. Failing in his attempts for some minutes to mange even a grip on one of the handles, Sripati Samanto gave up the idea of travelling to Calcutta by that train with a sleeping accommodation. But he was badly in need of sleep that night, as he had not a wink of it during the past three days. Two days were fully spent in supervising the marriage ceremony of the grand-daughter of an intimate friend. And the third night was the hottest in the season. Replacing the dislodged eye-glasses properly Sripati Samanto suddenly shouted at the coolie—"Look, stop there!"

It was true that Sripati was not Napoleon, but he was the illustrious son of late Chhidam Samanto, the most venerable personality still remembered by the old as well as young of the locality.

He abruptly stopped there. Within a second he felt a spur to apply his practical common sense and intelligence. He walked up to the assistant station master talking to the guard of the train and solicited with some hesitation—"Really a problem, Sir, to travel by this train . . . . of course, if you kindly permit, Sir, I may occupy just a corner of that compartment", and he pointed to the Servants' compartment attached to the First Class.

At first the assistant station-master felt confused at the impertinent desire of a haggard-looking aged Indian, but later he felt pity for his utter ignorance, when he reminded him smilingly—"Well, my dear old man, you're mistaken, that's a First class compartment!"

Sripati however was not a fool who could not distinguish a First Class from other classes. He therefore begged more humbly—"Not that one Sir, I mean the smaller one adjacent to the First Class. There is neither cushion nor anything of the kind; if your honour be so kind....I mean, I'm a poor old man and physically unwell....upon God, Sir, I'd no sleep for the last three days....

The gentleman of the First Class Compartment was watching through the window and was enjoying the conversation; he had a burning pipe gripped between his teeth.

Sripati Samanto did not look at all smart, rather he was niggardly looking; a shabby short dhuti, bare body, a pair of slippers made by some local shoe-maker, a pair of spectacles with glasses cracked and set obliquely on a nickel-frame with only one hand and the other replaced by a piece of twine. His neck was slightly slanting at one side, eyes crimson and without lashes, a beardless face saturated with politeness, a wide bald and a normal tropical complexion. He carried a country-made *Hukka* in one hand.

"Well, ask that gentleman," the assistant station master pointed at the person in the First Class Compartment, "That compartment is meant for his servant. If he does not object, I've nothing to say—"

The gentleman in the First Class Compartment was a Bengalee by birth, though European in outfit. He however grunted with the stub of the tobacco-barrel chewed between his teeth—"No! that can't be. I can't allow that."

Sripati implored with clasped palms—"I'm also no better than your servant, Sir! If you kindly permit me, Sir . . . . . "

The highbrow passenger perhaps felt it beneath his dignity to prolong the discussion with an apparently rustic fellow and immediately withdrew himself from the window and switched the fan on to full speed.

The first bell rang. Once more Sripati helplessly looked at the third class compartments. Passengers swarmed just in a bee-hive even on the foot-boards. He hesitated for a moment, but instantly fixed up his mind.

"Please listen to me, Sir," he addressed the railway official, "I'm boarding this compartment. Kindly send the crew here, I shall pay him the fare," and immediately—"Come here, coolie, keep the luggage here beneath this bench. Yes, all right!"

"Look — stop there!"

he called his attendants to stow all the articles he was carrying inside the First Class Compartment. The articles of course included a few bundles of sal-leaves, a bundle of empty hessian bags, two big earthen jars of molasses, a large melon, a fish-knife, a fishing-line, two enormous baskets full of various packets and packages and a half-maund tin full of ghee. His attendants got down after settling his master and the articles securely inside the Compartment. The old Samanto then said to his personal attendant with a smile—"Well, Banchha, now you stay at the attached compartment and make another *Hukka* ready. Right!"

"All right, Babu," Banchha got down and slipped inside the servant's compartment. Meanwhile the train began to move.

Stripati Samanto then kissed his *Hukka* with a long breath, whiffed off a clot of cough through the window noisily and then observed as if addressing that Anglo-Bengalee gentleman—"Excuse me, Sir, I must require a sleep this night to keep my brain cool and active, because I'm to make a very brisk business transaction to-morrow morning."

In due time a T.T.I. with beard and moustache, appeared and asked for the fare. Sripati squatted on the bench with his back obtusely at the ticket-checker and took out a long cotton-purse from his waist. He then turned it upside down on the cushion of the bench, paid off his fare including charges for the articles and again kept it secured in its proper place together with the receipt. If anybody would have a chance at that time to count the contents of his purse, he could discover that it contained besides small coins and currency notes of small denomination a few bundles of currency notes amounting to ten thousand rupees.

"Your ticket please!" the ticket-checker turned to that First Class passenger.

"My ticket is in my suitcase, you may take my word for it," the gentleman replied.

The ticket-checker insisted—"I cannot punch your word; my duty is to punch tickets."

Ultimately it could be discovered that excepting a match-box, a tobacco-pipe and a cinema-weekly, that First Class passenger had nothing with him.

An altercation ensued. In a few minutes English turned its tail and the national language came to reinforce the guttural strength of the two oral fighters.

Sripati was drawn to a dozing which was abruptly shattered. He sat up erect.

What a damnable trouble! Would they not allow him an undisturbed sleep!

Sripati Samanto gaped his mouth in an enormous yawn. Suddenly he came to be alert at the ticket-checker remarking that he was quite familiar with the habits and manners of the Bengalee people, so . . . . . .

His hairless brows wrinkled in a frown. He again squatted on the cushioned bench and drew out his purse—"Well, Mr. Ticket Checker, there's no good arguing uselessly. Waste of energy! Better tell me what's the fare, I'm paying it off.

I must sleep this night at any cost. A few coins will make little difference."

Both the ticket-checker and the First Class passenger were dumb-founded. What an unexpected proposal!

Samanto Babu dispensed with the railway official and told that First Class passenger—"Are you not going to Calcutta, Sir? That's it. Please therefore return the money to my gaddi according to your convenience," and he gave him his address.

Thereafter he turned to the checker and remarked in distorted national language—"Listen, Sir, how many Bengalees have you actually come across? Let me ask you what sort of etiquette is

". . . how many Bengalees have you actually come across?"

this to call the whole race by name? Durga Sreehari . . . Durga Sreehari . . .

Sripati Samanto again lay flat on his bench.

I do not know whether that First Class passenger paid off his debt or not, but he did not dare to light his pipe during the rest of his journey.

(Translated by Dilip Mukhopadhyay)

THE EXPECTED MOMENT

By MANABENDRA PAUL

THE morning bus on the Kalna-Burdwan route pulled on leaving behind the railway level-crossing at Dhatrigram.

The road cuts straight through rich paddy fields. The young rice plants now bright green in the morning sun waves with gusts of north wind. There is a nip in the air.

The passengers feel it and looked about with lively eyes. They started very early from their villages either to attend the district court at the first hour, or to consult their pleaders, or see a doctor for some difficult case. The weather and the landscape cheer them up.

The decrepit bus proceeds wearily, bumping and jolting along the potholed road, at ten miles per hour. Not that it cannot run faster, but the passengers won't be happy with the jerkings. The costly nuts and bolts also may give way.

The bus leaves a storm of dust behind.

The conductor approaches the passengers for fares.

— How far do you go?

— Ainapara.

— Ten annas, please!

He counts the money and gives a ticket.

The man scrutinises the ticket with a frown of disbelief. He shows it to his neighbour and asks. — Is it all right?

The neighbour assures him with a smile. But his suspicion is not allayed. He asks — Is it ten annas?

The gentleman smiles again and says — Yes. it is in order

The passenger carefully wraps the ticket in his napkin.

The driver is a slim person with long back-brushed hair. He has tucked up his dhoti above the knees. While driving he frequently smokes a biri and blows the horn whenever a stray bullock cart is seen on the road. At the sudden shriek the bullocks get scared and wildly run towards the side ditches at a tremendous speed. The driver laughs heartily at the plight of the cartman.

Sometimes there is a timid goat or a Santhal boy on the road, very close by. The driver stops the car at once with an abrupt brake action. At the sudden jerk the passengers lose balance and tumble over one another. But they do not take it amiss. They are used to it. They rather praise the driver for his promptness which saves a life.

From Kuchut, the bus speeds up. They think that this is to make up for lost time. None can guess the reason for the sudden acceleration, and in this particular area. Only the conductor knows the cause. Near the next stoppage he smartly pulls the cord of the stopping bell, and cries aloud with some mystery in his voice — "Hatgobindpur, Hatgobindpur".

A happy smile sights up the driver's face.

The bus stops at the bend of the road near a pucca well. Waiting passengers hurriedly come forward with their small suitcases made of coloured tin, wearing half-dirty dhoties under new shirts still showing the maker's name-stamp. Others carry

some documents under their armpits—litigants with grave anxious looks.

A teen-aged bride walks under a veil behind her young groom. She is going to her father-in-law's place probably for the second time after marriage, her frightened eyes full of tears. She looks at the bus and recognises it—it is the same vehicle that carried her back to her father's place only a few days ago, and now the same vehicle will snatch her away from her loving parents to some cruel fate of merciless trials.

The driver of "Aparupa", which is the name of bus No. 14, looks at the weeping bride, and is full of sympathy and pity.

Leaving Hatgobindpur the bus soon reaches another junction of the road where stands an old and broken temple of the deity known as Trilochan Shiva. The deity is absent, the temple is overgrown with snake infested bushes. A sturdy banyan tree has grown over the temple spreading its zigzag roots into all cracks and crevices winding round the temple.

The girl has come again with a lantern in her hand anxiously waiting for the bus.

Here the driver slows down and for no apparent reason starts hooting the horn repeatedly, although no cause of alarm is in sight. Of course there was a sad accident here long ago, when a drunken driver ran over a girl causing her instantaneous death. But that is no reason why a careful driver should become nervous and stop the car dead.

Yes, the bus has stopped here, although it is not a regular stoppage.

Ah, there! a girl is seen standing alone at the corner of the road. Her face is suddenly lit with joy, and with one bound she runs up to the footboard of the bus and straightway mounts the driver's seat, saying "Oh! my father, you have come, you have come !"

This was her expected moment, and now she has completely changed the atmosphere with her happy voice, chirping like a bird.

Some of the daily passengers are amused, they know this mid-journey secret of the father and daughter's meeting. But others get impatient due to the unnecessary delay. they begin to clamour.

But the driver is now deaf to all remonstrances, the girl has already climbed on to his lap, and is talking to him eagerly.

— Now, what have you brought for me father?

— Just get down from my lap and I will show you.

He brings out from under the seat cushion two oranges and some coloured lozenges and hands them over to her.

The girl begins to dance and clap in joy.

— But where is my pretty doll ?

— That will come to-morrow.

The girl now tries to pull him down, saying — Come home, once only for a second.

— No, no, that can't be. The bus will be very late.

— It is not for me, but for my mother, she asked you to come.

The driver does not reply. He calmly resumes his seat.

Without further request the girl gets down and stands on the road. She knows quite well that her father won't come, although their home is so near. Yet she can't help begging for it everytime she meets her father.

The driver starts the engine, the bus begins to move. He has still to go far, and is already somewhat late.

In the afternoon the bus comes back through the same route, now from Burdwan to Kalna

It stops again at the same place near the broken temple. But now it is dark. Jackals howl from a distance, and mosquitoes hum in the air. The girl has come again with a lantern in her hand, anxiously waiting for the bus. Though she has no watch to go by, she knows the exact time when the bus will return.

The bus stops as usual. The girl runs to her father. She says. —

— Now you must get down. Mother had made some Dalpuri for you.

The driver fondles the girl with tender caresses, and patting her on the back, says, — Now go back, it is getting dark.

The engine starts. With tearful eyes the girl holds on to the handle of the door and asks piteously—Just wait a moment.

From under her frock she brings out an aluminium casket and handing it to him says—Here, mother has sent Dalpuri for you.

The driver takes the casket from her hand and looks rather wistfully towards a small hut that is their own home. Only a little distance apart by the side of the road, on the other edge of the small

(Continued on page 122)

MURDER OF CHHABI

By TUSHAR KANTI GHOSH, W. B. C. S.

IT is exactly eleven months from today that I came away from you all. This is the last letter that you will get from me. No, no, I am not leaving this world for good—I am leaving this sordid place and soon I shall join Santu and you once again. Coming away to this distant land, I thought I would earn some money and along with that, spend some months incognito. Money I have made to some extent, but the supposed happiness of living incognito has vanished completely. Now I am thinking, it would be more tolerable to live with you, in spite of my poor earnings there and your consequent discontentment.

This letter will be a bit lengthy because you will find elements of a short novel or a story in it. Oh, no, in this stage of my life I do not look for any new romance. Some thrilling incidents have occurred here which I have encountered in the course of my service. I shall try to give you in outline a picture of those happenings.

Away from human habitation, in the middle of a forest is a leprosy home where I am working as a doctor. I did not tell you of that earlier, intentionally. The salary is lucrative and the quarters a pretty one, overlooking a small, blue hill. I have done a bit of gardening, and set up a poultry. In the beginning, while puffing my cigarette on the corridor with red tile-shed, I thought I had no further needs — I forgot all of you, even Santu. The patients would disperse by 11 o'clock and from then on I had perfect liberty. From that sense of perfect freedom I got a desire—to do some work for those poor lepers. What work? — To provide them in such a manner that they could earn their living. Our leprosy home only supplies medicines and similar benefits to them. With my own eyes I saw their misery. Some used to go to beg, others starved. They stayed in their small huts about half-a mile away from our home. The subdivisional town was eight miles away. From there officers would come once in a month and distribute money and wheat by way of relief. I thought there was some scope for arranging better living for them—particularly those lepers who had become negative. The name of the doctor in charge was Mr. Hart. You will hear more of him later on. He was a bachelor and would not mix with anybody cordially, not even with me. I then thought he had some mental agonies. I was thinking whether I should chalk out a plan to rehabilitate the lepers, when things took a sudden unexpected turn.....

At about midnight one day, I was relaxing on the easy chair in my room and going through a journal when I heard an excited voice outside my room, I got up and said, "Come in." A young man of twentythree or twentyfour came hurriedly in. He wore rayon trousers; on his body there was no shirt but there was only a torn vest; his hair was dishevelled; on his wrist there was no watch, a few scratch marks were seen on his arms. A number of explanations flashed in my mind. On seeing me he said, "You are a doctor? Save me please, please." He narrated the entire episode to me. I gave him an anti-virus lotion and a strong soap and sent him to the bathroom, asking him to have a thorough wash. I gave him my dhoti and punjabi. When he returned from the bath, I gave him some pills. I went to give him an injection but he politely re-

fused to take one in the night, saying he was too much allergic to injection.

It did not miss my eyes that he did not swallow the pills but only feigned having taken the same and gulped in some water. I also did not understand why he was looking at my things. However, I did not attach any importance to that. Keeping him seated in my drawing room I went to the kitchen and lit the stove. I prepared two cups of coffee and when I brought the same to the drawing room I saw him looking into my drawer. On seeing me he placed a newspaper on my drawer as if he was reading the newspaper. I thought due to nervousness the gentleman was behaving in that restless way. After drinking the coffee he seemed to warm up. He gave me further details. He had a big amount of money with him—but everything had been taken away—including his terylene shirt and watch. I told him to come with me and point out the house he was taken in. He went with me and the house which he pointed out was quite known to me. I was wondering how Chhabi could do such thing. Hardly a girl of 19 or 20, she had by her behaviour commanded my respect. Her brother was a leper and in that connection I knew her. They lived in thousand miseries, there were many inmates in their house—but amidst all this shone her youth like a blooming rose. I could never imagine that this youth was her source of income. She had gone to the town and had the young gentleman accompany her to her house and the gentleman had discovered at a much later stage that there was stinking leprosy in her body. He was not so much worried about the loss of his property as about the possible contact of the disease; and he confessed that he had a loving, charming wife at home. I suggested the police be immediately informed; but he shudderred at the idea, lest it should make everything known to his wife. I then went straight into the house. On seeing me at that late hour, Chhabi seemed to have understood the purpose of my visit. She fell at my feet. The money was returned along with the shirt and the watch. I handed over the same to the gentleman, who at once stole away in the dark, saying that he would later return my dhoti and punjabi.

Next morning I reported the matter to Hart. Immediately he took out his motor cycle and started for the town to return in an hour along with the Subdivisional Officer. We held a conference. It was felt that due to poverty, some of them were led to that extreme path. The S.D.O. said he would arrange monthly payment of cash and wheat to each of them if they gave up begging and that evil trade. Hart said he would start a large poultry with them and they would each get wages. On that very day an association was formed, consisting of about fifty women. I was given charge of management. Wheat poured in from Sadar. The association went ahead with its work smoothly. I was also feeling satisfaction at the work.

But the trouble came from another direction. It was about a fortnight afterwards. The time was about midnight. All of a sudden I heard sharp whistle notes and saw torch light dashes in the leper colony. There were a police van and some motor cycles. There was no doubt that the police were raiding the place. After a while a police officer came to me and requested me to help them in their search. I went there. All the huts were surrounded and on search a huge quantity of illicit liquor was recovered. Those who were arrested could not

(Continued on page 118)

I prepared two cups of coffee and when I brought the same to the drawing room I saw him looking into my drawers.

Tantric Elements IN BENGALI DURGA PUJA

HE Durga Puja is today, and has probably been always, observed by the Bengalis as a national festival centring round the worship of the Goddess Durga. Whatever may be the ancient and classical origin of this worship—the untimely invocation of the Mother by Sri Ramchandra on the eve of the war with Ravana or the autumnal worship of the Mother by King Surath on the restoration of his lost kingdom—the Durga Puja as an annual celebration in Bengal is not older than 1581 when Raja Kangsa Narayan of Tahirpur performed this worship for the first time under the guidance of the famous Tantrik Ramesh Saraswati of Burdwan. A century and a half later, Maharaja Krishnachandra of Nadia lent added prestige to this worship when he organised it about the mid-eighteenth century on an extended scale. Since then the vogue has gained ground of every Bengali family of means performing the worship with all the trappings of a local community festival. Over the last quarter of a century even the worship is being organised on a local community basis—a fact which accounts for the Durga Puja having developed into a more vigorous national institution than before, even though during this period other religious worship of Bengali Hindus has progressively decayed.

There is a good deal of popular misunderstanding not only about the historicity of this worship but also in other respects. There is a facile impression that the Durga Puja is a Tantrik worship derived from the Chandi in the third episode of which the Goddess Ambica assured the prayerfully assembled Gods that someday She would appear on the earthly scene as Durga. The Durga Puja is no doubt a Tantric worship, as in fact all ritualistic worship of Gods and Goddesses is. But basically, it is more Pauranic than Tantrik. The Goddess in Chandi, the Tantric source of the Durga cult, is the Supreme Mother. She is Mahamaya, the manifested Reality of the Absolute. She is all; but She has no husband, no sons, no daughter. But the demon-killing Mother (the same demon whom She killed in the second episode of Chandi) as we have in our annual festival is the centre of a family. Tradition in fact regards Her as the married daughter of Himalaya and Menaka being on an annual visit to her parents' home along with her husband and children. The whole drama is Pauranic and has little to do with her Chandi role making her appearance on earth "for the purpose of fulfilling the task for the Gods." Ramesh Saraswati, it seems, in introducing the worship in 1581, deliberately toned down the

By K. M. PURKAYASTHA

Tantrik significance of the Mother in order to make her worship or popular one, tuned to the emotional key of the average man and woman of Bengal. It is noteworthy here that the great Tantrik Krishnananda Agambagis of Navadwip about half-a-century before the first Durga Puja in Bengal performed by Raja Kangsa Narayan composed his famous book "Tantrasar". But there the pride of place is given to the worship of Mother Kali. In spite of much attenuation in her worship, it is Kali who is the more basic Tantric diety and not Durga.

THE SHAKTI THEORY

There is a second popular impression that the Durga Puja of the Bengalees is *par excellence* the worship of *Shakti*. This is so much magnified a view as not to be correct. All Vedic and Tantrik conceptions of Gods and Goddesses are that they are consciousness-facets of the Supreme, and Tantra having identified consciousness with force all Tantric worship is nothing but the worship of Shakti. The Durga Puja has no singular distinction in this respect. What has specially influenced such an interpretation of Durga Puja is the custom of *Bali* or sacrifice associated with it. *Bali*, it is thought, symbolises self-sacrifice vicariously made. The late Swami Saradananda of the Ramakrishna Mission in his book *Shakti Worship in India* while fully identifying all Tantric worship with the worship of Shakti has emphasised that abstinence and self-sacrifice are the key-stone of an effective invocation of Shakti by a worshipper. This I venture to believe, is Vedantising all Tantric worship and in effect, suggesting that the worship of Shakta Gods cannot be efficaciously offered by an average householder with his propensity for enjoyment and self-fulfilment. Such a view is hardly correct. For, it is the essence of Tantric worship that it is legitimate for a man to crave egoistically—"Give me beauty, give me victory, give me reputation, give me mastery over the enemies"—so long as he recognises all these as flowing from the gift of Gods. Abstinence and abnegation follows from the effect of worship and are not a condition of it, as Swamiji inclines to think. Or in other words, the worship of Shakti is not the exclusive privilege of an ascetic. As already stated, much of the popular misunderstanding about Tantric Puja stems from the institution of *Bali* or goat-sacrifice. It is not an act of violence or a matter of sentimental ethicism. Like Tagore's Raghupati in his melodrama *Bisarjan*, the Tantrik believes that "each particle of dust of the earth is studded with elements of destruction." Spiritually, every

(Continued on page 128)

MURDER OF CHHABI

(Continued from page 116)

After carefully looking at her I found she was Chhabi !!

raise their heads; but I could very well recognise them. In one corner I found a girl. After carefully looking at her I found she was Chhabi ! Incorrigible were they, I thought. Suddenly I found that gentleman there who had come to my house at midnight after being robbed of his money and other things by Chhabi and her party. I could not understand why he came there at that late hour of the night . On seeing me he respectfully came to me and handed over a packet to me, saying he had come to return my punjabi and dhoti. He thanked me and went away suddenly as he came. I finished signing the seizure lists.

Thereafter some cases were started. Some were gaoled, others were fined. But Chhabi was never found after that night. Nobody could say where she was.

Perhaps you are feeling bored at my long narrative. It is not my intention to parade the good work done by us. The object of this letter was made known to you at the beginning. I am sending you the materials of a novel—of course very briefly.

The real mystery was clear to me about a month later, and after that I also tendered my resignation. Listen. I have already told you about Mr. Hurt, the person who runs this leprosy home. The finance comes from outside and it is Hart who is the sole local authority. Everybody used to have great regard for him as a man. But why did he murder Chhabi all on a sudden ? I have already told you that since the liquor case, Chhabi had been untraced. The span of this letter, like that of our life, is small. I am, therefore, telling you everything in brief, giving you the bare facts only, like a journalist. Intentionally I wanted to keep back certain facts from you, to sustain your curiosity and produce an effect of slight suspense, but my plain-speaking pen is completely devoid of any diplomacy and is disclosing every bit of information. The pleasant thing is this—since my pen cannot weave the yarn of unreality and imagination my story ends in a short time.

Hart had a large-scale business of of illicit distilation elsewhere. He not only befooled us, but also his financier. He failed to mislead only two persons; one was deceased Chhabi, the other was —I shall not tell his name now. The vast money received for the Leprosy Home went to Hart's personnel account. Only a portion was spent for the institution. Besides, he amassed a large fortune through illicit distillation. He had several associates who acted on his behalf. The machinery was so perfect that one could ever sense anything wrong with him. Paced in tin cannisters, and under the label of milk-powder, huge quantity of illicit liquor was despatched to the city. Large quantities of Government wheat for relief were used for illicit distillation. All this would remain unknown for ever—unless that girl with uncommon intelligence Chhabi—saw through the game. And for that reason Chhabi had to lose her life.

There was nobody to shed tears for Chhabi—hence none noticed her sudden disappearance. Only one man with sharp intellect noticed this. Could that villain. Hart, be unmasked but for his intellect? Could the world know the facts of Chhabi's disappearance but for him? Hart is now in prison, either death of life imprisonment is awaiting him. Part of Chhabi's limbs were recovered from near Hart's bed room; other parts were concealed beneath earth at distant intervals. The entire body was reconstructed. That clever man found these out like a deft magician. Various deeds and letters were discovered by him. He thoroughly scanned Hart's bank accounts and discovered his fabulous treasure. He sent information to the police station concerned. A gang of men with the leaders was caught there red-handed. Now the final curtain is being drawn over all this. Now a very lengthy chapter is being finished—for that reason I am not getting release soon. The management wrote to me requesting me to remain in charge till the final accounts were audited and the balance struck, and till the troubles of the police-investigation and lawyers were over. I wrote back to them to accept my resignation and release me soon. They have accepted my resignation—and for my 'immense service'—of which I myself am not aware—they enclosed a cheque for a handsome amount for me. For the scandals, the Leprosy Home was ordered to be shifted to the city. One officer will be arriving early next month. I have decided to close my bivouac here after making over charge to him and I shall return to Santu and to you thereafter. It is no use avoiding you all. I have understood this with tears. Excuse me for my peculiar and cruel sojourn over here. Tell Santu that his daddy is soon coming

(Continued on page 122)

Dr. Gopeswar Banerjee

And

VISHNUPUR GHARANA

By BIRENDRA KISHORE ROY CHOWDHURY

THE last glorious episode of the music of Delhi Darbar was over with the end of the memorable career of the Emperor Mahammad Shah and with the sabotage by the Persian invaders under Nadir Shah. The court of Delhi lost its fabulous treasures after the middle of the 18th century. The representatives of Hindusthani music adorning the Darbar left Delhi one by one to seek fortune in other semi-independent States. The descendants of Tansen divided themselves into two groups, the western and the eastern. The musicians of the western group belonged to the lines of Surat Sen and Sarat Sen, both being Tansen's sons. The eastern group consisted of the descendants of Tansen's youngest son, Bilash Khan surnamed Tan Taranga Khan and the descendants of Misri Singh Vunkar, the son-in-law of Tansen.

The western group made their home under the ruler of Jaipur and flourished in different States of Rajasthan as singers of Dhrupad and exponents of the Masidkhani style of sitar. There were also renowned Veena players within this group. The eastern group settled at Varanasi as the Raja gave them enough land and house property to stay there. Nirmul Shah represented the Veena Gharana of the line of Misri Singh. The musicians of the line of Vilash Khan excelled in the vocal music of Dhrupad and the instrumental music in Rabab and Surasringar.

Three famous brothers Jaffar Khan, Pyar Khan, and Basat Khan were the founders of the Rababi School and spent most of their time at Varanasi and Lucknow. Bahadur Khan and Haider Khan, their cousins, made their mark in the style of Dhrupad singing. Haider Khan adorned the court of Betia and had many disciples among the Kathaks or the priests of the Betia Raja, who subsequently formed Betia Gharana. Bahadur Khan on the other hand, was invited direct from Delhi by the ruler of Vishnupur of Bengal and stayed there for ten years before his departure for Mecca to spend his last days there.

The second Raghu Nath Singh, the then ruler of Vishnupur, not only posted Bahadur Khan as the head of his music darbar, but also engaged some other outstanding musicians there including Pir Bux, the Mridanga player, and some exponents of Kheyal and Tappa. It was his intention to form an ideal centre of music at Vishnupur and train up young scholars of music. As Bahadur Khan was a liberal-minded musician and had no son to inherit his treasures of musical knowledge, he had no hesitation to fulfil the request of the Raja to train up young musicians.

Among his disciples, the most noteworthy were Gadadhar Chakrabarty and Ramshankar Bhattacharjee. As Ramshankar was the younger of the two, he continued his studies from Gadadhar, after the departure of Bahadur Khan. After Gadadhar's death, he visited some other music centres in Northern India including Benares, Agra and Gwalior. He collected more than two thousand songs, mostly Dhrupads, but also Kheyals and Tappas.

Besides Bahadur Khan, he had a few other Gurus also notably a Sadhu of Brindaban, who came to Vishnupur on his pilgrimage to Puri. It may be said with certainty that Ramshankar was the founder of the Vishnupur Gharana. He enjoyed a long life and after finishing his musical studies trained up a band of high-class musicians at Vishnupur. Among these musicians, three names are outstanding, (1) Khetramohan Goswami, famous for propagating "Danda MATRIK notation system", a lifelong colleague of Raja Sourindramohan Tagore, a scholar and writer of a valuable treatise on music in Bengali. (2) Jadu Bhatta,—a great vocalist of unequalled melodiousness of voice, a high-class composer of Hindi songs, a rare genius who won laurels and titles from various music darbars and ever remembered as inspirer in music of Gurudev Rabindranath. (3) Sangeet Keshari Ananta Lall Banerjee,—the head of the music court of the Vishnupur Raj after the death of Ramshankar, a high-class Sanskrit scholar, music scholar of great reputation, a composer of Hindi and Bengali classical music and a great devotee.

Sangeet Nayak Gopeswar Banerjee was the second son of Sangeet Keshari Anantalall. The eldest son was the late Ramprasanna Banerjee, the famuos Surbahar player and a writer of the very valuable treatise "Sangit Manjari". The youngest son Sangeetacharyya Shree Surendra Nath Banerjee is still living among us together with his elder brothers and has contributed immensely in the building up of music traditions (classical) in Bengal, besides his superb demonstration in Surbahar and vcoal music. Anantalall should always be remembered as the chief custodian of the Vishnupur Gharana, as he gave up all ambitions of life for the preservation of Ramshankar's musical treasures at Vishnupur and to keep the traditions of classical music alive there in spite of the gradual decadence of the Vishnupur darbar for financial difficulties. He not only built up the musical career of his own sons by the gifts of his theoretical and practical knowledge, but also was responsible for the flowering of the musical genius of the late Radhika Goswami as his most favourite disciple.

When we speak of the Vishnupur Gharana of

music we naturally mean the musical teachings connected and preserved and propagated by Sangeet Keshari, Anantalall Banerjee. Both Jadu Bhatta and Radhika Goswami increased their musical knowledge by thier lessons from other Gharanas like those of Gawalior, Benaras and Betia. But Anantalall's knowledge was typical of the Vishnupur Gharana. He never left Vishnupur to seek knowldege, money or fame from other sources. Some people say that the music of Vishnupur was simple in character. But this assertion is made without thorough enquiry. It is true that Anantalall based his music on the Sudha Bani style of Dhrupad characterised by simplicity and purity but Gurudev Rabindranath himself was an ardent admirer of this style of classical music and had no liking for over-ornamentation or exaggerations of TANAS, GAMAKAS etc. Nobody can deny the fact that the great Tagore had atleast a superior aesthetic sense of melodies and notes to that of average musicians, who condemn the Vishnupur style. It should also be remembered that the immortal Tansen himself was an exponent of the Suddha Bani which has all embellishments required to make the representations of Ragas in a most melodious manner. By careful study of the style of Anantalall we will find plenty of instances of the uses of Meed, Gamak, Chhut and other Alankaras.

Dr. Gopeswar Banerjee with his elder brother spent his early years in thorough study of the theoretical and practical classical music from Anantalall. Both had natural gifts of extraordinary melodious voice and intelligence to grasp and demonstrate the teachings of their father. They also had natural aptitude for skilful display on the Sitar. Thus they had not only accumulated and absorbed the teachings of their father in the vocal music but also advanced a lot in the displays of Sitar. After the end of their studies they started to frequent Calcutta to see Kheshtra Mohan Goswami in the court of Maharaja Jyotindra Mohan Tagore. Under the patronage of the Maharaja they were initiated by Sayeed (Sajjad) Mahamed Khan, the great Surbahar player. Both of them attained mastery in Surbahar in a short period of coaching.

At that period the famous Kathak brothers of Betia, Sibnarayanji and Guruprosadji distinguished themselves in Dhrupad and Kheyal respectively at Benaras. They used to be invited by the Maharaja Tagore off and on to visit Calcutta. At the instance of the Maharaja, they gave valuable collections of Dhrupads and Kheyals to be notated by Raja Sourindra Mohan. Radhika Goswami and Gopeswar Banerjee both got valuable lessons from them. After the death of Anantalall, Goswamiji was retained by Maharaja Tagore and Cossimbazar Raj. Ramprasanna Banerjee settled himself in the darbar of Raja of Narazol. He was the author of a very valuable book of practical music "Sangeet Manjari" which contained collections from Bahadur Khan and Sibnarayanji. Many noteworthy compositions of Dhrupad and Kheyal are found in this script. However, with all his knowledge of Dhrupad and vocal music, Ramprasanna shone mostly in Surbahar and acquired name and fame even in the darbars of western India including Gowalior. Following the syle of Sajad Mahammad both Ramprosanna and Gopeswar reproduced Alap and Tar-Paran of the Veena in Surbahar. They also played on Sitar exremely well.

But Gopeswarbabu gradually bestowed more concentration on the vocal music, specially on the Dhrupad. He joined the Darbar of the Maharaja of Burdwan and received the title of "Sangeet Nayak". Having been stationed there, Gopeswar Babu was not only content with his superb demonstrations of vocal Alap, Dhrupads and other types of classical songs, but also embarked on a new mission to propagate classical music throughout the country by the publication of songs and Tanas with notations, and also to train up young artistes in the purest style of music. He continued to publish notations in the music magazines like "Sangeet Prokashika" and "Ananda Sangeet Patrika", and also published some important music scripts including the famous "Sangit Chandrika". Simultaneously he started giving private lessons on music (both vocal and instrumental) to the girls and boys of cultured and aristocratic society of Bengal. Thus he did yeoman's service to the cause of classical music by spreading it among the members of the educated community.

During the first World War, he permanently settled in Calcuttta as the principal of "Sangit Sangha", founded by the late Justice Asutosh Chowdhury and Lady Chowdhury. This institution represented classical and high-class Bengali music in Bengal and was guided by the principles of music advocated by Gurudev Rabindranath. Gopeswar Babu continued to propagate classical music through the memorable institution and other musical circles in Calcutta, besides giving training in music not only to the members of his own family but also to many of the aristocratic families residing in Calcutta. After the death of Lady Chowdhury, "Sangit-Sammilanee" followed the examples of "Sangit Sangha" under the guidance of Indira Debi, the niece of Rabindranath. Surendranath, the younger brother of Gopeswar Babu became its first principal. Gopeswar Babu looked after all these institutions and conducted many music competitions to encourage young artists to shine in music. Before the outbreak of the second World War, he was regarded as the most venerable leader of music in Bengal and Rabindranath demonstrated his sincere appreciation for Gopeswar Babu as he gave him the title "Geet-Saraswati". Earlier, Gopeswar Babu distinguished himself in the All-India music conferences organised by Pandit Vatkhandeji at Lucknow and Benaras and was received with high respect in the Darbar of Alwar, where the immortal Dhrupadiya Alabonde Khan highly praised Gopeswar Babu's music. He also gave superb demonstrations of Alap and Dhrupad in many music conferences in Calcutta.

During the second World War, Calcutta's cultural life was upset by a general fear of aerial bombing as many aristocratic people left the city and the music schools were closed down. From this stage both Gopeswar Babu and Surendranath left their permanent residence in Calcutta and re-settled themselves in Vishnupur, Bankura. Gopeswar Babu founded there a music college to perpetuate the memory of his elder brother, Ramprasanna Banerjee. As the principal of Ramprasanna college of music, Gopeswar Babu spent the last part of his life in his own home. But his zeal for practising and teaching music was retained up to the last breath of his life. After independence of India he received high honours from the Union and State Government. He was invited by the A.I.R. to give demonstrations of the Dhrupads of his Gharana in company with his illustrious son, Shree Ramesh Chandra Banerjee, Sangeet Ratnakar, Head of the Department of music. Rabindra Bharati University. Gopeswar Banerjee was honoured by the Visva-Bharati University with the title "Deshi-Kottam" which means Doctorate and lastly he was nominated by the Central Sangeet-Natak-Akadami as a Fellow of the Akadami.

He passed away at the age of 83 with the highest glory of his career survived by his younger brother, Sri Surendranath, his son Ramesh Chandra Banerjee and his disciple and nephew, Shree Satya Kinkar Banerjee to keep the high light of the Vishnupur Gharana of music intact and to propagate the teachings of this Gharana to the young aspirants of music in and outside Bengal.

I would request you to give this effort the solemn reception it deserves and not to treat it with levity. There will be no "joke," no "wit or humour" intended in this article. This caution is necessary. There are, alas, still some innocents at large who have a notion that the "patter" columns are supposed to be "humorous" columns. I am glad to note that there is a much larger number who differ vehemently. Sensible men.

The warning is specially necessary because I am going to talk on the subject of "wives." Only a bachelor can try being funny about wives, — not knowing what they are talking about. Well, I am not a bachelor, and, I am assuming,—neither are you.

Day before yesterday, August 19, at an Anglican Congress held in Toronto, African Bishop, Rev. S. O. Odutola, put up an impassioned case in support of polygamy as practised by his non-Christian countrymen. He said: "When missionaries speak of 'one man, one woman' to us, well, *we* say, you are not all that good to preach it. We have honest polygamy. The African practice of having three or even more wives is more honest than the Western practice of taking one wife, divorcing her, taking another and so on."

Well, all this is nothing new to me for I said that,—publicly,—thirty years ago, and the Bishop's homily is only a variation on the same theme. What has happened since has only lent more power to my thesis. The Profumo case is the latest of these happenings. In fact, the Bishop admitted that it was that *affaire* which spurred him on to speak as he did.

Come now. Let us get down to cases. *We* had polygamy once. Why did it stop? Why *should* it? I ask that because I believe seriously that it was a mistake. I believe strongly that polygamy in certain cases is not only a necessity,—but a blessing. And I believe fervently that a revival of that ancient system will purge this country of most of its social disorder and help in leading it back to its one-time eminence,—what you call "her pristine glory."

Sorry! Now, note. I said specifically that it was good *"in certain cases"* and I would like you to remember that distinction in your examination of the case. It cannot and should not be a universal, or even a general practice.

For, I am quite aware of *menages* where two hearts beat as one,—in Love,—and the intrusion of a third into that Eden can only mean another "Fall." I am also painfully alive to cases where two hearts beat as one,—in Fear,—of the wolf at the door and an extra stomach to fill,—pardon the language,—can only mean destitution. I am certainly not recommending polygamy in such cases.

But,—when you go further into the question, you will see that for every ten such cases, there is always one exceptional instance where such conditions do not obtain. In such a case, polygamy, — I submit,—is definitely indicated. I shall come to the merits of the medicine later. Let me dispose of the objections first.

The leading theology-cum-sentimental argument is that marriages are "made in heaven" and two hearts made one should never permit the butting-in of a third. Right. But how about the "butting-in" when one of the hearts has parted company and gone somewhere from where no wife returns? You can marry them one after the other. Why not several at the same time?

Then it is said that it is nothing short of imbecility to ask for more trouble,—reading "trouble" for wife. "It is all one can do to keep one's end up with one of the species. It is sheer madness to talk of it in the 'plural'." I agree that my recipe will be too "hot" for folks who talk so. For, *I* am talking of men, not worms.

Incidentally, however, I have to point out that that argument may not work even in the existing

order. One solitary wife can give as big and blazing an Inferno to his "man" as three other wives may not. It is all a question of your individual "guts,"—of the punch you can pack in your "mitts." *You* know what I mean. If you are a worm crawling on two legs,—well, well, I'll say no more.

But look at Ramamurthi,—any Ramamurthi, any of those musclemen. I understand, gold and silver form regular courses in their breakfasts. It does them good, I am told. Now, can *you* include the metals in your morning bite,—even Morarji permitting? No, you can't. They are "for Princes and Rich men only." Exactly.

That was exactly what I meant. For every ten, —or even hundred,—of "Mrs. Caudles", — or shall we say, "Mrs. Soshi's" husbands,—I can show you one of these "princes and rich men" who appear to have been born for a plurality in wives. Physically, financially, psychologically,—I say, morally,—it would be, in a well-ordered society, their sheer *duty* to have more than one wife.

I urge with all the solemnity I can command that it is a sin not to propagate polygamy among such giants. It is a duty which they owe to themselves,—and to society. It is the duty of the society to see that there is no waste of such rich material. And it is for the giant to see that he does not miss the happiness which is his due,—as a married man.

To the Mussolinis of marriage, the prospect of "risk" is not alarming but only stimulating. Whereas, the nightmare of two of them pulling at one husband would frighten minnows like you and me, it may provide more "fun" of the fight to the Triton. More, he can, if he is a good player, set one against the other, and have his mid-day siesta when his weaker brothers are sitting up.

Personally, however, I would suggest not two but three of them. You know why? Two against each other can only provide respite. But *the third can,—in the meantime,*—I say, in the *meantime,—provide comfort,*—what they call in the novels,—"consolation." On the terrace or the Lake side,—as exigencies permit.

The secret is DISCIPLINE. That is the only word for it. I concede freely that with the milk-and-water kind of life which the average man lives, a second wife is unthinkable. There is no Form no Law, no Order,—in a word, no discipline in an ordinary household. And there is, therefore, no room in it for a second wife. And I would never suggest it.

But think of the "rich men and princes," of the "Profumos" and "Wards" of Society. The Bishop was thinking of them when he spoke. Were *our* Kings and Maharajahs particularly unhappy in the "good old times",? History does not say so. Nor does Mythology. Today,—on the other hand,—would it not be a solution of the too-many-daughters problem, too? Think all that over.

* * * *

By the way, perhaps, you are wondering why I dubbed this article "Spice." I will tell you. Look. When you have too many "mouse," you call the lot "mice." And when you have too many "louse,"—hypothetically, I mean,—you call them "lice." But when you have got,—or manage to get after reading this article,—too many "spouse,"—you call them "spouses." But why? Why not "spice"? Think that over, too.

THE EXPECTED MOMENT

(Continued from page 114)

pool where a curved and crooked date tree is drooping down its thorny head, a room of the hut under its tiled roof is plainly visible. Its two small windows are wide open even at this hour. All the terrible jungle mosquitoes must be entering through them,—won't they sting on the bare skin of his newborn child !

But through those open windows are seen a tiny flicker of a small hurricane lantern from amongst the surrounding darkness—that light which is reflecting on the surface of the pool in shiny sparkles —and all this seem like consolation to the tired and hungry man.

The girl has gone back by this time. Monorama, her youthful mother looked at her with questioning eyes, but could not ask anything lest the mother-in-law should overhear, and that would be shamelessness on her part. So she keeps silent.

But the mother-in-law asks — What did your father say ?

The girl replies — No, he won't come.

Yes, Monorama knows it very well, he won't come and can't come even if he wants to.

Yet it hurts her with a pang, she feels the twitching of the heart as none else can feel.

She counts her days. Although her loving husband passes by the door twice daily, yet he cannot cross the threshold even for once, as it may lead to serious consequences. Monorama understands it very well.

What can the poor fellow do! His passenger-carrying service has much responsibility and leave is very scarce, only for a day in a month.

Still she thinks herself lucky, she can see him daily at the expected moment, although from a distance. Their eyes do not meet, but her silent and eager eyes peeping through the windows can see him in a flash, and she is consoled. (Translated from Bengali by P. Bhattacharya).

MURDER OF CHHABI

(Continued From Page 118)

back. Has he grown up by this one year? How is your teaching in the college going on ?

Let me satisfy your curiosity before I finish. My pen is—I have already told you — extremely frank in nature. Do you know who was that man with sharp intellect ? He is that stranger, who came to my room at midnight—that gentleman of twenty three or twenty four—with the rayon trousers and vest on. He is the best detective Inspector of the State. Chhabi was his informer. He was not really robbed of by Chhabi and her associates that night—he came to test me in collusion with Chhabi and also to search my room, to verify whether I was an associate of Hart or not. Hats off to that intelligent girl Chhabi, and to that wonderful detective.

Durga Puja of Santals

By

CHARULAL MUKHERJEE

WHEN one considers the multitude of spirit-deities, the Santals have in their pantheon, the inquisitive student of their religion finds himself in a bog.

The early Census reports of the British times cut the Gordian knot by describing the religious beliefs of the Santals and other Prto-Australoids as "Animism." Risley in his *People of India* said, when a Santal thinks of a tiger-spirit (*Baghut Bonga*), he does so from the "vague dread of a mysterious tiger-power or tiger-demon, the essence and archetype of all tigers, whose vengeance no man . . . . could hope to escape." (P. 225). But when the anthropologist goes deeper, does he not find that the concept of an abstract power, in itself independent of a material vehicle, is very difficult for the aboriginal mind ?

To the Santal, "Thakur Jiu" (Supreme deity) is a real entity and the name connotes a moral order of things. Emotion and thrill play a conspicuous part in Santal religious practices. So perhaps, the Census authorities of our time have dropped the term "Animism" in describing their religion and Sarat Chandra Roy, the doyen of Indian anthropological thought, characterised it as "Spiritism" in describing the religion of the Kharias, a Munda tribe like the Santals.

BELIEF

On the other hand, during our investigations at the Santal Parganas and Mayurbhanj, the Santals were heard publicly declaring, "Sri Ram Chandra used bows and arrows as we do. Sri Krishna played on the flute like us and tended cattle which is our avocation. Why are we not Hindus? We are." One witnessing the Santal *Sohrae* festival (The December Harvest Home) can hear such songs sung on the "Gohal Puja" nocturnal vigil:

Gaini colilo Siribrinda bone ho,
Mahisini earae ganga para jo yo re,
Mahisini carae ganga para jo.

In another song on this occasion reference is made to "Kanu Gowala" who used to feed cows in the east. Kanu is asked: "Where have you lost your flute?"

He replies:

Batehin heralon
Danda ka basi ho;
Gotehin heralio
Gaia jo

It means that he lost his flute in yonder field; he lost his cattle in yonder pasture.

The use of the words "Bat," "Got", "Kanu Gowala" and his "basi" carries its own tale of the idyllic life of Sri Krishna at a Santali "Siri Brindaban."

The Santals have their own Charak festival (Pata), they worship the goodess Kali and their folk-songs are replete with references to Hindu religious culture.

PUJAS

We knew so far. But a shock of mild surprise lay in store for us when we heard that they have their own Durga Puja festival, in the Dumka subdivision of the Santal Parganas.

Just as a will has a codicil, the festival at Dumka, Santal Parganas, has an appendix viz. the

Santal melas at their own Durga Puja. The immersion ceremonies take place at different dates in the Dumka sub-division and huge Santal rallies congregate at Mahulbani, Pipra and Barahat. Mahulbani is 10 miles from Dumka on the Deoghar road. From its etymological meaning one might expect a forest of Mohua (*Bassia latifolia*) trees. But we saw one at a distance bearing company with a few date-palms to break, I should say, "the silence of the seas"—the far-off that lured Tagore. A few telegraph posts were the only signs of civilization.

We reached there by our car at 3-30 p.m. on the 24th October 1950, as my log shows. Pipra is about seven miles from Dumka. We visited the fair (the next year) being held on a rocky upland shaded by a few trees with intervening shrubs and bushes.

IMAGE

I vividly recall the image of Durga, crudely fashioned after the prevalent Hindu model, I saw at Mahulbani, standing on a pedestal in a straw-hut in the low land below. The evidence confirmed the information that the puja was organised by the Santal sardars with the subscription raised from the tribe. A special Santal priest worshipped the deity. The immersion, postponed till the full-moon of October, is according to the calendar of the area varied to enable the Santal masses to take part in the festivities.

The goddess Durga at Pipra was also worshipped in a thatched cottage specially made for the purpose. There was Lakshmi, Saraswati, Kartick and Ganesh to complete the picture. We wanted to have a peep at the deity. But it was impossible. Huge crowds of Santal men and women in mute adoration had queued up near the image; and to elbow through the bevy of belle proved a task indeed! And we dropped the idea like a hot potato, although, with the help of a Santal chowkidar, my daughter Esha, had a glimpse of the holy mother Durga.

But herein (both at Mahulbani and Pipra) hangs a tale. Durga Puja is a purely Hindu institution and although for centuries, the Santals have been joining these festivals, the idea is common that it is merely a tribal urge on a festive occasion.

Enquiries revealed at Mahulbani and confirmed later at Pipra that this was a puja of the Santals, by the Santals and for the Santals. The money for the image and the rituals was subscribed by the tribe; the worship was performed, not by a Brahmin priest, but by a Santal, and it was an exclusive religious observance confined to the tribe alone.

ATMOSPHERE

In such a fair as this, you might feel like Alice in Wonderland. Can you imagine yourself marooned in a fairy land for a moment? The flecked sky of the autumnal afternoon arched over-head and caging you before a wonderous panorama. The fleecy clouds overhead with tints of vermilion here and there match with the yellow and pink saris of *Diku* (non-Santal) women.

Dark grey hills encircle you on all sides at a distance. The rocky table-land at Mahulbani seems to be an islet in a ocean of infinity, the characteristic beauty in a Santal Pargana landscape. Long streams of Santal men and women wend their way to the Durga Puja fair in files of five or ten. A subject indeed for techni-colour photography.

At Pipra, all roads led not to Rome—but to Pipra, hectic with dreamy anticipations of songs, dances and mirth. The *joie de vivre* of tribal life pulsated through Santalia. . . . . Where were they going? They seemed so glad. The women were merry and the men voluble with an extra dose, yes, of rice-beer. . . . . Bevies of Santal maidens with arms inter-linked with the shoulders of their friends tripped on playfully like the fawn at large in the wide expanse of the Santal Parganas.

SPLENDOUR

They crooned tunes and then broke into a teasing laughter. You look to the left and whole village would seem to move on—men, women and children. The youths tied turbans on their heads and stuck peacock feathers in them. The girls had tucked flowers of all hues in the mass of their raven-dark curly hair. Their bronzed bodies sparkled in the sun.

Dancing parties encircled by huge crowds of spectators are usual features in such Durga Puja rallies. There was the *Dasae* dance going on. This festival with its etymological resemblance to the Hindu Dasahara, starts on the Durga Puja eve and concludes with the immersion ceremony of the goddess. All these days the *Dasae* dancers, all males, wearing peacock feathers and dressed in white with triangular red scarves hanging from their necks, can be seen going round the Santal Parganas singing special songs:

To whom are we offering Puias?
To Kamru Guru—

comes the reply.

The traditions and institutes of the Santals (*Mare hapramko reak katha*) say that the Santals learnt magic and witch-craft from *Kamru Guru*, a word with an etymological affinity with Kamrup, the special land of the lore. If the reader cares to open an almanac, he will see that the *Kamrupiya Sankarabda* (the Sankar era of Kamrup), starts with our Bijoya Dasami.

The fair at Mahulbani and Pipra contained several such parties. I saw a man playing a *buan* (one-stringed harp) and carrying a rope of *bachkom* grass; the majority had tinkling leather bands fastened to their hands. Another carried a garland made of palm-leaf with a brass-bowl containing *sal* (*Shorea Robusta*) leaves and vermilion. He struck it musically with an iron stick from which was suspended a flower-like thing made of hemp.

DANCES

The dancers all stood in formations of five in a line. The first man in the first row had a cymbal, while the second had a brass bowl. At times, they seemed to make movements like prowling cubs, again they lay on their backs with their heads on their neighbours' laps and sat up again as they made spectacular movements with the five in each row linked together.

A special item was the *Bonga enec* (Godling dance). Here a dancer fell into a frenzy of spirit-possession and danced to kettle-drums, cymbals and pipes giddily till he was whipped back to consciousness with the *bachkom* (made of a hill plant called *Babui*) rope by his fellows. I saw a Santal had at least fifteen stripes which he bore without any sign of pain. Custom requires that the *bachkom* rope would be ceremonially immersed after the Goddess Durga.

But the centre of attraction was the "Lagren" dances, to which whole villages gravitated. This was the moon-light dance of the Santals and they danced the whole night. Of all the Santal dances,

(Continued on page 126)

AYURVEDA

Its Evolution And Decline

By JAPESH DAS GUPTA

HINDUS believe that the Vedas, were not written by man. They were the voice of the Divine Soul, and so too was Ayurveda which is included in the Vedas. We get a few mentions of Ayurveda in the Rig-Veda. But there are quite lengthy dissertations about many aspects of it in the Atharvaveda, so much so that Sushruta considers Ayurveda as a part or upanga of Atharvaveda.

"Ayus" is the Sanskrit word for span of life and root "Vid" means "to know". "Ayurveda" is the science that gives one the knowledge to live a long life healthily and happily. It is believed that Ayurveda had its first dawn in the conception of Brahma who put it in verse (Sloka). From Brahma, Prajapati Daksha learnt Ayurveda and imparted it to the Aswinikumaras. Tradition goes that Aswinikumaras attained such high skill in the healing practice that they could substitute an iron leg in place of an amputated leg. They could even give vision to the blind. It was, however, Indra the king of Gods who learnt the science from the Aswinikumaras and propagated it for the benefit of mankind.

A believer divides the evolution of Ayurveda into three periods:

"Daivakal" or the period during which Ayurveda was in the hands of the gods, that is, from the period of Brahma to that of Indra. Prajapati Samhita, Aswisamhita, and Balavid Samgrahita are the treatises that belong to this period.

"Arshakal" or the period when Ayurveda was practised by the rishis. Bharadwaja and Dwibodasa are the two rishis who learnt Ayurveda from Indra and imparted the knowledge to their pupils and disciples in two parts. Bharadwaja particularly developed the medicinal aspects of Ayurveda. His principal disciples were Punarbasu, Chandrabhagi and Atreya. Dwibodasa on the other hand developed the surgical aspects of Ayurveda and his disciples maintained the School. The disciples of Bharadwaja and Dwibodasa later became authors of various books on Ayurveda. This whole period comes under Arshakal. There are treatises on treatment of plant-diseases (Brikshayurveda) as well as diseases of horses, elephants and dairy animals.

"Samgrahakal" is the period starting from Bagabhat. This period belong Bagabhat, Sharangadhar, Bhabamisra, Madhab, and Chakrapani, and they compiled a complete treatise of Ayurveda.

Later on Alchemy (Rasa-Sastra), became a complete and separate branch of the science. It modified the Ayurveda of Arshakal. It is indeed a fact that so profoundly did alchemy exert its influence on the Ayurveda of Arshakal that one may say without any hesitation that the Ayurveda that has come down to us is the end product of the complete fusion of Ayurveda and Alchemy.

ELIXIR OF LIFE

Mahadeva, it is said, was the first to conceive of Alchemy and it came into being in man's endeavour to find an "elixir of life" that would enable him to defy age and ills, to be immortal, in a word. Byadi, Nagarjuna, Dattatreya, Anantadeva, Sadananda, Yasodhara, Shalinath, Chandra Sen, Lankesh, Matta, Mandabya are the most famous ones who specialised in Ayurvedic Alchemy (Rasa-Sastra). They carried it to such an acme of skill and perfection that it is said that they discovered processes of preparing gold and silver from copper with the help of mercury etc.

The division of Ayurveda into the following eight sections shows it to be the elaborate and exhaustive science that it is. The sections are:

KAYACHIKITSATANTRA (Ayurvedic Medicine) It is concerned with the symptoms, etiology, prognosis treatment dietetics etc. of the diseases like fever and dysentery as well as tuberculosis and other consumptive diseases which can be cured by medicine.

SHALYATANTRA (Ayurvedic Surgery) This has two sections:

(a) General Surgery (Sadharan Shastra Chikitsa) includes etiology, symptoms and treatment of diseases which can be cured by use of Surgical methods like blood letting, cauterization, leeching and use of surgical instruments.

(b) Prasutitantra (Obstetrics & Gynaecology) deals with conception, care of the pregnant, treatment of diseases of the pregnant, delivery, prenatal and antenatal care.

SHALAKYATANTRA (Ophthalmology & E.N.T. Diseases) restricts itself to the symptoms, etiology, treatment etc. of diseases of eye, ear, nose, throat etc.

BHUTABIDYA (Nervous Diseases) for treatment of the insane, epileptic etc.

KOUMARABHRITYA TANTRA (Children's diseases) deals with child care, treatment, etiology etc. of children's diseases (Pediatrics).

AGADHATANTRA (TOXICOLOGY — describes all sorts of toxins and poisons etc. [illegible]

symptoms, treatment of snake bite, general toximia, and poisoning etc.

RASAYANTANTRA deals with "Rasayans," medicine which is supposed to prolong man's life, enabling him to overcome the ills of age, sharpen one's intellect and memory, keep the body free from any ailment, give it grace and complexion, deepen voice, accentuate the senses and emphasizes in one's personality, politeness, purity of speech and self control.

BAJIKARANATANTRA deals with treatment of the imbecile or impotent and methods of increasing potency of healthy individuals.

Now I shall quote a few instances to show what a peak of skill and perfection our ancient savants reached in this system of Ayurveda in treatment of human ailments. The Tridosatatwa or the theory of wind, bile and phlegm in Ayurveda is indeed sparkling example of their love and it is this theory that was later developed by ancient Greeks as the Humoral Theory.

The advance that the ancients made in Anatomy is well illustrated by the precise description of Adult and Foetal circulation in Sushruta Samhita.

In surgery too the healers in the days of yore achieved the same perfection. They successfully carried out amputation of limbs, operations on intestines and other abdominal organs, as well as on uterus, and bladder. Instructions and indications are still to be found in the treatises of Sushruta and others. The treatment of rabies, and snake bite as given in "Kalpasthan" section and Sushruta Samhita show how marvellously advanced Ayurvedic toxicology was.

THE RECESSION

Ayurvedic medicine also records none-the-less brilliant successes in the cure of piles with the help of a liniment or cure of complaints of paranasal sinus with the help of a snuff. However, the short space would not permit me to cite more such instances which hold us spell bound even today. Thus different branches of Ayurvedic medicine and surgery were improved and evolved and Ayurveda flourished supreme.

This was followed by the period when things turned absolutely the other way round and so started the recession of Ayurveda which can be said to be the mother of all healing sciences. The causes that account for this decline are not few. First Sanskrit gradually ceased to be the popular language it was and the medium of teaching, and on top of that the ancient texts became rare. In the Buddhist period application of instruments to the human body came to be a cognizable offence and gradually Ayurvedic Surgery came to be relegated to the hands of the untrained barbar and obstetrics became the profession of illiterate lower class women. With modern civilization opening up newer vistas of life, and due to lack of public sympathy and various other demands and strained conditions, very few people went to Ayurvedic practice and there were many who gave up this profession of their fathers for other means of livelihood. Besides, during the Muslim period the Yunani System under State recognition came much in vogue. Even the public hospitals that were established by the Hindu, and Buddhist Kings gradually dwindled away and everybody knows how with the coming out of the English the Allopathic system gained ground in this country. The above are just a few of the causes that advanced Ayurveda fast on its decline.

But Ayurveda has stood the test of time and has survived the ravages of foreign invaders and sceptics and it has been able to retain the soul that was in her, the first beat of the throbbing pulsation of a mighty science buried in dregs so to say without research and almost without practice, decayed and sinking but still retained. And so ebbing away is that pristine glory of India. Ayurvedic surgery is practically lost to India and her medicine is struggling just for existence.

Ayurveda is India's own, and unique treasure. What our Rishis contemplated and discovered in those days of yore hold as good even today defying all the glare of our modern civilisation. Ayurveda is India's own, and most perfectly suited to the constitution of her people and it is no wonder that the sylvan wealth of a country should have the intrinsic cure of the maladies of its people.

So the duty is ours—one cannot overemphasise the responsibility of our people with the help of the Government, to revive Ayurveda, with research and sympathy, to make it the living science that it was, and one is sure that with all our best and united efforts, the goal would not be far to be sought.

DURGA PUJA OF SANTALS

(Continued from page 124)

the "Lagren" is the most stimulating and the youths and maids of the tribe find here plenty of opportunities for love-making as it is a mixed dance of the two sexes.

The very steps of the dance provide facilities for courtship, as the couples face side-ways and can talk as they trip. And if they feel like it the girls can slip off pleading an aching limb to meet their lovers, perhaps playing flutes like a serenade in the fields near by.

A sample of such a folk-song sung on such occasions may be thus translated for the readers:—

On the banks of the river,
Whose lute plays?
Alas the heart weeps.
I haven't seen with eyes,
Nor heard with ears,
Alas my heart weeps.

Col. Dalton in his Descriptive Ethnology of Bengal commented on this dance. He says: "It is singular that in this national amusement of the Santals, we have handed down to us a most vivid living representation of one of the prominent scenes in the sports of Krishna in Braja and Brindaban. There is nothing in modern Hinduism that at all illustrates the animated scenes so graphically delineated in the Puranas; but the description of the *Rasa* dance in Chapter XIII, Book V of the Vishnu Purana might be taken literally as an account of the Santal Jhumur". *

As we left the Durga Puja fairs (both had a strong family resemblance), the devotion in their faces became a Wordsworthian treasure to ruminate upon "in vacant or in pensive mood" (so familiar to all). Here was, we felt, the "giant heart" of Santalia quaking in unison with the heart of Aryabarta.

* **Jhumur—The term is used for a dance of the non-Santal population of the area, but it is not an orthodox Santal dance. It is certain that Col. Dalton was referring to the Santal "Lagren" — Author.**

THE PROBLEM OF CALCUTTA AND A SOLUTION

By BHASKAR MUKHERJI

LET us see first how the problem has arisen. Forty years ago the population of the city was about nine lakh. To-day it is close upon three million. Yet the growth of the size of the city within these forty years has been disproportionately low. The area of the city has grown from 23 to 37 square miles only, and the number of premises from 60,000 to less than a 100,000. If the growth of the city has been disproportionately low, those of the essential and chief Municipal services has even been lower. By essential services is of course meant water supply, drainage, length and maintenance of roadways, lighting, etc. The result is the present day squalor, congestion, confusion and contrast which is a feature of this greatest city in India. The influx into the city chiefly during the last few years is composed of men with outlooks rural rather than urban. They add considerably to the problems of the City.

The solution is obvious. It is to increase the size of the liveable space with corresponding increase in local services.

The obvious way to do this is to spread the confines of the city far out into the districts surrounding it. In fact, if we examine comparable world cities we notice that a city with the same population as Calcutta is spread out into an area of at least 400 to 500 square miles. Tokyo and London are both spread out over a distance of 600 square miles, New York over 400 square miles.

It is thus in dispersal and resettlement that the hope of Calcutta lies.

Calcutta and the outlying areas as we all know are spread North and South. The dispersal, therefore, should be towards the East and the West. Virgin areas are available particularly across the river to the West of Calcutta, as well to the north-east of the city.

There is, however, a basic difficulty which was first pointed out several years ago by Governor Casey. The access from the surrounding districts into Calcutta at almost every point is narrow and, therefore, difficult. To spread out the city the first task should, therefore, be to increase, broaden and ease the access to the city to all kinds of traffic.

Obviously the access is meant for the use of those who live in the districts and come to Calcutta for their daily work. This daily travel to and from the city should be made as quick, cheap and easy as possible; otherwise it will hardly be popular. In fact, this is the principal aim of all world cities where hundreds and thousands of workers daily travel into the places of their work in the city.

There is, however, another mode of dispersal which obviates the need of daily travel and which is now being followed more and more in all progressive world cities. It is the establishment of complete new cities within the 400 or 500 square miles, complete with housing, places of work and recreation. Such a City is a civic and economic unit, dependent, no doubt, on the main City, but otherwise self-sufficient. These are known as satellite cities, and these have the great advantage that its citizens do not have to go through a vexatious time-consuming and fairly expensive daily travel to the main City. This method of dispersal is followed practically in all the larger concentrations of population in the world, chiefly under the leadership and on the initiative of Professor Sir Pattrik Abercrombie, a leading authority on town-planning.

I think the best way to explain what I mean is to quote a modern authority on town-planning.

"One of my purposes is to show that building new towns (satellite towns) is not an evasion of the problem of making the best of existing towns; but is indispensable to the solution of that problem. In Great Britain and in other countries where the aggregation of population has gone too far and the central parts of large cities are, therefore, grossly congested, you simply cannot reconstruct the old cities on decent human standards without at the same time building new towns or extending the smaller towns; and in nearly every region you must do both the latter things.

"We shall need both country town extensions and new towns. London, on the lowest estimate, must disperse over one million people, Liverpool 250,000 people, Manchester 150,000 people, and other cities large numbers."—F. J. Osborn.

Thus, to improve Calcutta, the first thing to do would be to draw off and resettle the surplus population to centres of population outside Calcutta; and you cannot so draw off until you can provide not only homes, but also work for the displaced population in their new locations.

I would now describe in a few words one of these extension or satellite cities built under the scheme of Sir Pattrick Abercrombie to relieve the population pressure on London. The new town is Crawley, and has been planned and built by a Development Corporation with the object of creating a self-contained and balance community. The factories and houses are designed to receive a popu-

lation of 50,000 from London:—workers with their wives and children living their congested London homes.

TWIN EVILS

The twin evils of slums and over-crowding in large cities have their roots in the unregulated and excessive growth of towns during a period when the health of the people, no less than their spiritual and social well-being, were sacrificed to industrial needs. Men and women must live near their work. Yet only in recent years has come a full realisation that the solution to many of the problems to which these evils give rise is by setting some limit to the haphazard sprawl of existing cities and by providing in new towns, wisely and skilfully sited and planned, a proper balance between housing and industry.

The new factories, for industries which are being shifted from London to Crawley, are all located in the industrial area north of the town. Eighteen London industries have already found Crawley an outlet, with promise for their future well-being. Buildings are light and airy, and near enough to the residential part to eliminate the tedious journey to and from work, so much a part of the life of the town dweller.

Many families have already moved into their new homes. They are the vanguard of the many who will bring Crawley's ultimate population to between 50,000 and 60,000.

The new tenants find living in Crawley very different from the crowded streets of London. In the general layout of the residential neighbourhoods, an endeavour has been made to preserve as much open space as possible, and careful planning has been undertaken to preserve trees, hedges, and attractive natural features.

Crawley is one of at least 12 new towns built under the Abercrombie plan to relieve the population pressure on London within the 600 square miles forming the greater London area. Round Calcutta ample and cheap space is *equally* available for the siting of similar satellite cities. If Barrackpore and Barasat are linked by an 8 mile long railway we get an area of at least 60 square miles bounded by a circular railway. Dum-Dum, Barrackpore, Barasat Dum-Dum, comparatively undeveloped are ideal sites for the location of such overflow cities. Similarly across the river there is a large tract of developable land between the two arms of the Eastern Railway forking out from Bally. Aerial Survey may disclose other suitable areas.

But the point of utmost importance is that the access from these areas to the heart of the City must be both easy, quick and cheap.

OVERNIGHT CONSTRUCTION

How to build cities in these vast extension areas? Enormous strides have been made in mass-building within the last 7 and 8 years, chiefly in Soviet Russia. The basic material is of course reinforced concrete, of which there are 2,500 plants in that country, against only about 50 in ours. By the method of vibration rolling of concrete, in special conveyor plants, articles of concrete come out of the mill in a continuous stream, which are converted into all kinds of structures, chiefly needed in building multi-storied flats. This technique has been developed chiefly by Engineer Kozlov. Large house panels are produced which are bolted together in the sites to make liveable flats. A multi-storied flat can be erected in this manner inside a week. Extensive cities all over Soviet Russia are being built or rather mass built on this process both cheaply and quickly, and the results are astounding. In 1961, 2,200,000 flats were built in the cities of Soviet Russia, and 500,000 houses in the countryside all in this way. Nearly 10,000 modern flats in the cities and 2,500 rural homes are being built in a single day, all on Kozlov's principle. In the current 7-yearly plan period a total of 15 million flats are to be built. To-day a quarter of Russia's immense population is housed in modern flats, for which the rents inclusive of services do not exceed 4 to 5 p.c. of the family budget, and by 1980 every single family will have its own flat to live in, and free of charge. Such is the miracle of the technique of mass building.

We could do no better than send out a study team to investigate these methods of mass-building. In our poverty-ridden land there is no poverty more abject than poverty of space to live in. It demoralises on a mass scale; it makes beasts of men. To solve the problem of living space should be the first task of a Welfare State.

TANTRIC ELEMENTS IN DURGA PUJA

(Continued from page 117)

action entails destruction of something, of a kind of "atomic disintegration". The goat-sacrifice in a Tantric Puja is a symbol of human action, of every item of sense-experience with which man continuously lives his life. To re-spiritualise every mundane experience is the teaching of Tantras and the object behind Shakti Puja. The goat-sacrifice dramatises such an experience challenging the worshippers to re-establish spirituality in an act of overt destruction.

The Shakti Puja, as taught by the Tantric philosophy, is in essence a spiritual striving after self-divinisation. Such an objective is no doubt a common ground of Shaktism and Vedanta. But such a force-development is more obtainable in Tantric *Sadhana*, e.g., the esoteric *Shata-chakra-ved* than in the Tantric worship. The latter more frankly connotes a dualistic position where the basic man-God relationship is not one of identity but one of giver and the gift-taker, the crucial Tantric element in Shakti Puja being thus not the emphasis on self as the fulcrum of all spiritual power but the faith in the efficacy of *mantra*, *mudra* and *karma* (goat-sacrifice). The average Shakta worshipper is indeed so much removed from the Tantric emphasis on spiritual self-reliance that there is not much distinction in the attitude of a Shakta and a Vaishnava worshipper except what the technique of the respective worship makes it. Even Chandi in course of their prayer makes the Gods say "all men in the world are like women." At the same time, it is wholly uncritical to think that Durga Puja in Bengal is a sociological relic of the Mother-worship in primitive tribal society. The Tantric Durga has been conceived as a mother as a pattern of closest human relationship thinkable in a man's or woman's life. She that is in the form of eternal cosmic Reality is also the source of that Reality—hence the concept of motherhood. According to Tantric absolute idealism, all creation is of the staff of God's mind, we lie in His womb; what else can It be except being the Mother—the Mother of mine and the Mother of the Universe (*Jagadamba*)?

SKIING JAWANS

— Amiya Nandy

LADY OF THE LA

CROSS CURRENTS

By Major T. C. GHOSH

HULLO!

"Is that you, Gita ?"

"Yes. What is it Shanker ?"

"Gita. I am frightfully sorry. I shan't be able to make it."

"Oh!" She controlled a sob.

"There is such an amount of work in the hospital, I just can't leave this place. I thought I would be able to get away by five thirty but some new casualties have just been admitted. I would not be able to leave this place at least before eight."

"I knew this. This is not the first time."

"Gita. Please try and understand. I am really feeling miserable that I can't make it."

"Anyway, what do you propose I should do with these tickets?" She suppressed her rising anger.

"Why don't you go and see the picture with your friend Mohini or somebody else ?"

"Yes. I think I should find somebody to take me," she said in bitterness.

Gita hung up the receiver or rather banged the receiver in a huff. Yes, he always did this sort of thing. How often did he let her down ? Everything else seemed to have higher priority than she. She could not control her tears. They trickled down her cheeks. She locked herself up in her bedroom and threw herself on the bed.

The whole afternoon she was thinking of going to see this picture. It is a long time since he had taken her out. When two days ago he proposed to see this famous film together, she was so thrilled that she immediately went and bought the tickets. The whole afternoon she planned and matched the sari she was going to wear. It could not be pink or maroon because he did not like the colours. What should she wear, cream coloured Kanjivaram or should it be the sky blue Kashmir silk ? No, plain colour would not be suitable, she must wear that new sari with the abstract print. She had not worn it even once. This would be a surprise for him. But would he notice ? He hardly ever complimented her on her clothes. This time he was bound to notice. She had not worn any abstract coloured print before.

It took her nearly half an hour before she could finally decide on the clothes she was going to wear. Even the afternoon siesta was disturbed. She could not relax lest she was late. Shanker always complained that she was not punctual and took too much time in dressing. She made up her mind to give him a surprise by being ready when he arrived. But all was in vain. What an anti-climax and disappointment. She was lying there with her face buried in the pillows. Her best sari was getting crushed under her. The sari which had been so carefully selected was now as neglected and unwanted as she was herself. Her thoughts went back to such similar instances Yes, he never paid any attention to her. Right from the beginning he was neglecting her. Every time a past episode of a similar hurt came to her mind, fresh tears welled up in her eyes and she gave in to fits of weeping.

"Memsahib ?" There was a knock at the door. She jumped from her bed. Has Shanker really changed his mind ? She rushed to the door and opened it. It was Shanti the maid servant.

"Biren Sahib has come."

Gita was not only disappointed but got irritated. "Tell him I am not well. I can't see him to-day," she cried. Shanti got afraid seeing Gita's mood and wanted to make a quick retreat. Suddenly Gita had a brain wave. "Wait!" she called Shanti back. Why

should Gita pay so much importance to Shanker. There are so many admirers running after her. She could easily choose any one of them. What's wrong with Biren? He is reasonably handsome, well educated and the son of a rich man. Too much attention had spoiled Shanker. He had become swollen headed. Gita must make him understand that there were more than one fish in the pond. Yes, she would go to the pictures with Biren. That will teach Shanker a lesson. She was shocked when she looked in the mirror. What a miserable state she was in. Her clothes completely crushed, dishevelled hair hanging over her face. With the tears the mascara had run and there were black streaks down her cheeks. Lipstick had been wiped away. No, she could not possibly go out to-day. She said to Shanti.

"Please go an tell Biren Sahib that I am not well to-day. Ask him to come tomorrow."

She looked the door again and sat on the edge of the bed. She looked at her watch and saw it was half past six. It is already late, she could not possibly go to the pictures. She opened her purse, took out the two tickets and casually but deliberately tore them into pieces, got up and threw them away into the waste paper basket. That was the end of her eagerly awaited evening.

What she did not know was that Shanker did not even go for lunch trying to finish his work before five thirty.

Shanker was the class mate of Kiran, the elder brother of Gita. From her very childhood Gita heard so much praise of Shanker that before she could develop the power of judgement she made a god out of him. Kiran was devoted to Shanker, the best boy of the school and there was not a single day when he would not say some praise about this brilliant boy. If ever Gita tried to say anything against Shanker or tried to criticise him in any way. Kiran would get annoyed, and in their younger days had even thrashed her once or twice. From Kiran the infection of hero worship gradually spread to Gita. Shanker and Kiran were good friends and he used to come to their house quite often. Shanker on his side had very little time to devote to girls and the only pretty one he met often was Gita. It was when he was in the final year of the medical college and Gita was in the first year that they exchanged their innermost thoughts, and it was more or less accepted that they would get married as soon as Shanker was settled in his profession.

In the next six years many changes had taken place in the small world of these two families. Kiran went to United Kingdom along with Shanker to study for the Bar. He married there and did not return. Gita's father had died leaving a reasonable amount of fortune for Gita and her mother. Gita after her graduation had more wealth and idle time on her hands than she knew what to do with. After her father's death she first let herself go with her newly found freedom but soon she got tired of the aimless, sophisticated social life. One really gets tired of whirlwind parties. She gradually settled down to a comparatively quieter life and waited for Shanker to come back.

Shanker had also had his share of misfortunes. While he was studying F.R.C.S. in London his father died. He lost his mother in early childhood. Now he was faced with the problem of supporting his younger brother and sister. His father did not do well in life. They were practically living from hand to mouth. It was his scholarship which helped him for higher studies. As soon as he returned home he plunged himself in earning money which was so much in need. Gita offered financial assistance but he refused. The marriage had to be postponed for a couple of years until he got the permanent appointment of a surgeon in the Government Hospital.

Gita could not understand him. He seemed to be perpetually busy with his work. After the working hours he would spend the rest of the time either at his studies or attending to his private practices. Even though he made it a point to meet her every day, he never stayed long. He rarely took her out. She thought that he came to meet her as if to perform another duty. It did not look as if he had a personal longing to see her. All this seemed so unreasonable to Gita. What was the point in living this way if life meant only work and no relaxation? Why was he so adamant about earning a few rupees to maintain his younger brother and sister when Gita had so much surplus money? All her money was also his money. Why could not he understand this simple fact ?

Shanker was not like this before. He was so gay and full of fun that he was really bubbling with life. Within a few years what a change had come over him. Is it the higher studies or the responsibility of work or the ambition of fame as a surgeon which had changed him completely ? He became so grave and always so materialistic in his outlook on life. But then he was not really wordly-wise. He need not slave so much for a little money when so much was available with her.

She also failed to understand why he had to become financially well off before he could marry her. Their married life would never be in want of money but he refused to touch her money. He wanted to earn enough on his own to be able to marry. If it was his professional success that he was after then why was he slaving away in a Government job. He could easily open a nursing home with her money and could become more successful. No, she just did not follow his point of view. He was certainly nothing more than a uselessly vain person.

In the beginning she did not protest to whatever he wanted to do. She was so happy when he came back from England that she was prepared to make any sacrifice. In spite of his regular letters she was worried that Shanker might also settle down in England like her brother. Quite often she thought of going to England to make sure that he was not lured away by some enticing woman. After all Shanker was not experienced in defending himself against the spreading nets of those foreign women. It was her father who did not agree to her going and after his death the thought of leaving her mother alone ultimately stopped her from going. Gita was constantly apprehensive that possibly the next letter would bring the news of his new attachment. Thank God nothing really happened and when he eventually returned to her she was so overjoyed that she agreed to whatever suggestions he made.

But as the days and months passed her patience was coming to an end. The initial excitement was over and even after his return she found herself as lonely as before. She hardly got any company from him. She tried to explain once or twice about her lonely life but he always advised her to read books or take up some social work. How could she make him understand that a woman's heart was never satisfied with somebody else's work. It was to make her own home that she was craving.

As she lay on her bed her whole life with Shanker unfolded before her mental eyes. Yes, she had always been made use of. It was she who, out of hero-worship, ran after him and was so much in love with him. Just because he got her without the slightest effort he really never understood her value. She was even wondering if he really loved her. Not that there was any rival but he must be one of those prosaic men who had nothing called

emotion. But then he was so attached to his brother and sister. For them he would take any amount of pains and trouble but for her he just had no time.

No, she was of no value to him. To him, she was just a piece of inanimate object. Did he ever bother to look at her heart ? Did he ever try to understand how miserably she was spending her days ? He did not even bother to ask how she was or what she was doing or if there was anything she wanted. What a self-centred, selfish man he was. She felt her humiliation was unbearable. Her whole mind revolted against this neglect and indifference. She could not bear it any more and must do something even if it meant her destruction. It was better to die than to be a nonentity. Her cup of bitterness was full.

Next morning she rang him up and asked if he could go to the pictures as it was the last day. His reply was as expected.

Yes, it was true, she was really there.

"But didn't you see it yesterday ?"

"No."

"What happened to those tickets ?"

"I tore them up."

"Tore them? But why?"

"That's besides the point," she replied suppressing her annoyance at his lack of grasping emotional feelings. "Please tell me now if you can come to-day."

"I am sorry. I just can't make it to-day. I can try tomorrow".

"To-day is the last day."

"I am sorry. It looks as if I shan't be able to see this picture I so much wanted to see."

"Well in that case, I think I shall go with Biren."

"Yes, that's a good idea. Please go with him. I was afraid you may not be able to see it because of me. Please go and enjoy yourself."

Gita bit her lips. He does not even bother with whom she went and what she did. His indifference was limitless. Was it worth loving this man? She was no longer going to wait for him who was so unworthy of her intense love. Next she rang up Biren and arranged for the pictures.

From then onwards she forcibly tried to put Shanker out of her mind and started seeing a lot of Biren. They often used to go out for late night dances, picnics and parties. Shanker came regularly in the evening to meet her but often he did not find her at home. Even when he met her he never noticed her reserved behaviour. She sometimes felt the pang of guilty conscience but when she saw that he was nonchalant and was oblivious of her change of behaviour, she used to get irritated. She thought that he deserved all these for his indifference.

Once as usual when Shanker went to meet her, Gita's mother called him to her room. After making one or two queries about his work and family, she came to the point. She expressed that Gita and Shanker should get married soon. Shanker was surprised at this suggestion since it was originally decided that they would get married after two years. Then she explained that she did not like Gita going out with Biren so much. She was apprehensive about Gita's future. Shanker did not let her proceed any further.

"But I don't mind her going out. I am so busy with my work that I hardly have any time to take her out. She is so lonely. If she goes out and enjoys herself, what's wrong with it? I know her and trust her. You needn't be afraid."

Gita's mother was not convinced since she knew women more than he did, but she thought it expedient not to continue the discussion. She only mentioned that Gita was planning to go on a long weekend to Mossoorie with a crowd which included Biren. She had not given her permission because she did not want to go like this. Shanker was astonished because he did not know anything about this trip but he did not say anything. He thought that Gita would probably talk about it when they next met.

Gita found her new life very attractive. Biren was attentive and so much more polished than Shanker. He was observant and appreciated her choice of dress, her demeanour, intelligence and wit. For the first time she realised what romance was. As a matter of fact, she thought how foolish she was that she wasted so much time on Shanker. Sometimes her conscience troubled her for her deceit and she often thought she would make a clean breast of everything to Shanker, but then possibly the lack of moral courage stopped her from doing it or the new found romance did not give her enough opportunity to recollect her thoughts. Life brought a new meaning to her and she started craving for more and more of Biren's company. She could not spend a single day without seeing him. Whenever she met Shanker she felt very uncomfortable and wanted to avoid him as far as possible.

Just before her departure to Mussoorie one day when Shanker was coming back home from a late night emergency operation, he saw Biren's car in front of his taxi. But who was that girl by Biren's side? Yes, it was Gita. Her head was on Biren's shoulder and he had one arm around her. Shanker sat up, rubbed his eyes, Yes, it was true, she was really there. Doubt never leaves a lover. He wanted to make absolutely sure. He asked the taxi driver to overtake the car. While the taxi was overtaking he distinctly saw her even though the street lights were not very bright. She was quite oblivious of the

For Safer Wiring..

FORT GLOSTER INDUSTRIES LTD

14, Netaji Subhas Road, Calcutta-1

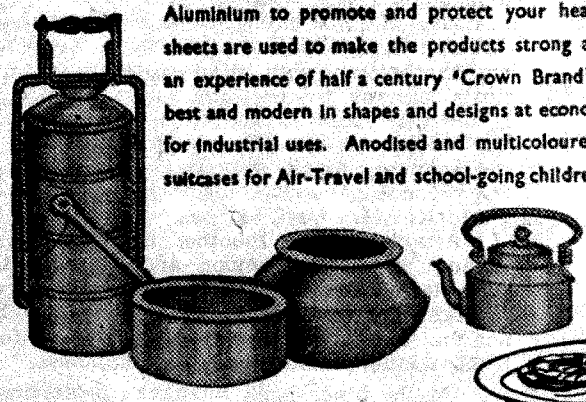
M. 71, Connaught Circus, New Delhi-1 • Budhmarg, Patna-1

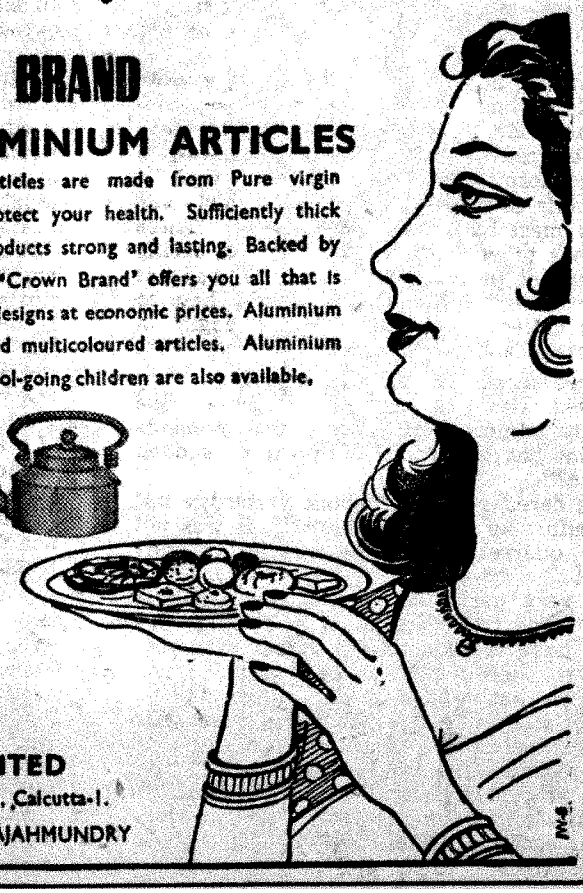
Purity Strength and Perfection assured

in **CROWN BRAND**

ALUMINIUM ARTICLES

'Crown Brand' Aluminium articles are made from Pure virgin Aluminium to promote and protect your health. Sufficiently thick sheets are used to make the products strong and lasting. Backed by an experience of half a century 'Crown Brand' offers you all that is best and modern in shapes and designs at economic prices. Aluminium for industrial uses. Anodised and multicoloured articles. Aluminium suitcases for Air-Travel and school-going children are also available.





For the benefit of our consumers we have now started RETAIL SALES at 23 Brabourne Road.

Please visit our RETAIL SHOW-ROOM

at JEEWANLAL (1929) LIMITED

Crown Aluminium House, 23, Brabourne Road, Calcutta-1.

ADEN • BOMBAY • DELHI • MADRAS • RAJAHMUNDRY

"You see, Shanker, I waited too long for you."

taxi overtaking the car. All of a sudden he felt giddy. He temporarily became blind. There was nothing but darkness all around him. It was only for a split second then he ordered the taxi driver to drive fast. He still could not remember how he got down from the taxi, paid the fare and staggered to his room. He was in a state of daze and as soon as he got to his room he threw himself on his bed. Gradually he came out of his shock and tears started trickling down his cheeks. The whole night he did not sleep but lay stunned.

Early morning he got up and after having a bath, dressed quickly. When he reached her house, Gita was still sleeping. He forbade the servants to wake her up. He preferred to wait. While he was waiting he rang up the hospital and informed them that he would not be able to come. At about nine thirty she came down to meet him. He looked at her. There was a slight look of astonishment in her eyes seeing him at this hour of the day. Otherwise she was not perturbed in the least. He did not know how to start. She also patiently waited for him to begin. In the end he rather abruptly suggested.

"I think we should get married now."

As expected Gita was taken by surprise. She could not reply immediately. After a few moments she said, "What has happened? Why this sudden change of Date?"

He nearly flared up at her about yesterday but with a great effort he controlled himself. It was not advisable to quarrel when one was losing one's ground.

"Nothing very particular. I was just thinking about you for some time. You must be feeling very lonely when I have so little time to spend with you. I have been very selfish and obstinate to make you wait just for the satisfaction of my stupid vanity. Now if we get married we could have more time together and another thing", he paused and stared at her for a few seconds, then whispered, "I can't stand the separation any more. I can't wait a single day."

"But what about your research, your appointment and your economic independence?" There was sarcasm in her voice.

"Nothing matters, when I feel you are gradually getting farther and farther away from me. Everything has its importance after I know I have you."

"How do you make out that I have gone farther away from you?"

"I am not blind. I have been coming here everyday. Previously you used to wait so eagerly for me but now tell me how often do I have the chance of even meeting you, leave aside your waiting for me".

"You see, Shanker, I waited too long for you. There was a time when I could kiss the very ground you walked on, but now I have come to the end of my patience. I am sorry I can't immediately answer. I shall have to think. I don't know what I really want."

There was hardly anything more to say. Any further persuasion would only amount to more humiliation. Shanker had to wait and leave himself to destiny. If Shanker was in a normal state of mind he certainly would have noticed the triumphant contentment in the eyes of Gita. He left her house much more depressed.

During the next three months Shanker became a changed man. Not only he came everyday but often invited her out to some entertainment or other. The sober, studious, hard working man no longer bothered about his duties in the hospital. His colleagues were surprised seeing the change. He was callous with his work and his keenness for operation had completely vanished. He started grudging and cribbing if any extra work was given to him. At home his brother and sister found him grave and peevish. They did not know the reason so they started avoiding him. But in the presence of Gita he was different. He was attentive, gay and very observant. Gita was astonished and pleased to see that she was often complimented.

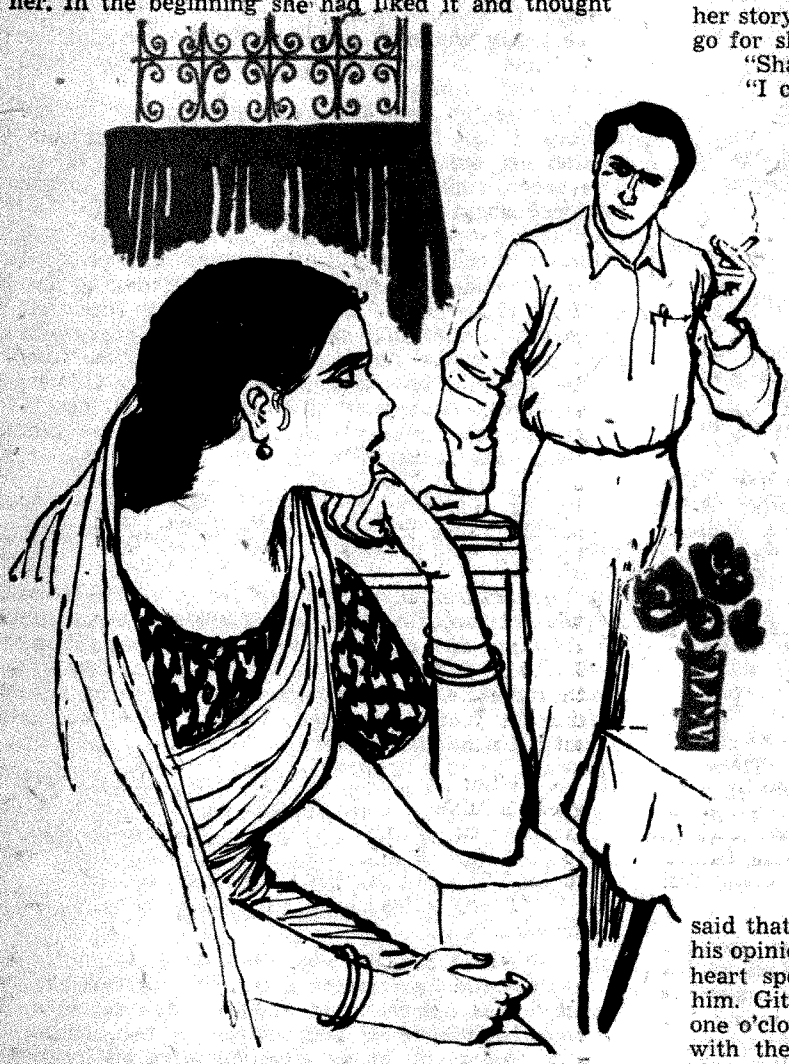
In the beginning she did not accept the invitations of Shanker and more often went out with Biren. Shanker's persistent approaches and quiet patience started showing results. She started going out more with Shanker and engagements with Biren started receding. In spite of Biren's courteous and polished manners, Gita noticed that he was getting tired of her. Initial zeal was cooling down. She also heard reports that Biren was seen going out with other girls. When she asked Biren about it, he laughed and said that she should never listen to rumours. He was supposed to be devoted to her. Another thing which struck Gita as being very odd was that even though Biren expressed his love many times in many different and romantic ways, he really never proposed to her. She became suspicious of him. Moreover, she did not really get over her love for Shanker. Since Shanker had changed so much she did not have anything to complain about. She gradually went back to him.

After about six months they were married. During their honeymoon and subsequently when they started their new home Gita was very happy. Shanker proved to be an ideal husband. She did not find even a small fault with him. Life seemed to be a long period of blissful happiness.

On the other hand Shanker's professional work was completely neglected. He hardly studied. The most promising surgeon paid little heed to the patients. His private practice diminished and the head of the department of surgery recommended that Shanker should not be confirmed immediately and his case should be revised after one year. Shanker was just callous about these setbacks. When Gita came to know of all these she did not bother much. She had plenty of money and she wanted Shanker to herself. It did not matter to her if he failed to earn more. The younger brother and

sister could not suffer any more their beloved brother's indifferent attitude. They tactfully requested if they could be sent to live in their college hostels. This proposal was gladly accepted and they were glad to get rid of one another.

Within the next one year after their marriage Gita found that Shanker never wanted to leave her alone. Even when he had to go out on essential work he went very reluctantly and rang her up more than once. She very rarely got any time to herself. When she wanted to go to any of her relations or to meet any of her friends he would insist on going with her. In the beginning she had liked it and thought



"If you think I am blind and don't see your activities with your paramour or old flames you are mistaken."

that he was so devoted to her that he could not live even a single moment without her but gradually she became tired of this behaviour and wanted some freedom. Sometimes she showed her irritation but that was of no use. Another peculiar thing she observed was that Shanker never allowed her to meet any man. Either he would evade the meeting or when they actually met he would tactfully take her away as soon as decently possible. She was surprised at his behaviour. He was so trustful of her that he never even doubted her when she had late nights with any of her male friends, and now he did not even let her meet any one of them. Possibly men became more jealous and possessive after marriage.

One day when Gita went out for shopping alone she happened to meet Anil, her classmate in college. She met him after a long time and was very glad to meet him again. They had so much to talk about the old days. Anil suggested that they should go and have some coffee together when they would be able to talk. Without a second thought she accepted the invitation. When Shanker came home she narrated the incident. Shanker narrowed his eys and there was a distinct frown on his face. When she finished her story he said with some sarcasm, "Did you really go for shopping or was it an excuse to meet him?"

"Shanker! What are you saying?"

"I can't understand why you have to go alone. Could you not wait for me to take you out? You didn't even tell me that you were going out for shopping. It seemed you had no previous plan to go out. You just went suddenly for some reason or the other."

"But I told you in the morning that I needed some cosmetics.'

"Yes, but that doesn't mean you must go out the same day or it may be that the appointment was made previously and your requirement of cosmetics was only an excuse."

Gita was thunderstruck at his mean and baseless accusations. She was never very good in battle of words. She felt a sob rise in her throat. She ran to her room and locked herself in.

The relationship remained strained for some time. Gita eagerly expected that Shanker would certainly understand his mistake and would apologise but he did nothing of the sort. Instead. he went about with the air that he was correct and Gita should apologise.

A couple of months afterwards Biren rang up. Shanker was out in the hospital, so Gita picked up the phone. She was happy to hear Biren's voice. She had not heard from him for over a year. Biren said that his mother had some heart ailment and in his opinion Shanker was certainly the most promising heart specialist in the town. He wanted to consult him. Gita said that Shanker would be back about one o'clock, so why not come round and have lunch with them and also discuss his mother's treatment then.

Shanker was late that day. He came at about one thirty. When he entered the drawing room he saw Biren and Gita happily laughing together. His face darkened. They both became quiet and an unpleasant silence fell. Biren was the first to talk.

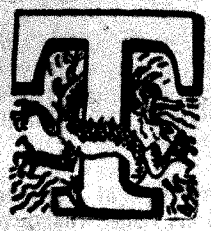
"Shanker, I was waiting for you. You see my mother is suffering from heart trouble and I wanted to consult you."

"Really, but why here? You could come to the hospital or to my consulting room." Rudeness was apparent in his tone. Gita quickly said, "He rang me up this morning and it is I who invited him for

(Continued on Page 160)

MAHESH

SARAT CHANDRA CHATTOPADHYAY



THE name of the village was Kashipur. The village was small; its Zemindar yet smaller. But so domineering was his personality that no subject of his would ever dare to raise a voice of a protest against his dispensation.

It was the birth-day celebration of the youngest son of the Zemindar. After performing the usual rites, due on such a solemn occasion, Tarkaratna (a Brahmin Pandit having the Sanskrit title of 'Tarkaratna') was returning home at noon. It was the end of 'Baisakh', but there was not a vestige of cloud in the sky. It seemed as though flames of fire were melting down the sun-burnt sky.

The field that stretched towards the horizon had become scorched and cracked like a ripe melon, and it appeared as though the blood-vessel of Mother Earth had been ceaselessly letting out heaps of smoke through the numberless crevices in her body. Would anybody direct his eyes towards the upward serpentine movements of those flames, his head would at once begin to reel, he would feel dazed.

On one side of this sun-burnt heath lay the house of Goffur the weaver. The mud-wall of the house had given way and his court-yard now became merged with the road-side, thus surrendering the privacy of the Zenana to the mercy of the passers-by. Standing under the shade of a 'Pitali' tree that grew by the road-side Tarkaratna shouted out, "Goffur! are you in?"

The ten-year-old daughter of Goffur responded to the call and said, "Why do you call Father? He has been laid up with fever and can't move out".

"Laid up with fever? Nonsense! Send that rascal! that rogue! that infidel! I shall teach him a good lesson!"

Goffur found it difficult to remain indifferent to the shouts and abuses of the Tarkaratna any longer. He slowly came out of his house, shivering with fever. A bull was standing there tethered to one of the branches of an old 'Babla' tree that raised its trunk over the dilapidated wall. Pointing to the bull Tarkaratna said, "May I know what you mean by this? Have you altogether forgotten that this is a village of the Hindoos and that its Zemindar is a Brahmin? And that nothing sacrilegious can be allowed to happen in this village?" His face grew crimson owing partly to the heat of his anger and partly to the scalding rays of the sun. And it was only natural that heated words came out of his lips at such a moment. But Goffur could not make out the cause of his temper and remained staring at his face, tongue-tied.

Tarkaratna continued, "Early in the morning when I passed by this way I found the bull tied to this tree and now at noon when I am coming back I find it exactly where it was. Do you know, fool, that the Zemindar will bury you alive if the bull dies for your negligence? Don't forget that he is not an ordinary Brahmin!"

"What shall I do sir? I have fallen in such a great trouble! I have been down with fever for the last few days, and when I try to take the bull out to feed it with a few baits of grass, my head begins to reel! Tell me, sir, what can I do now?"

"Then, why don't you untie it and let it graze freely?"

"Where shall I leave him to graze, sir? The paddy-crop has not yet been fully harvested; the straw has not yet been stacked, the edges of the corn-fields have all been singed by the heat of the sun; and there is not a handful of grass anywhere. If I now let the bull graze outside, he will either damage somebody's paddy-crop or eat from somebody's haystack — how can I untie him, Sir?"

Tarkaratna now relented a bit and said, "If you are not willing to unfasten it, then why don't you give it one or two bundles of straw that it may chew for the while? And has not your daughter cooked rice today? Then give it a tubful of gruel".

Goffur gave no reply. Helplessly staring at the face of the Tarkaratna for some time he heaved a heavy sigh of anguish.

Tarkaratna said, "Oh! you don't have that too? Why? What have you done with your share of straw? Have you despatched everything to your

belly, that fathomless cavity? Shouldn't you hold back even one bundle out of your stock? You are a veritable butcher, I see!"

At this cruel charge Goffur's voice got chocked; and it became impossible for him to utter a word. After a little while he began to say in a drawling voice, "Sir, I really got some straw this year as my share, but the landlord held back the entire share in adjustment of my last year's dues to him. Falling at his feet I implored him piteously, saying, "My lord, you are both my saviour and dispenser of justice! I am entirely at your hands and is there any scope of my fleeing anywhere beyond your jurisdiction? Then kindly let me have a portion of my share of straw! You know, my only dwelling-shed that I and my little daughter share has already been denuded of thatch, and it is likely to become unfit for use any time, yet I do not mind that I shall roof it with palm leaves and somehow pass the rainy season. But if you do not let me have some straw my Mahesh will die of starvation".

Before he could finish his speech Tarkaratna interrupted and said with a derisive smile on his lips,

"The Zemindar will bury you alive . . ."

"How silly? A bull has been named Mahesh! I cannot but laugh at your foolish pranks!"

This sarcastic remark of the Tarkaratna was entirely lost on Goffur. He went on saying, "But, all my wails and solicitations went in vain; the Zemindar's heart did not soften. He gave me only the paddy that fell in my share with which I could somehow manage two months' food. The straw was stacked in entirely and poor Mahesh was given not a particle of that."

Hardly had Goffur uttered these words when his eyes became filled with tears and his voice got choked in auguish. Tarkaratna, however, was not the least moved at this. He said, "You are a nice fellow, I see. Have you no mind to pay your dues to the landlord? Do you expect that the Zemindar would feed you for nothing? And, you are so ungrateful that while living under his benign rule you dare to abuse his good name! And, what else can be expected of a low-bred fellow like you?"

Goffur said somewhat embarrassed, "Why shall I vilify him, Sir? But would you kindly say wherefrom I can pay his dues?

"I till only four bighas of land as a share cropper. Crops have failed for two successive years—they have dried up in the fields and even we two creatures, father and daughter, cannot have two square meals a day. Please also look at my room—during the rains I and my little daughter pass our nights simply squatting on a corner of its floor. Even there is no such space where we can sprawl out our legs and somehow recline ourselves. And please look at Mahesh once; he is now reduced to skin and bone. Would you be so kind as to lend me only two bundles of straw so that I can feed the bull to his heart's content only for a day or two?"

He had scarcely finished saying when he dropped at the feet of the Brahmin with a thud. Tarkaratna started up as if electrified, and hastily retracing his steps shouted out, "Fie on you, rogue! do you mean to touch my body?"

"No sir, why should I touch you? But wouldn't you lend me a bundle of straw? I have seen with my own eyes that you have as many as four big stacks — and if you part with a bundle or two out of them, your store will not be the least affected. I do not mind dying of starvation, but how could I see my Mahesh die without food before my eyes? — Mahesh, poor mute creature! he has no voice to express his feelings, he only stares at me and sheds tears".

"You are asking for a loan, but how will you repay it?" enquired Tarkaratna. Thinking that his prayer was going to be granted Goffur cried out in excitement, "Sir, I will repay your loan at all costs, I will not play false with you, Sir, I will not fail you!"

Tarkaratna made a peculiar intonation of his voice and mimicking Goffur's speech said, "I will repay your loan at all costs, Sir, I will not fail you, Sir! Oh my darling! you have come to cut jokes with me! Nonsense! Look here, fool, leave my path at once, and let me go; I have already got late and must reach home before long".

But hardly had he moved one step forward after saying this with a contemptuous smile on his lips, when he retraced his steps as if frightened and shouted out, "Go to Hell, rascal, why is this devil of a bull nodding its horns towards me, does it ..... does it mean to gore me?"

Goffur stood up and pointing to the bundle of fruits and soaked rice in the hand of the Brahmin

. . . his eyes became filled with tears . . .

said, "Oh, I see, Mahesh has got the scent of food, and extremely hungry that he is, he wants to eat....."

"What! wants to eat! Nice ! As you are an idiot, so is your bull! It's a nice plan, no doubt — when it finds no grass to eat, let there be a meal of rice and banana! Look here, fool, remove it from my path! Oh, how terrible are its horns! I am sure it will not stop before it has killed some passer-by."

So saying Tarkaratna carefully crossed the place and went away with long strides.

Goffur now turned his glance from that direction and remained stupefied for sometime, and then wistfully looked at Mahesh. The two deep black eyes of Mahesh were expressing a great hunger and agony of his heart. Then coming near him Goffur said, "Mahesh, my dear, my pet, you couldn't have even a handful of grass, isn't it? They possess plenty, but they will never give anything to others! Well, what's of that? We never expect anything from them!"

It grew impossible for Goffur to continue in this strain, his throat was getting choked, and then drops of tears began to trickle down his eyes. He came to Mahesh and patted his neck and head and then began to say in a low whisper, "Mahesh, you are my son, you have served us for long eight years and now you have grown old; I cannot give you a full meal,—but you know quite well how dearly I love you!"

In response, Mahesh only stretched out his neck and remained standing somewhat cosily with his eyes closed. Goffur wiped off the tears from the back of Mahesh that fell from his eyes and then began to say in a low voice. "The Zemindar has snatched away the food from your mouth, he has also rented out the only pasture land of the village out of sheer greed for money. Mahesh, how can I save you in this year of crisis? If I let you graze outside, you will either damage somebody's haystacks or banana plantations—what shall I do with you now? Now that you have grown old and infirm you have become an unwelcome guest; everybody advises me to sell you at the cattle market." He had scarcely uttered these words within himself when his eyes became filled with tears. Wiping out the tears from his eyes Goffur cast his look around, held a handful of discoloured straw before the mouth of Mahesh and then said in a low voice, "Mahesh, take and eat this at once, otherwise—" "Father!"

"Why, my child!"

"Come to eat, Father", so saying Amina came out of the room and stood on the doorstep. Looking at her father for a while she said, "Father, you have again damaged the thatch to feed Mahesh?"

Goffur was apprehending the same thing; he felt somewhat ashamed and said, "Darling! it was all but rotten and was falling down itself; So I...."

"No, Father, I heard from inside the room that you were pulling out the thatch from the roof".

"No my child, I was not exactly doing so....".

"But, Father, what will you do when the wall gives way? — "

Goffur remained silent. Besides this one thatched shed there was no other room left in the house. And who knew better than he that this shed also would go out of use before long if he thus went on damaging its roof? And how long could one continue in such a wretched condition?

"Wash your hands and face, Father, and come to eat, I have already served the food", said the daughter.

Goffur said, "Give me the gruel and let me feed Mahesh first; he is so hungry!"

"All the gruel has dried up in the pan to-day; so how can you feed Mahesh?

"What! Not a drop remains!"

Goffur became simply speechless. Even this little girl of ten had realised that there should not

be the least wastage of any article at such a critical moment. Washing her hands she went inside the room and stood by the side of her father. Then she served a little rice and some vegetable-soup on a brass plate for her father and took some rice for herself on an earthen plate. Goffur looked at her and towards the food served for him for sometime and then said in a mild voice, "Amina, my dear. I feel feverish: should I take rice now?"

"But didn't you tell me, Father, that you felt extremely hungry?" said Amina somewhat anxiously.

"Oh ! I told you so! Amina, I had no fever when I told you."

"Well, then I will keep the food for you to take at night!"

Goffur shook his head and said, "No, Amina, if I take such cold rice, won't it do more harm to my ailing body?"

"Then what will you eat, Father?" — said Amina. Goffur thought for sometime and seemed to have made a solution to the problem. He said, "Do one thing, Amina, give the rice to Mahesh. Won't you be able to cook me some food at night?"

Amina uttered not a word and kept on looking at her father's face. After a while she said gently, "Why not, Father? Of course, I will."

Goffur's face grew red and he kept silent.

It was the omniscient Lord alone who was perhaps the third person, besides these two, father and daughter, who understood the meaning of this drama, having seen everything from heaven.

2

About a week after this Goffur was one day sitting on the verandah with anxiety printed on his face. His Mahesh had been missing since the previous day. He became very weak after the recent illness: so Amina had been out since morning trying her best to search out the bull. When the day was waning she returned home, but without Mahesh. Approaching Goffur she said, "Do you know, Father, that Manik Ghose and others have taken Mahesh to the Police Pound?"

"That's absurd, you silly girl!" — said Goffur. "Yes, Father, it's a fact. Their servant told me,— 'Go and ask your father to make an enquiry at the pound of Dariapur'."

"What did Mahesh do?"

"He broke into their garden and spoiled the trees and plants, Father."

Goffur sat speechless. He apprehended various mishaps about Mahesh but he was not the least prepared for such a one. He was innocent as he was poor; so it was beyond his imagination that any of his neighbours could ever inflict such a heavy punishment on him. And could he ever dream that a pious man like Manik Ghose, who was well-known in this locality for his regard for cows and Brahmins could be so cruel to his dear Mahesh!

"The day is declining, Father, won't you go to bring back Mahesh?" Amina said.

Goffur simply said, "No".

"But I have been told by them that on the expiry of the third day the police will sell him at the cattle market."

"Let them do whatever they like," rejoined Goffur. Amina had no knowledge of the word "Catle market" but she had noticed on many occasions an abnormal change wrought on his father's countenance at the mere reference to the term. Without uttering a word she slowly left the place.

Under cover of night Goffur came out of his house stealthily and went to Banshi's shop. "Uncle, you have to lend me a rupee," he said to Banshi and then put his brass-plate under the bamboo stool.

Banshi knew all about its weight and other particulars as he had to pay such loans against mortgage of this utensil at least five times during the last two years. As he did before, this time too he raised no objection to Goffur's demand and handed over a silver coin to him.

The next day Mahesh was again seen in his wonted place, the self-same "Babla" tree, that cord, that post, that fodderless manger and the same wistful hungry look of those black, tearful eyes; an elderly-looking Muslim agriculturist was very minutely examining Mahesh with the keen eyes of an expert. Goffur sat silent in one corner of his yard. When he finished his examination the old man brought out a ten-rupee note out of the fold in his wrapper, and then approaching Goffur said, "Take it Goffur Mean, I give you a whole note".

Goffur stretched out his hand and received the note, but he kept silent all the while.

Now when the two men that accompanied the old man went to untie the cord of the bull, Goffur suddenly flew into a rage and said, "Take care, I tell you, don't touch the cord if you want your good!"

The men became simply amazed. The old man, who, too, was not a little surprised at Goffur's attitude said, "Why? What's the matter?" Goffur replied in the same angry tone,—"There's no why. The bull is mine and I shall not part with it. And none has any right to interfere in my sweet will." So saying he flung the note at him indignantly.

"But didn't you receive an advance from us yesterday on this account?" they said.

"Well, take it back." He at once brought out two silver coins from the fold of his cloth and threw them forcibly on the ground in utter disgust.

Finding that a heated altercation was impending, the old man gently said, bringing a smile on his lips, "Oh, I see! You mean to draw out from us another two rupees, isn't it? Well, men, hand over to the little daughter of Goffur Meah two silver coins to purchase some sweets. Well, are you now satisfied, Goffur Meah?"

"No".

"But do you know that there's none to pay you a single farthing more?"

Goffur got more excited and violently nodding his head cried out,—"No ! No ! "

The old man now got irritated at Goffur's obstinacy and said, "What do you mean, Goffur ! Do you mean to say that what I have said is wrong?

What will be a little paying is only its hide; otherwise, what matter is there in its body?"

"Fie! Fie! Hold your tongue, I tell you!" Suddenly an abusive term slipped out of his tongue. He then rushed into his room and began to threaten them saying that if they did not leave the village at once he would have them shoe-beaten by the men of the Zemindar.

Apprehending a disturbance, the men went away disappointed in their bargain. But in no time Goffur was summoned to appear before the Zemindar. He now understood that the whole matter had been reported to the Zemindar and that in a distorted manner.

When he reached the court he found that the Zemindar was surrounded by a host of gentlemen as well as some vulgar people. At the very sight of Goffur Shibu Babu shouted out with his eyes reddened with anger, "Goffur, I don't know how to punish you! Are you fully aware under whom you are living?"

Goffur said with folded hands, "I am quite aware, my lord! Only that we have often to go without food, else I would not the least mind paying any fine you would deign to impose on me."

Everybody present was surprised at Goffur's submission. So long they knew him to be an obstinate and ill-tempered man. He said almost weeping, "My lord! Hereafter I shall never commit such an offence." With these words he pulled his own ears with both hands and then rubbed his nose against the ground from one end of the courtyard to the other.

Shibu Babu said somewhat relenting, "Well Goffur, you may go now; but remember that such offence must not recur in future."

Whoever heard of this incident shuddered, and was convinced that it was only due to the benign influence and rigorous administration of Shib Chandra Babu that such a nuisance could be stopped for ever. Tarkaratna, who was present when all this happened, lost no time to make a scriptural exposition of the word "Cow" and concluded his illuminating speech with the remark that to give asylum to an impious, ill-bred man in the village was grossly sacrilegious, and thus opened the eyes of the ignorant villagers.

Goffur uttered not a word in protest, and, considering all these abuses and harassment to be his due, returned home with a rather light heart. He begged some gruel from his neighbours and fed Mahesh with it and then began to pat his head muttering in a low voice many words of endearment.

3

It was now the end of Jaistha. And it grew impossible for one without looking at the sky of that day even to imagine how terribly grim could become the countenance of the sun that first revealed itself with its flaming appearance in late Baisakh. It seemed as though there was not a drop of mercy anywhere. And it was hardly possible to conceive that this blazing appearance of the universe could ever undergo the least change, that this sky could ever become a little moistened with clouds. It appeared as though these flames of fire that were being showered day and night through the burning firmament would never cease, would never be extinguished before everything had been completely burnt down.

On such a day Goffur returned home at noon. He was not accustomed to the work of a day-labour.

Hold your tongue'!

He had no fever for the last four or five days, but his body was as weak as it was tired. He went out to find out some work, but no work was available anywhere. He only suffered the terrible heat of the sun, all his efforts went in vain. He was so tired and overpowered with thirst and hunger that his vision got almost blurred. Standing on the courtyard of his house, Goffur called out, "Amina, haven't you cooked rice yet?"

The girl slowly came out of the room and stood before her father holding a post with her hand but without a word on her lips.

Finding no response Goffur cried out, 'Is meal ready? What? Is it not? May I know, why it is not?'

"Rice is wanting, Father!"

"Rice is wanting? Then, why didn't you tell me in the morning.?"

"I told you Father; I told you last night".

Casting a dreadful frown at her and almost mimicking her speech Goffur burst out, — "Told you last night! Nonsense! can anybody remember anything told overnight?" His own harsh tone only added fuel to the flame of his anger. With an abnormal countenance he cried out, — "How can there remain even a little store of rice left? Without ever enquiring whether the ailing father eats or not, you the old girl go on eating four or five times a day like a glutton? Henceforth, I won't go out before I have kept my store of rice under lock and key! Well, give me a pitcherful of water,

I am going to die of thirst. Say, idiot, that is also wanting!"

Amina remained standing there in the same way with a downcast face. When after waiting for a few moments Goffur understood that there was no water even to quench his thirst, he could no longer restrain himself. Rushing to the little girl he gave her a violent slap on the face, and said, — "What do you do the whole day, wretched girl? Thousands of men die everyday, but can't you die?"

The girl uttered not a word. She took up the empty earthen pitcher and wiping her tears silently went out even in the scorching rays of the sun. But she had not gone out of sight when Goffur felt as though he had been pierced through his heart with a shaft. He only knew with what great difficulty he had brought up this motherless girl! He now realised that this loving, dutiful and sweet-tempered girl of his was not to blame. Since the small quantity of paddy grown in his field had been completely exhausted she could not have two full meals a day. Some day she had only one meal a day and some day none at all. Taking five or six meals a day was as false as it was absurd;—and the reason of the want of drinking water was not unknown to Goffur. The two or three public tanks of the village were completely dried up. The small quantity of water that was still left in the private tank of Shibcharan Babu was not available to the public. And the little water that could occasionally be dug out of those public tanks had such a heavy demand that one had to stand in a long queue before getting a pitcherful of water. And this girl being a Muslim had to stay outside the crowd. She could fetch a little water if only somebody would deign to pour it into her pitcher after she had waited for several hours. All this was known to Goffur. Maybe, there was no water or that she was not favoured with a little water by anybody in the midst of the heavy crowd. Thinking that such a thing might have happened that day he became sorry for his conduct; and instantly his eyes became filled with tears.

Amina remained standing there.

Just at this moment a peon from the Zemindar's court made his appearance before him like Death incarnate. "Goffur, are you at home?" the man shouted out.

"Yes, I am, but why?" replied Goffur somewhat indifferently.

"The Zemindar has summoned you to appear before his court. Come at once with me."

"I haven't yet washed myself and had my midday meals. I shall go some time later,"—replied Goffur.

But such audacity on the part of a poor subject was more than the Zemindar's peon could endure. He shouted out with an abusive remark. "Look here, fool, my master has asked me to drag you to the court beating you with shoes."

Goffur again lost his temper. Making a filthy remark at the man he said, "None is a slave under the Queen's regime. I live here on payment of usual taxes. Go and tell your Zemindar that I am not going to abide by his orders".

But, in this world it is a positive danger for a small man to plead in the name of a great one! The only relieving feature is that his feeble voice does not reach those big ears! Otherwise there would have been no end of his miseries; he would have been deprived of his food as well as of sleep for ever.

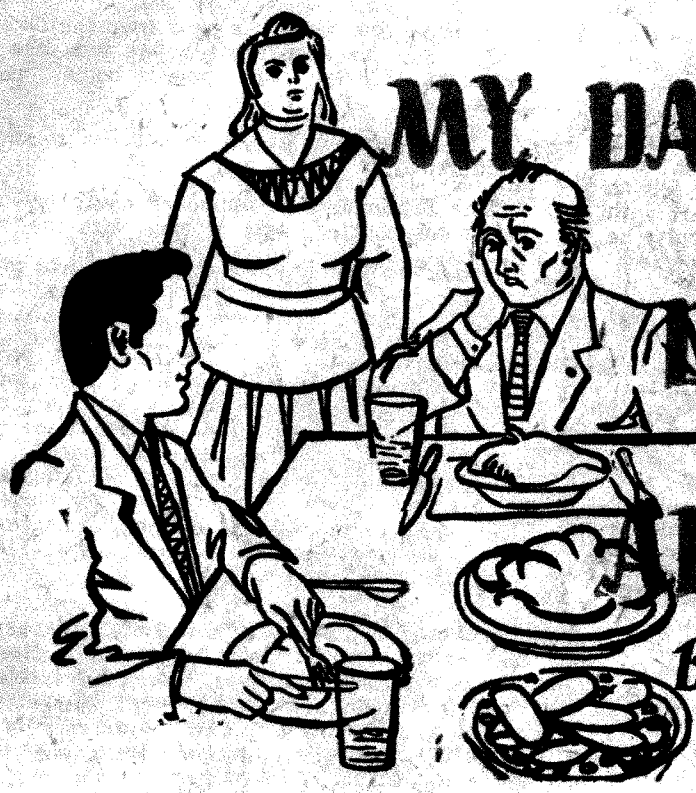
What happened after this is needless to mention, but when after an hour he returned from the Zemindar's court his face and eyes grew swollen. It was due to Mahesh that he had to suffer all this harassment. As soon as Goffur left home Mahesh also broke loose from the cord and went out, entered the Zemindar's compound and ate up the flower-plants and damaged the paddy that was being sunned in the courtyard, and at last when he was going to be caught he pushed down the little daughter of the Zemindar and made good his escape.

This incident was not the first of its kind. On previous occasions Goffur escaped punishment only on the ground of his extreme poverty. And this time, too, he might have been excused of his offence had he once approached the Zemindar and begged his forgiveness. But instead of beginning his pardon he only gave offence to him by saying that he had duly paid his taxes and that he was no slave to anybody.

Being a Zemindar, Shibcharan Babu found it impossible to ignore this insolent remark of a poor subject of his. Goffur also raised no protest against the abuses and beatings of the Zemindar; he brooked all these without the least demur, and after returning home he silently lay down on the floor in extreme languor and dejection. He forgot his thirst and hunger, but his heart was burning like the noon-day sky outside.

How long he passed in this way he was not conscious of, but when a groaning cry from the

(Continued on Page 154)



MY DAD'S DENTAL ADVENTURE

By T. Lewis

MY father was thoroughly normal save in one respect. He had an irrational fear of the dentist's chair. This was all the more unusual because his closest friend was a dentist. It was on the golf-course that Dad and Dr. Duncan had become friends. Both had taken to the game late in life. So, neither was very proficient. Yet the fascination of golf so grew on them, that they never let a week-end pass without a single on the links.

Golf appealed to my father's temperament. He liked to walk and talk. What better place to do this than in the sylvan setting of the golf-course! Moreover the exercise of the game, helped him to work off that middle-age swell which comes from good eating and sedentary employment.

By modern standards my mother was old fashioned. Her sole preoccupation was her home. She had never heard of Napoleon's dictum about an army marching on its stomach. But experience had taught her that not only the good health of a family, its cheer also depended on a good kitchen. Her greatest creative effort went into her cooking. Without exaggeration, every week she had one or other palatable surprise for us.

My father believed that the good things of life were to be enjoyed. Foo ' was one such thing, and so he ate with relish. His was no hedonistic abandon. He had acquired a discriminating palate which he considered the mark of a cultured man. My mother, of course, often questioned his judgment in this matter, and it led to pleasant banter between them.

Unexpectedly this changed. It must have been round about my sixteenth year. Afterwards my mother referred to it as the one and only crisis of her marriage. My father went off his feed. Even at my mother's tastiest preparations, he merely nibbled. She could not understand this 'volte face' in disposition. He spaciously attributed it to the water which had so much mica that his stomach was affected. Using all the subtle persuasion she could muster, my mother pleaded with him to have a check-up by a doctor instead of being his own physician.

Thinking that such a course was sufficiently safe to hide his real trouble, my father, just to please my mother, agreed. Alas for him, his judgment miscarried. The doctor was a better diagnostician than he had thought.

"It's not your stomach, but your teeth which are at fault. Have them out, for they will poison not only your stomach, but your whole system." This was the secret my father had been cherishing. That explains why his medicine chest was filled with an ample supply of clove oil and creosote. He had been dabbing his gums and teeth with these oils in the hope they would relieve his pain and deaden the exposed nerves.

Now that the cause of the trouble had been traced, its remedy was simple. So, thought my mother : Dr. Duncan was not only a reputed dentist, he was her husband's good friend. Eagerly she made an appointment for my father. Expectantly she looked forward to the passing of a cloud which had, of late, hung over her home. Little did she, or, for that matter anyone else, guess the complexes deep down in my father's sub-conscious mind which

.... he ate with relish.

would continue to resist all attempts at making him take dental treatment.

My mother made several appointments. He balked at every one of them. Sometimes at the last moment he would back out. Once while she was reviving up the motor of the car to drive him there, he called it off because of some imaginary business. The Duncans were friends of our family. We visited theirs, and they came over to our place. But since the time my mother had begun to hound him about seeing a dentist, Dad had not gone to Dr. Duncan's place. If things were allowed to remain in this groove, my mother feared we might lose the friendship of the Duncans. This my father did not want. So, on the next occasion he consented to accompany her. He suggested a Sunday because the doctor literally closed clinic on that day.

The visit was like old times. Mrs. Duncan and mother exchanged homely chit-chat. Dad and the doctor discussed the chances of the different favourites at the next golf championship the club was soon to hold. Neither entered for anything save the handicap. But they were as keen as the participants. Before leaving, the doctor remarked on my father being a shadow of his former self. Then my mother spilled the beans.

For some time her husband had been off his feed. Our family physician had examined him and suggested that he see a dentist because his trouble, so far, was merely his teeth. She had made several appointments, but he always found alibis. While Dr. Duncan looked on pathetically, my father blushed to the roots of his few hairs. To relieve his embarrassment the doctor said: "You know I don't work on Sundays. But I can have a look and tell you how things are." The check-up confirmed what the physician had advised. Twelve teeth had decayed beyond repair and my Dad's gums had suppurated. This made it advisable to extract all the teeth. For my father it was a terrifying prospect. Dr. Duncan reassured him: "I'll do it in such easy stages you'll feel nothing before, during and after the extractions." He spoke with such assurance that he generated confidence. The doctor consulted his engagement book for the coming week and gave my father the earliest appointment convenient. With a final recommendation that my mother should accompany Dad when he came for the appointment, he saw them off.

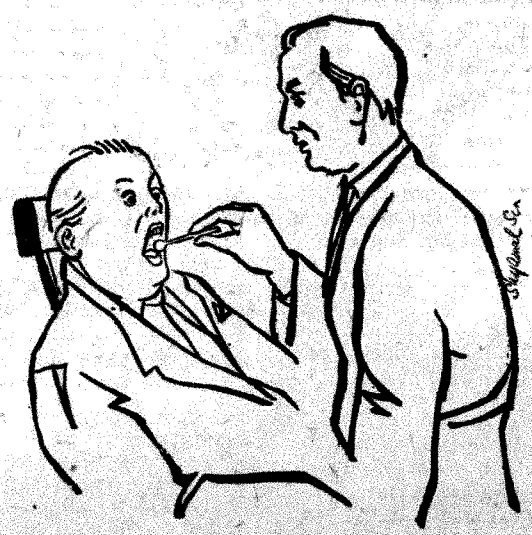
Mother did accompany Dad. For once she thought his morale was good: he raised no excuse and made no fuss. Instead he praised her for her over-solicitous attention. Her retort was that she was merely carrying out doctor's orders. Everything suddenly changed when Dad got into the dentist's chair. My mother pleaded, the doctor cajoled. Yet nothing availed. Dad would not open his mouth. So they returned in tense silence, and then my mother broke down. Up to this my father's behaviour had tortured her privately, now it added the fresh smart of disgrace in public.

She recalled another visit to Dr. Duncan's with my little sister. The child was afraid, but they had no difficulty in making her do what they had told her. There was no public exhibition of terror, after the manner they had witnessed today. And to think that the actor was no other than her husband who had been decorated for valour in war. After such a show, his name was mud with Dr. Duncan . . . .

What my father felt most of all was the hurt his conduct gave my mother. How could he explain to her that he was the victim of something which was beyond his reach, and which paralysed his will. He didn't like to admit it to himself. On the level of sensibility, this domestic drama had become for the main actors, a tragedy. Then by a merciful act of Providence, something happened which relieved its tension.

I won the junior tennis championship of the State. My photograph appeared in the newspapers. No one in the family before ever had this distinction. My parents were both pleased. My father,

(Continued on Page 160)



Twelve teeth had decayed beyond repair .....

Indian Dances

By HIRANMAY BANERJEE

DANCING in India is a very old institution. "Bharata Natyam", the extant book on classical dance was written sometime in the second century A.D. The Classical Dances have been developed on certain basic ideas. To properly appreciate them, therefore, it is necessary to pick up a working knowledge of these ideas. The Indian theory visualises dancing or acting as having two parts, namely the objective part and the subjective part. The objective aspect is called *Bhava*. The subjective aspect is *Rasa*. The objective part is constituted by what the dancer as an artist presents to the spectator. The subjective part is represented by appreciation of the presentation by the spectator. There are nine *bhavas* with nine corresponding *rasas*. For example we may take the case of anger. Its depiction by the dancer is its *bhava* aspect and its appreciation by the spectator is the *rasa* aspect.

Here the objective aspect is the presentation by the dancer of the picture of a mood so to say. Its appeal as an artistic creation is not to the cognitive faculty of the spectator but his emotional faculty. Although the presentations are of different types their appeal is to the aesthetic sense of the spectator. It is not a case so much where the depiction of a particular mood induces a corresponding sentiment in the mind of the spectator. It compares on his side to the appreciation of a work of art which leads to aesthetic enjoyment. For example a painter may paint the picture of a bad man or of a courageous man. When somebody studies it as work of art he does not feel disgust when he sees the first picture nor does he feel the sentiment of a man of courage when he sees the second picture. His reaction to both of them may be expressed in the same way by simply saying that they are beautiful. The Dance executed by the dancer stands in a similar relation to the spectator. The presentation side is *Bhava* and the appreciation side is *Rasa*.

Dance has been classified into three kinds, viz. *Nritta*, *Nritya* and *Abhinaya*.

(1) *Nritta* is what may be called abstract dancing. It does not express any thought but is limited to execution of certain dance patterns.

(2) *Nritya* is more concrete. It presents a theme or a mood. So it is accompanied by music also.

(3) *Abhinaya* or acting is a series of dances which tell a complete story. It can, therefore, be called dance play.

In classical dances an elaborate gesture language is employed. The component elements of this gesture language are four namely, (1) *Angik* that is bodily gestures, (2) *Vachick* that is what is conveyed through words, songs or sounds, (3) *Aharya* which consists of equipments, costumes and make-up and (4) *Satvika*—which is facial expression supplemented by movements of the body to reflect the inner mood of the mind. For example, when you want to show that you are angry your eyes wear the look of anger, your facial muscles assume the expression of an angry man etc.

In classical dancing gestures of the limbs, particularly those of the hands have assumed very great importance. They are the media through

which ideas are conveyed or action is depicted. Such gestures are known as *Mudras*. There are two broad types of *Mudras*, namely,—*Samyutahasta* and *Asamyutahasta*. *Samyutahasta* is gesture with both hands while *Asamyutahasta* is gesture with a single hand. These originally formed part of dance poses. But in Kathakali dance they have been isolated and utilised with great effect in depicting both ideas and action by a combination of certain basic *Mudras*. For example, the flight of a bird or the hovering of a bee over a flower may be depicted beautifully through such gesture language.

A system of time measurement is another outstanding feature in Indian dance. The measurement is made with the help of different kinds of drums in different dances. For example, in *Bharata Natyam*, the *Mridangam* is used. In Manipuri the *Khol* is used. In *Kathak* dance in North India two separate drums are played by the two hands. The one played by the left hand is called *Bayan* and the one played by the right hand *Tabla*.

The home of classical dances of India is mainly in the South. There they retain the pure form. The oldest style of classical dance is called *Bharata Natyam*. It is also called *Dasi-attam* that is dance by Devadasis who are girls dedicated to the temple. This form of dance is accompanied by the drum only in its abstract *Nritta* form. In *Nritya* form it is accompanied with music also. A stanza of a poem is sung, the *Mridangam* is played, and the dancing is executed by gestures.

The most popular form of dance in South India is the *Kathakali* dance which belongs to Kerala. This is not purely ritualistic. It is popular dancing performed in the open in villages. It tells whole stories taken from the Ramayan, the Mahabharata or the Puranas. It is dance play. In this type of dancing, the most important features are the make-up and the gesture language. The make-up is very elaborate involving use of big helmets, painting of the face and flamboyant dresses. It uses an elaborate code of gesture language based on gestures of the hand.

The Manipuri Dance was evolved in Manipur in North East India. It is based on the local folk dances but was adapted subsequently to depicting stories of Lord Krishna and his milkmaid friends, under influence of Vaishnavism. Its most characteristic form is the *Rasa* variety of dancing. It is group dancing in which the only male member in the party is Krishna and the others are all Gopikas including both Radha and her principal associates. Krishna uses a head-dress with a peacock's feather mounted on it and has a flute in his hand. The women use a tight bodice and a gown which looks like an open umbrella. Overlapping it there is a smaller gown of white material reaching upto the knee. On the head is a cone-shaped cap surmounted by a transparent veil. The tempo of this dance is slow, but it is very graceful. It involves no movement of the head at all which is very frequent in the South Indian dances.

Kathak is the classical dance form evolved in North India proper. This is absolutely secular, its objective being pure entertainment. It has assimilated elements which are both indigenous and imported. In fact it evolved under the patronage of Muslim rulers as a form of court dancing for their entertainment. The dancer is a woman who wears a pyjama and long coat with a cap on her head. It is not accompanied by any vocal music, the only accompaniments being the percussion instruments and a string instrument which is called the *Sarengi*. It involves elaborate foot work and spinning of the body punctuated by sudden stops.

SANTINIKETAN

I shall now refer to the new dance form evolved by Rabindranath Tagore in Santiniketan. He was both a playwright and an actor. He had written plays in verse form. He had also experimented with musical dramas named by him *Giti Natya* which is comparable to operas. It appears that he wanted to go one step further and add dancing as an addi-

(Continued on Page 146)

LOST CAUSES & GREAT FIGHTERS

By PRAMATHA CHAUDHURI

ROBERT Browning would have no truck with those who do not love to fight and to struggle against odds. Man suffers a setback only to renew the struggle with greater strength. It is within the power of man's spirit to pluck the sting out of failure and to make of it something better than success.

> "Though I do my best I shall scarce succeed.
> But what if I fail of my purpose here?
> It is but to keep the nerves at strain,
> To dry one's eyes and laugh at a fall,
> And, baffled, get up and begin again,—"

This (Life In A Love), Prospice and the Epilogue to Asolando, may be taken as, in a special degree, his testament to the world. With those who fall fighting this is an article of faith which crude sentimentalism would do well not to assail.

Let us turn to mythology and history haphazardly. Prometheus defied the gods and was chained to a rock to be tortured by a vulture. Shelley's Prometheus made light of his sufferings. He would not bend because the highest goodness lies in endless struggle.

No doubt the Satan of Milton, at least the Satan of the earlier books, is a majestic figure. There is a grandeur and spaciousness in his manner and conduct which makes him worthy of his Heavenly Opponent's steel. His fall is rapid and complete. But some remnant of his former glory clings to him. From first to last he never thinks of submission to God.

> "To bow and ask for grace
> Will never be our task."

he says and to this he sticks throughout. We rejoice he made up his mind to fight his quarrels out to the end.

We now descend to personages who relegated success to a place of secondary importance. There are Leonidas, Hannibal, Sivaji, Netaji Subhas and Rana Protap.

Xerxes would stick at nothing to do Sparta down. He collected a large army and a large fleet. He crossed the Hellespont, marched through Thrace, Macedonia and Thessaly. So far he had matters all his own way. But at Thermopylae, a narrow pass between Mount Octe and the sea he had to cross swords with one whose name is to the world the synonym of simple heroism.

OBEDIENT THEY LIE

Leonidas would not yield obedience to him. He repulsed the Persian attack with great slaughter. Had Ephialtes not shown the Persians a path across the hills by which the Spartans could be taken in the rear he would have staved off the invasion. The Persian host was so numerous that their arrows hid the sun. Leonidas fell. The defenders, 300 strong, were forced back behind the wall. As the enemy broke in from behind they drew together on to a hillock where they made their last stand to be surrounded and cut down to a man by overwhelming numbers. A column was afterwards erected at Sparta with the names of Leonidas and his 300. On it is engraved:

"Go tell to Sparta that passest by, That here obedient to her words we lie."

It was Sparta in 480 B.C. and the Sparta of Leonidas sank into history.

Though cast much in the same mould, Hannibal, son of Hamilcar Barca, is a loser of a different type. The crushing defeat of the Carthaginians off the group of island called Aegates in 242 B.C. burnt in the brain of Hannibal. He was bound from in-

fancy by his father to eternal enmity to Rome and was casting about for an opportunity to break with the Romans. He picked a quarrel with them by attacking Saguntum, a city in alliance with Rome. His march to Rome through the Pyrenees amidst terrible natural difficulties has developed something of epic greatness. He crossed the Alps in the teeth of a murderous fire and waged war invincibly for about fifteen years until recalled to save the home-land. Scipio emerged triumphant but Zama was not the grave of his reputation. The fibre of this man bearing up against every misfortune, betrayed and undermined from home, pitted against Rome with her natural, nascent strength must have been tenser than any we have been told about. Trasemene, Cannae and Zama—these are the tableaux.

Sivaji hurled a huge challenge in the face of Aurangzeb. The thought that surged up in his breast was how to restore India to her former glory. This was not easy to do. He shed much blood and many tears for it. Perhaps the task he set himself was much too big. Perhaps he overestimated his strength. But it is a fault of which the brave are guilty. He died leaving his work incomplete. Failure is the hall-mark of greatness.

STERNER STUFF

Netaji Subhas is made of a sterner stuff. The very thought of India in chains oppressed him terribly. His one wish was to see the chains slit. He gave a new direction to men's thoughts and actions. He gave shape to the nebulous ideas of national work in the circumstances of our difficult and complex problem. Above all he gave tone to Indian politics. He was bound to be fearless of danger or death and wasted no time or thought on questions of whom he might displease or dissatisfy in pressing along the path of his duty and more than Aryuna would have on the field of "Kurukhestra" after having been convinced by Sree Krishna of the way of his "Kshatria" duty. He smuggled out of India, made soldiers out of straw, so to speak, and would have marched to Delhi had luck not let him down badly.

Memories stored in the fields and hills of Mewar are awakened on Rana Pratap's leaving us behind this shore of eternity. He lives not dimmed by mortal changes but transfigured and glorified. Akbar wanted to make quick work of him. But the craft of Pratap was more than match for him. Cheetore was despoiled of her ornaments. Cheetore widowed, burning in memory, had set him on fire and transformed him into a consummate general. He and his family lived in the hills, ate of wild fruits and bread of grass. But Akbar gave him no respite. He set against him his kindred in faith and blood and let hell loose on him. He was not fated like Napoleon to eat his heart out in exile. He bided his time and put the Moghul army to the sword. It was a stroke of luck that Prince Saleem survived the attack of the Rajpoot at the battle of Huldighat. He regained Komulmeer and Odipur. But Cheetore eluded his grasp. He lived in a hut on the bank of the Peshola and closed his eyes in sight of the river that babbled by to reveal the soul of the poet of patriotism.

Only those who take a narrow view of life put a premium on success. But the greatest of men are remembered by work unachieved.

INDIAN DANCES

(Continued from Page 144)

tional element to it. In the histrionic art, the senses of hearing and sight are the medium through which the actor communicates his ideas to the audience. Obviously, his objective was to introduce a dance form in which the appeal both to the sense of hearing and the sense of sight is intensified. That is why spoken words were rendered in verse and sung. Similarly mere expression of the face and gesture of the body as involved in ordinary stage play was replaced by dancing. Evidently he was influenced both by *Kathakali* and *Manipuri* form of dancing both of which he liked and introduced in his school at Santiniketan. He called these new plays dance dramas. For this purpose he wrote out new versions of old dramas or poems written by himself. For example, we may refer to the drama Chitrangada which had been written in blank verse as early as the late nineties of the last century. He rendered it in dance drama form in the thirties of the present century.

In this form of dancing the play is sung by a group who sit at the back of the stage. The actors do not utter words but give expression to the ideas conveyed by the songs through the gesture language of dances. While Tagore adopted some of the *Mudras* of classical dances he depended more on natural gestures which suggest themselves for expression of ideas mainly based on miming. For example in the dance drama Shyama the hero appears in the very first scene as a foreigner in a strange land engaged in opening his bundle and examining its contents and then carrying it away. This is depicted by copying the gestures of a man engaged in such work. Similarly, in the Dance Drama Chandalika, in the first scene the untouchable girl is found engaged in drawing water from a well. The dance conforms to similar kind of miming here also.

VIVEKANANDA

And

SWADESHI MOVEMENT

By K. P. BISWAS

WILL the statement that Swami Vivekananda and the Swadeshi Movement in Bangal were complementary to each other be supported by history?

It is admitted both by those who directly guided the two phases of the Movement and those who are now out to trace its course that Swami Vivekananda's message and writings were the fountain-source of inspiration to sustain it. There is no dispute on this point and it can be established by sufficient documentary evidence from authoritative sources.

The controversy is likely to flare up when the same statement is put in a reverse order, namely, that it is the Swadeshi Movement and its aftermath, originally inspired by Swami Vivekananda, that established his rightful place in history. To put it precisely it means that if the Swadeshi Movement would not have intervened during the particular period following the passing away of the great Swami (in 1902) it is problematical if Swami Vivekananda's stand could have been so well secured, his popularity attain the pinnacle that it did and which still continue to retain its hold. For ready acceptance of the last point it can be stated here by way of digression that Swamiji's works are still the best-seller in the State.

The first point, I am afraid, will not be readily acceptable; not for any other reason but because it has not yet been looked into though it is highly interesting. As a matter of fact no serious study of Swami Vivekananda and research work of the age in which he lived have been undertaken by politically conscious literary workers even during the Centenary year of his birth when lots of books on and about him are available.

What was actually Swami Vivekananda's position in Calcutta Society in 1902? There was no dispute in any quarters, hostile or friendly, that the Swami was an outstanding personality, an irrepressible source of inspiration and a sharp and dominating intellect out to throw away many things of the prevailing Society and to replace them with healthier Indian stuff. However justifiable might be all those and many other demands regarding him the Society as a whole refused to move according to his direc-

tion and guidance. The press of the day was sharply divided in three sections, hostile, friendly and utterly indifferent to him and his activities. Public leadership showed the same attitude. Young men, particularly the college boys, were not materially different from the leaders.

Let us not suffer any confusion in outlining the picture of the particular period. It ranged between 1897-1902 and 1902-1908. One was not the same as the other. The first official correspondence over the partition of Bengal (Chittagong Division and the Districts of Dacca and Mymensingh to be added to Assam) was issued on December 11, 1902, just after five months of the demise of Swami Vivekananda, in a letter by H. H. Risley, Secretary, Government of India, Simla, to the Chief Secretary, Government of Bengal, Calcutta. And let us also not suffer any confusion over it that even when the Swadeshi Movement reached its highest point of demonstration the small College Square side-way ground or the compound of the residence of Pasupati Bose in Baghbazar could provide adequate accommodation to the enthusiastic crowd. Not to speak of the Maidan which is today's venue, even the spacious Shraddhananda Park of Non-Cooperation days was never thought of for staging demonstration then.

DIFFERENT WORLD

It was a different world altogether, a world dominated by England-returned men with a few "natives" who were honourable exceptions. Swamji's achievements and success undoubtedly cast a spell over them all abroad at the beginning of his emergence (1893-4) but that spell was broken by 1902. Various factors, mostly personal but in some cases communal too, helped in breaking that romantic spell.

The actual position was deplorable. Even a memorial meeting on behalf of Calcutta citizens to mourn the demise of Swami Vivekananda — the usual practice then was to have it convened in Calcutta Town Hall — could not for long be organised. The friendly press bitterly complained about this utter neglect. In contrast to Calcutta, Madras went mad over the sad event where people held memorial meetings not only in towns of the Presidency but even in the countryside, going ahead with the work of perpetuating Vivekananda's memory. Whatever public expression of sorrow the death of Swami Vivekananda evoked in Calcutta was due to the personal efforts of his disciple, Sister Nivedita and his friend Narendra Nath Sen. Gita Society was then a reputed body of leading literary men and Narendra Nath Sen was its president. At a meeting of the Society held after the passing away of the Swamiji, a resolution was moved by him from the Chair expressing profound sorrow over the demise of the Swami. None other than Sen spoke at the meeting which was attended among others by Bepin Chandra Pal.

The resolution with a covering letter—people of the period were very formal — was sent by Sen to Swamiji's brother-Sannyasis at Belur. Swami Brahmananda, President of the Ramkrishna Math and Mission, gave a reply to that letter of Naren Sen. In that remarkable letter Swami Brahmananda for the first time made an assessment of the role of Swami Vivekananda for others to gauge. A quotation of that letter, more than any other document, would help a student to note and appreciate the extent to which the yet-to-be-started Swadeshi Movement and its glorious aftermath could resurrect Swami Vivekananda and enthrone him on the high pedestal in the people's mind.

"Dear Sir", writes Swami Brahmananda in his letter to Naren Sen, "your kind note of sympathy enclosing the resolution of the Society (Gita Society) to express the deep sense of sorrow at the loss, has reached our hands. We hasten to send our grateful thanks for the same on behalf of all the Sannyasis of the Belur Math.

"Irreparable as the loss has been to ourselves, it gives us joy even at this time to think that the unselfish labours of the dear Swami in behalf of his motherland are being appreciated in the midst of his own people, however slightly. Time alone will show the extent of his labours and how he has raised Mother India, in the estimation of the great nations of the West. The sower has sown the seed and gone to his rest, but shall we be able to hold our own and carry on the great work which he has so nobly begun? Let us hope so; in the meantime let us all rally round the sacred memory of the great life that has been taken away from among us for united efforts for the regeneration of our own land and people".

That sowing the great Swami did between 1897-1902. And the rich harvest about which Swami Brahmananda could not be definite at that time began to be reaped between 1903-8 — and which is going on till now. It is historically provable subject.

It is greatly interesting to study the reaction of the leading public men of India of the time towards Swami Vivekananda's activities. It is remarkable to note that those among them, who were just then showing signs to go left, ardently championed Vivekananda while those, who were on the saddle and later turned out to be rightists, were cold and maintained almost a total silence over him and his activities. An analysis of their attitude towards Swami Vivekananda alone would materially help a student to sort out the controversy which later burst out over Anglicisation and Indianisation of our political and social life, over Moderatism and Extremism, over "mendicancy" and self-reliance etc. etc.

Let us refer to some names; Gokhale, Surendra Nath Banerjea, Ananda Mohon Bose, Romesh Chandra Dutt, Rash Behari Ghosh, Ambica Majumdar, Pandit Madan Mohon Malaviya were leading figures of the period. They all stood for maintaining British-Indian political ties. It was a fundamental question with them. They all, except Banerjea and that too only partially, studiously avoided Swami Vivekananda and what he stood for. It is doubtful if any of them ever spoke publicly about the Swami during his life time or even after his demise. Surendra Nath Banerjea addressed the first Town Hall meeting held to congratulate Vivekananda in 1894 but failed even to attend the memorial meeting held in 1902 although it was scheduled that he would move a resolution.

NEW FORCE

In contrast to them we note a new set of men coming up and hailing the Swami and championing his cause. They included P. Mitter, Bar-at-Law, soon to be the founder of the Anusilan Samity, the first organised secret society on this area of the country, Aurobindo Ghosh soon to be the rider of the storm sweeping Bengal, Brahmabandhav Upadhyaya, an outstanding scholar and fanatic champion for re-establishing Indianism in all fields of activities and above them all, Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak. Needless it is to emphasize that they were all exponents of the new force just released—you may call it revival of Hinduism if you are prejudiced—in direct opposition to the process of Anglicisation then prevailing. They were not silent admirers of the Swami either. They loudly proclaimed their views about him and welcomed his activities too. I will not dilate on this point in this short article, but I cannot resist the temptation of quoting a few lines written by Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak—a quotation I have not noticed anywhere referred to in the literature issued during

this Centenary year of Swami's birth. It is taken from the biography of the Lokmanya by S. L. Karandikar.

"On 4th July, 1902", writes the author, "the world was shocked to hear that Swami Vivekananda had passed away. The following passage from Tilak's article in the *Keshari* dated 8th July is remarkable for the comparison it institutes between the Swami and the Shankaracharya:

"Shankaracharya, who lived more than a thousand years ago, understood the glory that was Hinduism. He valued it as an inestimable national asset and a source of national strength. He made it the mission of his life to propagate it all over the world. His faith in the glory of Hinduism did not merely blossom into words; it ripened into a concrete achievement. What that towering personality achieved in those old times, Vivekananda has the unique distinction of having achieved towards the end of the 19th century."

BOSE'S LETTER

In altogether a different category are to be put in the names of Jagadish Chandra Bose, Rabindra Nath Tagore and Bepin Chandra Pal. There is no controversy whatsoever over the fact that Jagadish Chandra Bose had deep regard and esteem throughout his eventful life for the Swami. Indeed it was reciprocal. Jagadish Chandra Bose was the only leading Brahmo member of the Citizens Committee set up at the Town Hall Vivekananda Memorial meeting to take steps to perpetuate his memory. Incidentally, I may mention here that I came across a letter written by the illustrious scientist to Swami Vivekananda in the archives of the President-Maharaj of the Belur Math which had not yet seen the light of the day.

Undoubtedly Rabindra Nath Tagore made only a few references about Swamiji in his writings. Possibly there was a trace of conflict of personality towards the beginning between them but later that hesitancy was well discarded by the poet. However few those references by Tagore might be they were all significant and fully complimentary too. As editor of the *Sadhana* Rabindra Nath was possibly one of the first of his countrymen to comment (in 1894) quite approvingly—without mentioning the name of the Swami—on the Hindu move made at Chicago to explain its message and the success achieved there for the cause. That he presided over a local memorial meeting held shortly after the death of Swamiji where he also spoke, and that later in the company of Saroda Charan Mitra, Jagadish Chandra Bose, Dr. Chuni Lal Bose, Prof. Satish Chandra Vidyabhusan, Dr. Kedar Dutt, Nagen Mitra, Kailash Kanjilal, and Narendra Nath Bose, B.L. he went to Belur Math to attend the Vivekananda birth anniversary celebrations in 1905 are well-known.

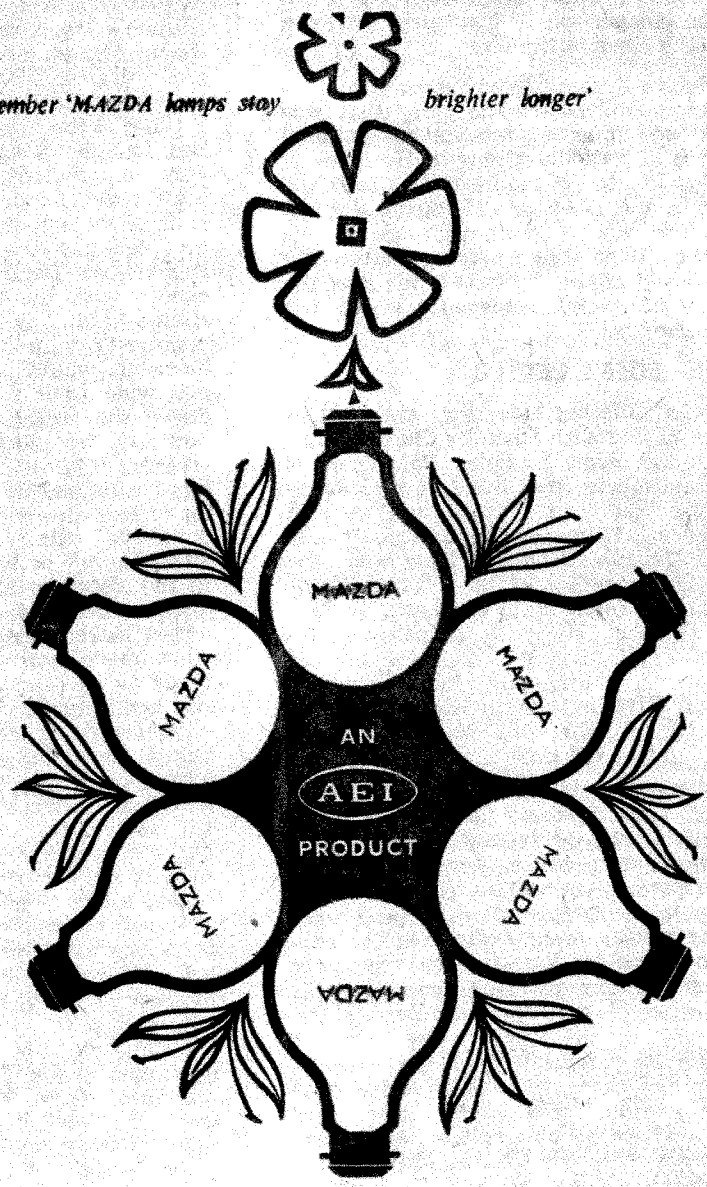
Bepin Chandra Pal, however, maintained a critical attitude to the personality and attainments of the Swami. Like the moderate leaders, Bepin Chandra had been hesitant to assess Swamiji in the way Tilak could do. That he was extraordinarily cautious in his estimate of Swami Vivekananda is evident in the first comment he made on Swamiji's demise in his weekly, *New India*. One will note that extra cautiousness on the part of Bepin Chandra in almost every line of that comment.

Says Pal in the 10th July, 1902 issue of *New India*: The news of the sudden death of Swami Vivekananda on Friday last at the early age of 39 has been read with profound regret by the Indian public and will cause considerable grief among the large circle of his acquaintances and admirers in England and America. Endowed with large powers and a supremely magnetic personality, Vivekananda exacted the wonder and admiration of large multitudes whenever he went. In his early life he came in contact with the great Brahmo leader, Keshab Chandra Sen and was one of the actors at Keshab's stage where the Minister of the Brahmo Samaj himself appeared in the cast of the religious drama, *Nava Brindavan*. Vivekananda, then known as Narendra Nath Dutt, belonged also, for a time, to the choir of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj. But though his early contact with the Brahmo leaders contributed considerably to his mental and ethical development and supplied, we believe, the rational note that was never wholly absent from his teachings—the inspiration of his life came from Ramkrishna Paramahansa and in his intimate association with the life and teachings of this great Hindu Saint, lay the real secret of Vivekananda's popularity with his countrymen. This popularity however, would not have been 100th part as great and wide as it was, if Vivekananda had not produced the sensation he did in America, where, however, he did also solid pioneering work, in creating interest in Indian life and thought, among large numbers of people who had been brought up to look down upon both as little removed from primitive culture. As a teacher, Vivekananda's strength lay in his personal magnetism more than in the depth of his insight, or the breath of his grasp. Indeed, as a teacher of Philosophy, Vivekananda lacked system but this in itself was perhaps what made him so popular among people always ready to be carried away by catch phrases, on both the hemispheres. Vivekananda possessed the power of transmitting enthusiasm to the multitude, and though he lacked some of the other qualifications of a true orator, in this he had, perhaps, no superior among us, after Keshab Sen, the greatest preacher, we believe, of the last century not only in India, but all the world over. But Vivekananda was no thought-builder. He had, however, the makeup of a capable man of affairs in him, and the organisation of which he was, until his death, the head and main prop bears testimony to his large capacities as a leader of men. It is yet too early to form any rational forecast of the movement with which Vivekananda was associated, but whether it endures or not, his name will not be soon forgotten by his countrymen; as of one who sought to raise them in the est - mation of civilised humanity, and thus awakened to some extent, that national self-consciousness in them, without which no people can realise its God-given destiny".

NO MISTAKE

I will not proceed further but revert to the original theme, namely, Swami Vivekananda and the Swadeshi Movement in Bengal are complementary to each other. The point was nicely touched by none else than Sister Nivedita, his disciple and who, better than anybody, could interpret her Master as she saw him. At the Town Hall memorial meeting the dear Sister in reply to comments that Swami Vivekananda was born before his time expressed her surprise and significantly referred to the classic message of the Gita that it is when objective conditions warranted that a social change was urgently required, the leadership is dispensed. One can interpret that ageless message from both spiritualistic as well as materialistic standpoints. What the Sister however, actually said on the occasion was: 'Did they not know that great men were born as there was necessity for them? Did they think it was a mistake? No."

Remember 'MAZDA lamps stay brighter longer'



HIGHLIGHT PUJA WITH MAZDA LAMPS

AEI/43

Swami Vivekananda's Message To The World

By SWAMI SAMBUDDHANANDA

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA was a man of multiple personality—a great thinker and philosopher, a powerful writer, and an eloquent orator, an eminent historian, and a religious reformer, a world teacher and above all a man with a message to the world.

Of all the countries of the world, India had a very lofty place in the estimation of Swami Vivekananda. To him India was the epitome of the world. Every grain of earth of India was so sweet and sacred to him. He was under the impression that the regeneration of the world depends entirely upon the regeneration of India. He believed that the salvation of the whole world rested entirely upon the salvation of India. Swami Vivekananda, had, therefore, the conviction that India, not withstanding the oppression and suppression of about a thousand years was still alive, because she has yet to contribute her quota to the perfection of human civilisation in the world as a whole. The children of the soil, have, therefore, a special duty and responsibility not only to the people of India but also to the people of the world. For India is the only country that does not live for herself. She lives for all the countries and nations of both the hemispheres.

To build up a nation it is necessary that individuals should build themselves up. Swami Vivekananda believed in man-making and character building education. The education that is imparted in schools and colleges and universities today is more or less bread-winning education. Swami Vivekananda's idea was that a man of character can make money more easily and earn his livelihood better than others. "Man makes money, but money does not make man."

Vivekananda wanted man with muscles of iron and nerves of steel and above all with a will that makes him bold enough to meet even death face to face in the pursuit of his ideals. Courage, he maintained, is the lesson that one can learn from every page of the Upanishads which eloquently declares: *Nayamatma Balahinena Labhyah*—the Atman (Self) cannot be realised by the weak. The first and foremost of the qualities that one should acquire to become a true man is courage. A man of courage is a man of indomitable spirit that can never be daunted by any amount of dangers and difficulties. He would meet these with a smile of derision on his face. A bold man always welcomes the vicissitudes of life looking upon them as chance to wrestle with so that he can strengthen his body and mind. A man, according to him, should be fearless. "Fear not, fear not, for the greatest sin is fear." He asks everyone to shake off his timidity and be fearless and free. He could not tolerate weakness in a man. To him weakness was the cause of degradation and death.

SALVATION FOR ALL

Swami Vivekananda was not only a man of the world but also a man for the world. When in America he was asked which country he belonged to and what was his religion. He at once declared. "The Universe is my country and truth is my religion." He meant to say that he did not belong to any particular country, sect or society, he belonged to the whole humanity.

He did not believe in parochial patriotism but stood for Universalism. He warned the world in his inimitable words, "All contraction is death and all expansion is life." If any nation wanted to live in the world it must make "tolerance and acceptance" its watchwords in national life. Nations should ignore all differences. This spirit alone can save nations from mutual conflict in all walks of life and build up a much bigger unit to work out the path of salvation for all, irrespective of all distinction. This spirit alone can do away with all ideas of aggression, exploitation, intrusion and invasion. Thus alone can the powers of the world establish world peace.

He hoists, as if on the summit of the Himalayas a flag of peace which flutters on the heights as a menace to all the evils and wickedness of the world and sends out a clarion call to the people of both the hemispheres to come and rally round the banner and pave the path to peace and perfection. He was convinced of the fact that the world was badly in need of the ancient heritage of India which could break down the prison walls of narrowness and meanness and lead to universalism. He did not hesitate to reiterate the stern truth even while he was standing upon the hearts of America and Europe and announce in unequivocal terms—that the regeneration of the world depends upon the regeneration of India, the salvation of the world depends upon the salvation of India.

The Vedas declare "একং সন্তং বহুধা কল্পয়ন্তি" existence is one but is conceived of as many". In fact there is only one existence, one Creator and one God "একং সাদ্বিপ্রা বহুধা বদন্তি" The sages call it by various names. "একং জ্যোতির্বহুধা বিভাতি' The light is one but appears in different ways The world at its outlook appears to be a world of countless varieties and endless multiplicities But behind all these there is an underlying unity. The uniformity of nature speaks eloquently of this great fact.

Nature is uniform everywhere in this phenomenal world. A mango tree whether in India or

(Continued on Page 159)

Asrial
PUJA EXODUS 1963
LONG LIVE LINCOLN
LONG LIVE KENNEDY
WE WANT EQUAL RIGHTS WITH WHITES
HM, KENNEDY IS MORE INTELLIGENT THAN KHRUSHCHEV
BUT WE ALSO BELIEVE IN COEXISTENCE
PAKISTAN

SOUTH VIETNAM
PARADISE FOR FOREIGNERS
FOR HIKING · SHOOTING ·
FISHING IN TROUBLED WATERS
ETC., ETC.
COME YELLOW, COME WHITE,
COME BLACK, COME ONE, COME ALL
PUJA EXODUS 1963
NO SIR, IT IS LAST YEAR'S TRAIN
PUNCTUALITY IN INDIAN RAILWAYS NOT GUARANTEED
NO EXODUS TO TEA GARDENS ALLOWED

MAHESH

(Continued from Page 140)

courtyard suddenly reached his ears, he jumped up with a terrific speed and ran out of the room. He found that his daughter Amina was lying on the ground and that water was pouring out of the broken pitcher that lay in one corner and also that Mahesh was sucking out the water like a burning desert.

Goffur lost his senses at the very sight of what had happened. He picked up from the ground the iron blade of his plough that he unfastened from it for mending, and struck it deep into the head of the bull.

Only for once did Mahesh try to raise his face, but the next moment his weak and emaciated body rolled down on the ground. A few drops of tear trickled down the corner of his eyes and a few drops of blood rolled down his ears. His whole body shivered once or twice and then stretching out his legs he breathed his last.

"What have you done, Father!" Amina cried out in agony, "Mahesh has left us for ever, you have killed him!"

Goffur did neither move nor give any response; he sat motionless, staring with his two winkless eyes at the two still deep-blue eyes of his dear Mahesh!

Within an hour or two a band of cobblers from the outskirts of the village made their appearance. They tied the dead body of Mahesh to a bamboo pole and wended their way towards the burial ground. At the very sight of the sharp, dazzling knives in their hands Goffur closed his eyes with a shudder, but not a word came out of his lips.

The neighbours advised him, "Goffur, the Zemindar has desired you to consult the Tarkaratna to perform expiation which you are bound to do. We fear you may have to sell out your entire homestead to meet the expenses of the 'Prayaschitta'!!"

Goffur did not respond to any of their words,—he remained seated as before with a vacant look.

That day, at dead of night, Goffur roused his daughter from sleep and said, "Amina, let us go."

Amina had fallen asleep on the yard. Rubbing her eyes she sat up and said, "Where, Father?"

"To Fulbere, to serve in the jute-mill", said Goffur.

The girl stared at him, greatly astonished. Before this her father had, on many occasions, fallen in dire distress; but he could never be persuaded to serve in the mill—she heard from various sources that no man could ever keep his morals or religious faith, and no woman her chastity in such a place.

"Make haste, my child, we have to walk a long distance," said Goffur somewhat impatiently.

Amina was going to take the water-pot and her father's brass-plate with her when Goffur prevented her, "Let these remain here, Amina, with these will be performed Mahesh's 'Prayaschitta'."

In the deep darkness of midnight Goffur left home holding her daughter by the hand. He had none in this village to call his own; so he had none to bid farewell to. As soon as he crossed his courtyard and came near the Babla tree on the road-side, he suddenly stopped motionless and burst into a flood of tears like a child. Then raising his head towards the dark, star-studded sky he called aloud, "Oh Allah! punish me as severely as You will, but — how can I forget that my Mahesh died without a drop of water, and that he was not spared even a bait of grass. So, do not, Oh Allah, forgive that criminal who has deprived my Mahesh of Your gracious gift of grass and water. Pray do not, Oh Allah, forgive that sinner, do not forgive ..... do not forgive ..... do not ....."

(Translated by Sudhish Kumar Mazumdar)

"Oh Allah, ..."

A SOCIETY IN THE SERVICE OF INDIAN AGRICULTURE

By T. K. BOSE

HE Royal Agri-Horticultural Society, Calcutta, was founded by the great missionary scholar Dr. William Carey in the year 1820. The primitive methods of cultivation and low quality and yield of the products during his time in India inspired him to start an "Agricultural Society" to impsove the economy of tillers who were the real contributors to India's wealth. Very shortly afterwards "Horticultural" was added to it. In a letter to Dr. Ryland, Carey wrote, "I hope it will ultimately be of great benefit to the country and contribute to prepare its inhabitants for the time when they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and spears into pruning hooks."

At that time East India Company only took an interest in Indigo cultivation. With the co-operation and assistance of the East India Company, civilians, zamindars and planters, the Society first took up the problems of all the aspects of agriculture including livestock and farm implements. The Society has made an important contribution to the development and progress of agriculture and horticulture in India by introducing high yielding strains of cereals, pulses, cotton, sugarcane, tobacco, potato and vegetables, fruits and other miscellaneous crops from all parts of the world and also by improving methods of cultivation to obtain maximum yield of these crops. The Society did not limit its activities only in Calcutta or Bengal, but extension of improved agriculture was also done very successfully by distributing better seeds and implements and livestock and dissemination of useful information through transaction, proceedings and formation of branch Societies and similar other organisations in various parts of India.

In a letter to Maharajah Ranjit Singh of the Punjab, Lord William Bentinck, Governor-General of India, in 1833 summarised the activities of the Society and wrote, "The Agricultural Society, of which I am myself a member, consists of a number of gentlemen who consult together to encourage agriculture by the introduction of foreign seeds and plants and the improvement of the existing modes of cultivation, and your Highness will not fail to perceive that, as the land is the original source of all wealth, this Society which has for its object to increase the quantity and improve the quality of its produce, is highly deserving of consideration and patronage."

SEEDS

In 1830 seeds of different varieties of cotton (Sea Island, New Orleans, Upland Georgia, Bourbon, Seychelles) were imported and sown at different months of the year in the Society's experimental Station at Accra and also at various places of India to study the suitability of foreign varieties under different climatic conditions of India. Seeds of the variety of cotton which showed the best performance in a particular zone were distributed among the cultivators. Cotton seeds were purchased annually from America, South America, West Coast of Africa, China and Manila and distributed among the growers to extend cultivation of the better yielding varieties. The Society's efforts to introduce high yielding varieties of cotton with better quality fibre on Indian soil and improve the method of cultivation for 30 years were considered to be of great importance in the improvement of cotton in India.

Tobacco seeds, imported from Egypt, Maryland, Virginia and Havana proved very successful in different parts of India. Quality of tobacco also greatly improved by better cultural practices and curing the leaves.

Maize seeds were brought from America and distributed among the cultivators in Bengal and U.P. In the opinion of some American cotton planters who visited Allahabad in 1831 the performance of this crop in U.P. and some parts of Bengal were as good as those commonly grown in America. Attempts were also made to follow American method of cultivation and a marked increase in yield was recorded.

Exotic varieties of sugarcane from Mauritius and Singapore were collected and grown at the experimental station of the Society and the yield was found to be 9 times more than the local cane. (Report of the Agri-Horticultural Society, 1835). In the following few years we find that 34,000 sets were distributed every year from the nursery of the Society. The Agricultural Committee of the Society recommended in 1837 that the method of cultivation practised in Mauritius and West Indies should be adopted. An important paper describing the result on mode of planting, manuring, harvesting and extraction of sugar was published in the proceedings of the Society in 1840.

Wheat seeds from Egypt and Europe were brought to India through the agency of Society and were distributed in different provinces for cultivation. Some varieties gave much increase in yield of better quality wheat than the existing varieties. In 1843, Haworth, a Wheat Specialist, examined Egyptian wheat grown at Bolendshahur and reported, "The ears I should consider very fine and well grown, the quality of grain is very superior."

COFFEE

Coffee cultivation in India was encouraged by the Agri-Horticultural Society and in the beginning it was found to thrive well about Calcutta and at Chittagong. The produce was reported by good judges as exceedingly well. Lately the soil and climate of Bengal was found not favourable although attempts were made to select suitable place for its cultivation.

The Society popularised the cultivation of foreign vegetables like cauliflower, cabbage, and peas, and regularly imported improved and new types of vegetable, e.g., Brussels sprout from Europe, Cape of Good Hope and Van Dieman's Land. A consignment of vegetable seeds from Cape of Good Hope in 1824 contained, pickly spinach, artichoke, asparagus, lettuce, sugar loaf cabbage, early cauli-

flower, squash, vegetable marrow, white beet and garden cress. In 1829 the Secretary of the Society read a paper, "From my experience of nine years, the duration of this Society, I have found that in order to have good and early crops of cauliflower, cabbage, peas, turnips etc., it is absolutely necessary to sow only acclimatised seeds; that is seed which was the produce of plants raised from imported European or foreign seed, sown during the previous year."

In 1832 Capt. Richmond grew potatoes from an imported variety of England distributed by the Society and a local cultivated strain. He observed that the English potato was much superior to that of the local varieties in size and weight. Nainital and Shillong potatoes owe their origin to imported English strains brought by the Society.

The yield of North Carolina rice distributed by the Society in North Bengal and Arakan was recorded twice as much as that of the local varieties and there was a continuous demand for import of rice seeds.

In England, flax and hemp had very good market which had to be imported from Belgium and Russia. Prof. Royle, Professor of Medicine, King's College, London, and also a friend of the Society sent improved seeds of flax and hemp in order to compete in the English market. Gold medals were awarded by the Society for cultivation of the best quality flax and hemp. The possibility of growing crops for substitute fibres was also considered and several other fibre yielding plants were suggested for this purpose.

Various fodder crops such as Guinea grass, Reana and Lucerne reached these shores through the agency of the Society.

Branch Societies were formed at Dinapore, Berhampore, Bhagalpore, Lucknow, Agra, Allahabad and Madras as representatives of the main Society and rendered useful services in the development of agriculture in these areas.

The Society also brought useful implements from America and China to suit the improved method of cultivation. Moulboard plough and cultivator from America was found to be of great help for cotton and sugarcane cultivation in India. Awards were given for making more efficient wind mill, cotton cleaning and better devices for irrigation.

The improvement of livestock was also taken up, cattle and woolly ram being imported from foreign countries.

Indian silk had a very good market in foreign countries. Attempts were made to improve quality and quantity of production and considerable success was achieved. A number of species of mulberry plants on which silk worms live were introduced in Bengal. Better methods of spinning and weaving of silk greatly helped the cottage industry.

Tea was another subject which called for much ground work by the Society and the valuable report of Drs. Griffith and Maclilland will be found in the Society's transactions. The Tea Committee of the Society indicated the scope of cultivation of existing species found in Assam.

In 1852 the Society also drew attention of the Governor-General to the great advantage of introducing cinchona in India and a valuable article by Dr. H. Falconer "On the quinine yielding cinchonas and their introduction into India" was published in the Society's Journal in 1854. In response to the request of the Agri-Horticultural Society, the Court of Directors sent seeds and plants to the Botanic Gardens.

Fibres, tans, dyes, oils, fats, etc., were also the items that the Society took up.

The Society has introduced tropical and subtropical varieties of fruits and selected the best types. Varieties of apple, pear, plum, peach, orange and grape were brought from Europe and grown in suitable climatic conditions in India. Many varieties were found to be exceedingly good. Grape fruit from Florida, pomelos from Java and seedless lichi from China have been lately introduced and are doing well in the Society's garden at Alipore.

During the past fifty years there has been an increasing desire for better gardens, and the Society's services towards introduction of trees, shrubs and climbers have helped to make India beautiful. It has also brought into cultivation a number of annual ornamental plants which are now commonly grown in gardens in India. The Society had devoted much time in hybridisation and the results have been highly successful. Improved types of cannas, hibiscus, ixora, lagerstroemia, plumeria and numerous other varieties of ornamental plants have been produced by hybridisation and selection. Cassia Lancasteri thus produced is one of the most beautiful tropical flowering trees.

The Garden of the Society at Alipore has always been a place of interest to the amateur gardener and botanist. It has a very rich collection of common and rare ornamental plants. The nursery of the Society supplies plants to members and customers carefully propagated in the garden.

The Society issued Transactions and Journals which embodied reports of experimental work. This was first published in 1837. Copious extracts from the Society's Journals and Proceedings will be found in the Dictionary of Economic Products of India, and other official publications of the Government prove that the efforts of the Society have made a valuable contribution to the improvement of agriculture and horticulture. The Journal has been discontinued but periodic garden news sheets are still published.

The Library contains 3000 valuable volumes on agriculture, horticulture and botany.

The Society had a museum of plants and other natural product which were received from all parts of India and England. To test the quality of the products the Society used to send samples to the specialists for analysis and steps for further improvement of quality of produce were taken up on the basis of their report.

The greatest progress of the Society occurred under the leadership of Rev. Carey, Sir Edward Ryan and Sir J. P. Grant who acted as Presidents. They were assisted by Secretaries like Mr. John Bell, Dr. Spry, and Mr. A. H. Blechynden. It was during Percy-Lancaster's Secretaryship that the Society was granted the signal honour of adding 'Royal' to its name in recognition of the Society's long and useful service to agriculture and horticulture. In recent years due to the keen interest and generous contribution of Mr. L. N. Birla, the Society's activities have greatly increased.

The first exhibition of country and foreign vegetables, fruits and farm implements was organised by the Society in 1828. Cash prizes were awarded to the cultivators. Later on cattle shows were also held and winners of best imported cattle received cash prizes of Rs. 500|- and a gold medal. Since then flower and vegetable shows are being held regularly.

In addition to the number of branches in different parts of India, the Agri-Horticultural Society always worked in collaboration with the Botanical Gardens at Shibpore. Dr. Wallich and Dr. Falconer and other Superintendents rendered services as members of the different sub-committees of the Society.

FOLK SONGS on MARRIED LIFE

By HEM BARUA

INDISPENSABLE in different rituals, marriage songs contain a wide avenue of subject matter; they are essentially women's lyrics. Besides the songs related to the ritual and ceremony of marriage, there are songs that are incidentally connected with married life, longing for love and marriage, virginal inhibitions, usual apprehensions etc., that also come within the purview of the subject-matter.

The ceremony of wedding over, begins a new life. Like all other innovations, this new life takes time to stabilise. There are songs expressing the joy of it, the inherent sensations of two young souls living together, the passion of heart and embrace. Turgeniev says that there is nothing like two souls in love sleeping together against the natural perfume of one another's body. Love is the "silken knot"; but then, this is not the end. Problems beset life, at times problems of the heart, but, more often than not, the problems of economic life. They ruffle the current of life, create jolts and sad imbalances. All these problems have found sufficient expressions in Indian folksongs, for, this is a fact that the majority of the vast reservoir of peasants' lyrics has grown out of the peasants' immediate experiences of life.

These lyrics give a glimpse into the woman's heart as nothing else. Some of these songs describe the heavy lot of woman in a strange house, and inevitably, her emotional reactions to this life. There are other songs that might truly be described as the apotheosis of agony. The core of this problem lies in the system of compulsory choice of bridegrooms for girls obtaining in our society. This is true that some husbands are dominating in attitude; naturally such an attitude creates problems of imbalance and suppression in nuptial life. Songs sing them.

Besides, there is the inevitable problem of unsympathetic fathers-in-law and mothers-in-law too. Ours is mostly a joint family structure; this is the compulsion of agrarian economy. This adds edge to the problem. There are at times taunting sisters-in-law too. A widowed sister-in-law living in the family is a constant irritation. All these facts contribute to the making of the problem of married life one of deeper magnitude.

A WORKER

To add to this, the problem of polygamous family remains. In agrarian economy and undivided patriarchal families, the daughter-in-law is a worker; she is an economic unit of production. For this, she must have health, energy and vigour, and must be capable of hard work. In a society as this, the outer beauty of a girl was no measuring standard in the choice of a daughter-in-law.

The daughter-in-law must be healthy in order to discharge her second responsibility also *i.e.* the production of a healthy progeny in the family so as to replace the older folks as workers in the field. More energy and vigour are to be ploughed into the field, and for this, a vigorous posterity is necessary. It was often found that one woman was not enough to discharge all these responsibilities. For this, more than one woman was necessary. This is the starting point of polygamous families in our peasant societies,—an inevitable compulsion of agricultural economy. This aspect of life is, more than adequately, celebrated in our folksongs. Generally speaking, these songs are full of the *joie de vivre* as they say. There are instances of the other side of the picture, the seamy side, also. These songs are sad as dirges, and moan as does a bomboo grove against high tropical winds.

Not the songs of the problems of economic life alone; there are songs that at times give wings to problems of the heart too. These are songs of longing for some "dear and near ones," possibly left behind in one's native village. The compulsory choice of a man for a woman, as it obtains in our society, cuts at the root of all fundamentals of the heart. If you take away the banks, what remains of the river? If you take away love, what remains of the shell of life? These are songs of personal emotions; they are inevitably mournful in tone and rhythm; on occasions, they express a certain level of revolt and anger also. When the revolt becomes open and explicit, it creates social problems; and songs give them wings and expression. Thus a whole gamut of experiences finds expression in the songs of married life.

Youth means an exhilarating urge for companionship of the sexes. A strange feeling of loneliness captures the heart of youth at a particular stage of life. The following Uraon song is symbolic of such a feeling of loneliness. A girl begins to feel lonely even in the midst of her home surroundings; her heart catches fire. She longs to be free; she desires the companionship of a man. The "dove" in the following song, as pointed out by W. G. Archer, parallels the "feeling of the girl."

The dove, the dove
Calls in the hills, the hills,
I have no mother, and I cannot sleep,
I have no father, and I cannot sleep.
The brown dove gathers in the hills,
Hearing the dove, mother, I cannot sleep,
Hearing the dove, father, I cannot sleep.
The brown dove coos in the different hills,
Dove, my mother is not here. I cannot sleep,
Dove, my father is not here, I cannot sleep.

To a young girl inexperienced in the ways of

life, marriage is both a matter of anticipations and apprehensions. Marriage inevitably means uprooting a girl from the family in which she has been cradled into womanhood. The prospective life is not known to her. The natural longing is there, a man to possess and live with. But the "most unkindest cut" of it lies in the fact that nothing depends on her choice or wishes. Here is a Pradhan girl who wails, for the prospect is not known to her :

Father, had I been your son,
I would have stayed to thatch the roof
To take the cattle out to graze.
To drive the plough across your field,
But I was born your enemy,
A daughter who must go away;
At home I used to laugh and dance,
Today I leave you weaping.
The crane despairs beside the late,
Your enemy weeps on the threshold,
Your daughter weeps on the threshold.

This song is in a sense a trepidation of the heart. This problem is inherent in the very nature of arranged marriages. For the girl it is a leap in the dark. In fact, the climax of all marriages is separation from old ties for a girl. This is the burden of these songs. The women sing them; their plaintive tones render sorrow into sharpness. Girls are like sparrows; they fly away. The following Awadi song is an instance:

Don't cut the *neem* tree, father,
The *neem* gives rest to sparrows.
Let me clasp you, brother.
Daughter will leave for father-in-law's places,
Mother will feel lonely,
Let me clasp you, brother.

In the Kangra song given below the girl is apprehensive of her marriage. In arranged marriages partners are almost invariably uncertain. At times they are elderly persons; often they are brutish in their behaviour. Often their mouths smell of bad breath; they may have dirty teeth too. Thus a girl's maidenly dreams of life and romance get shattered. The following song speaks for Indian girls in general:

Marry me not to an old man, uncle,
Marry me not, uncle;
With fresh tresses, I shall become a widow
etc. etc.

The following Russian folksong of the pre-October Revolution period embraces the problem of arranged marriages most succinctly. It in a sense reflects Indian conditions *vis-a-vis* our social sanctions.

Not will she be joined in equal wedlock,
Nor will a suitable husband turn up,
He may be a thief,
And he may be a drunkard,
He may be old and wheezy;
He may be young and unfriendly,
He may be your own age and haughty,
Always supercilious and stirring up trouble,
And then, he lies crosswise on the bed,
And he speaks words that are crosswise too,
And he commands you to loosen his girdle.

(ii)

In tribal or such other social groups where the woman enjoys a certain measure of freedom, such problems seldom arise. Under normal conditions, a girl marries the man of her choice whom she meets in different avenues of life. There is no social taboo whatsoever. In Mishmi society of NEFA, for instance, pre-marital courtship is in the order of things. In such social conditions boys and girls meet in the hills, forests and other secret coverts that nature offers. They exchange assurances of life-long partnership, promises of life together. This fact is most evident in the folksongs of the Gonds, Baigas and Pradhans. The following is a Baiga *karma* song:

As you climb the hill,
Even your lover's voice you cannot hear,
You are panting so loudly;
Some are breaking small branches,
Some are plucking leaves,
As you climb the hill.

This is how lovers send their messages through songs. By certain emphasis and intonation, they suggest the place where to meet. The symbolic significance of the images of "panting" because of "climbing" the hill is obvious.

In most cases, courtship is a prelude to marriage; this obtains in the society of simple tribal folks. Their songs have a freshness and frankness that is obvious in such social conditions of freedom. This is not possible under social conditions of hide-bound morals. It's a Gond boy who can say thus to his girl.

You have brought pearly beads,
You tied them in your hair,
But now stop dancing in my eyes,
Or I shall tie you round my neck.

III

There are occasions in folksongs when a girl is unhappy in her new home not so much because of problems, social and economic, but because of forced separation from the man of her youth. Silently she weeps for him. In Telugu folk-poetry the *mama* that is the maternal uncle mostly figures as the lover. Marriages between the two are socially permissible. The *Chandangiri Sari* is a famous song from Andhra Pradesh. It is a silent lamentation.

Putting a ladder to the lemon tree,
My hand as I stretched to pick some fruit,
A thorn pierced my breast,
O my golden mama;
O, do send me some Chandangiri saris,
Between you and me,
O what a strange remoteness befell,
Yon blue hills impede our way.
To the hill I went, the sheep was grazing,
O handsome youth, my golden mama,
Send me some Chandangiri saris.

Odd dreams loom before the eyes. The longing for the lost lover persists even in the midst of the altered conditions of life. There are occasions when old lovers do come. But then, meeting is seldom possible; the social and family barriers are there. Folksongs sing of the difficulties. The following song is a picture in contrast. The bird enjoys freedom of movement from one branch of the mango tree to another. The girl, confined to her husband's precints, does not.

The kussera bird is swinging,
Free on the mango branch,
But you stand in the court,
How can I call you to me?

The problems of incompatible marriages are also sung in songs. Husbands are often minors because of the system of early marriages prevalent in our society. There are occasions when they are old and physically inefficient. The following songs illustrate both aspects of the problem. In the Punjabi

folksong recorded below, the girl sings of her apprehensions as she spins. The song fits into the music of the spinning wheel as does rain into spring.

Ghoon, ghoon, O spinning wheel,
Should I spin the red *pooni* or not?
Spin, girl, spin.
Far off is my father-in-law's house,
Should I live there or not?
Live, girl, live.
Long is my woe,
Shall I tell or not?
Tell, girl, tell.
My husband is a minor,
Should I stay with him or not?
Stay, girl, stay.
etc. etc.

There is none to share her innermost thoughts with; the spinning wheel is her guardian angel. She unburdens her rebellious thoughts to it. A girl's heart is a secret mine and it is a closed sea to others. The following tribal song is a picture of it:

She goes with her pot for water,
But who can tell the sorrow of her heart?

The following *dadaria* throws light on the other aspect of the problem *i.e.* the marriage of younger girls to older people. This is an apt instance of unequal wedlock.

The young girl makes her bed,
Weeping she spreads the rags,
And waits for the old man
Who cannot content her.

(iv)

Pre-marital romance dwindles into the hard facts of life; economic problems soon impinge on the placid flow of life. Life is hard; poverty mocks it at the face. Thus the struggles of economic life wear out a man and ruffle the current of family life often into disastrous tempests. But the spirit of man is indomitable. In the following song from Orissa the call of the East inspires a man. In the East there are tea gardens where he could work and make a living. He promises a good life to his wife thus.

Come, O diamond girl,
We will leave for Rangoon,
Rice and vegetable curry,
What more will I say?
Tea leaves in that country,
You can save money and keep in your hands.
Trunks and boxes in that country,
Rupees you can keep one row above the other,
Come, O diamond girl,
We will leave for Rangoon.

Here again is a song from Orissa that can be described as an agonised register of confessions. This shows how acute the economic life is and the struggle too. In fact this is true social realism.

For this stomach,
For this stomach, I left for Bengal,
For this stomach, I had all struggle,
For this stomach, I pounded rice,
For this stomach, I reaped the paddy,
For this stomach, I worked on a shop,
For this stomach, I received cane beating on my back,
For this stomach, I went on dancing,
For this stomach, I took to spinning,
For this stomach, I find abuses on my lips,
For this stomach, I met Yam Raj,
For this stomach.

This aspect of life finds an adequate expression in Tamil folksongs. Marriage is over. But the economic problem of life remains and multiplies. Poverty is there and the realities of life impinge upon and create problems. This is how a man complains.

We have rice and we have dal,
No oven, and that's the trouble,
The wind blows carrying dust,
Alas, we have no door, that's the trouble,
My wife comes and stands before me,
No sari to present her, that's the trouble,
The beggar comes and stands at the gate,
Not a *dhela* to give him, that's the trouble.

Here is a girl's complaint; this is also a Tamil song:

On many occasions, O mama,
The toe-ring is sold,
If you buy me a toe-ring, O mama,
I shall see how it looks on my toe.
In every village, O mama,
The wooden pestle is sold;
If you buy one pestle for me, O mama,
Pounding, pounding,
I shall get some flour, O mama.
At distant places, O mama,
The bridal veil is sold;
If you buy one veil for me, O mama,
I shall see how it adorns my shoulders.

This is poverty calling. "To be born poor is a sin," said George Bernard Shaw. In spite of poverty, there is no sense of revolt in these songs. The peasant consigns himself to his fate. He thinks this is his lot,—man-made or what?

VIVEKANANDA'S MESSAGE TO WORLD

(Continued from Page 151)

America produces only mangoes, but never any other fruit. A cocoanut tree produces only cocoanut whether in the north or south, east or west. A man is always a man with two eyes and ears, two hands and legs whether he happens to be an American or European, African or Australian, whether he is a Christian or a Mohammedan, a Jew or Zoroastrian, a Hindu or a Jain. All these are evident proofs of one Maker, one Controller, one God and one Father. The whole human race consists of the children of one immortal bliss. We are all the sons of the same Father. We are brothers. Every man is my own flesh and blood as it were.

The Centre of a circle is the creator of the circumference. From all points of the circumference of creation any number of radii can be drawn to the centre—the Creator—the God is Infinite. Infinite are the ways to reach the Infinite. So many radii are so many paths to the same goal. Different faiths or isms are nothing but different pathways to God. "Each soul is potentially divine" re-echoes Swami Vivekananda. "The goal is to manifest this Divine within, by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work, or worship or psychic control or philosophy by one, or more, or all of these and be free. This is the whole of religion. Doctrines or Dogmas, or rituals, or books or temples or forms are but secondary details. "Be and Make" should be the watchword of every human life. First be a man and make men of others; be a god and make gods of others.

So Swami Vivekananda stood for one nation. When the people will be awakened to this consciousness of universalism, world peace will itself be an accomplished fact.

MY DAD'S DENTAL ADVENTURE

(Continued from Page 142)

whose family pride was more pronounced, could not contain himself. This fact my mother used to get me on to her side. "Your father," she remarked, "has reduced much. As a result, he is no more the joyous happy man he used to be. Up to now, I have tried single-handed to get him to a dentist. Now you must help. If our combined efforts succeeded, our home would return to its old, happy condition." Then she disclosed her strategy. Dad had told her of his intention to reward me. All I should request is that he keep his appointment with Dr. Duncan.

The plan worked admirably. That evening while we were relaxing after dinner, my father came out with his proposal. He was very pleased with my success, "So ask what you want, if I can, I shall do it for you." Well coached by my mother I said that for me only one thing mattered — he go to the dentist. Surely he could carry out such a wish. Dad was taken aback. He had often preached to me: "Be a man of your word". Now he had to practise what he preached in a manner which cost.

The job of accompanying my father now fell on me. Dr. Duncan, too, had joined our side. So it was three against one. When we arrived, he led us into his study where a bottle of Scotch was on the table. According to instructions, he poured us each a peg, and then proposed a toast to my success. He ended with a clever piece of psychological conditioning for my father. "It must be quite an honour to be the parent of a talented boy, and something of a responsibility to live up to it." Dad was visibly elated.

Without a hitch, my father got into the chair. He opened his mouth for the first inspection. Dr. Duncan will succeed this time. I began to think how I would tell mother the good news. Suddenly the old rigour returned with the time for the injection. Nothing could get him to open his mouth. Once again the attempt had to be abandoned. Before leaving Dr. Duncan took me apart and suggested gas as *the* way to take out my father's teeth. That I felt he would not agree to, after what he had seen and experienced of gas in World War I. Then the dentist could think of nothing else save twilight sleep, an injection that will put him into a coma.

As a result of the last failure, a terrible sense of guilt had gripped my father. He had made me a promise which, as yet, he had not implemented. He agreed at once to have his teeth extracted under the influence of twilight sleep. Dr. Duncan suggested the "Avenue Nursing Home" and Dr. Sola Pinto as the one who could administer the anaesthetic. Then he would come and at one go pull out Dad's teeth.

We found Dr. Sola Pinto a genial, efficient anaesthetist. When Dad asked him to give twilight sleep, he looked hard and said: "You are the first male I am going to give this particular injection." Then we came to learn that twilight sleep was generally administered to women in labour to deaden their pain.

The injection is given in three doses. Between the first and the second, there is a wait of twenty minutes. After only fifteen minutes, my father called out: "Doctor, this stuff has no effect on males. I feel absolutely nothing." Soon after the second prick, he dosed off, and was quite unconscious when the third was given. Then Dr. Duncan arrived and with the greatest ease extracted seventeen of my father's teeth.

When Dad came round he felt so fine that he insisted on walking down to the car. Since his gums had not been pierced by the needle, and scalded by the anaesthetic he was able that very night to eat some of his "semi-solids". Within three days he had a temporary and in three months a permanent set of teeth. Once again his appetite returned, and with it his hearty disposition. He is ever grateful to his 'dauntless' wife, his 'resourceful' doctor friend and his 'selfless' son. Whenever anyone in his presence speaks of going to the dentist, he never tires of recommending twilight sleep for a painless, no-reaction extraction.

CROSS CURRENTS

(Continued from Page 134)

lunch and said that he could talk it over with you after lunch."

"Oh, I see," Shanker remarked sarcastically. "But I don't want to talk shop in my house. Biren, you better make an appointment with me in my consulting room."

Biren got up and while moving towards the door said, "I shall think it over."

Gita hurriedly said, "Please don't go Biren. You must have some lunch before you go."

"Some other day, Gita. I think I should go now." Saying this Biren went out. Gita could not hold herself anymore. She turned towards Shanker and cried, "There is a limit to everything. You have no business to be so rude, mean and unmannerly."

"On the contrary I have been extremely polite under the circumstances. If you think I am blind and don't see your activities with your paramour or old flames you are mistaken. I am going to have no more of this nonsense."

"What, what did you say?"

"You have heard what I said and I meant every word of it."

Gita could not utter anything. A sob had choked her voice. She collapsed on the sofa and started weeping. Shanker did not stop there; he cruelly continued, "It is no use weeping. You should watch your step. You should know that after marriage you have to behave like a respectable lady. You can't possibly have your Bohemian life as in your pre-marriage days." He left her there and went out.

Gita did not reply. She was too shocked to be even able to discuss it. After Shanker left she somehow dragged herself to her bedroom and threw herself on the bed.

How could he even doubt her fidelity. She had always been so honest with him. She hid nothing and never even thought of betraying him. In spite of all her devotion why did he mistrust her. What had she done to give him this baseless doubt. She was not hurt so much by the insults hurled at her but the thought that he had no faith in her was making her more miserable. Once he had had blind faith in her but now when she was so honest with him he did not trust her. Why? What had she done? How could she ever live with a man who did not have faith in her? Did he love her any more? She knew that he had passion and lust for her but could there be any love without trust? Would she ever get an answer?

She could not understand that a man never trusted a woman for the second time.

HILLSCAPE : DARJEELING
—Nirod Ray

ONE MORE SPRING – A. C. Ghosh

THE HOLY LAKE AND A HEAVENLY GARDEN

By BIRESWAR PRASAD BANERJEE

The holy lake

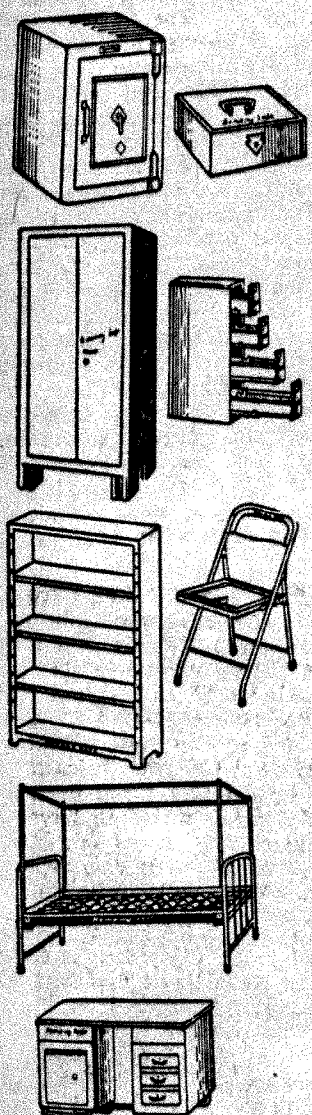
IF you have ever been on the way to Badrinath you must have come across, a few miles beyond Joshimath and some two miles below Pandukeshwar, an unostentatious place called Govindaghat where you could find no chatties save one imposing Gurdwara conspicuous in its display of the flag of Sikhism on its top and a wooden placard reading, "Way to Valley of Flowers". The new iron bridge spanning the river Alakananda would have been the only indication to you as the way to the valley of flowers on the opposite bank but its name might not have been appealing to you. You have, perhaps, wondered why of all places the Sikhs constructed a Dharmashala there. But had you been interested enough you would have learnt that this tiny halting place on the pilgrim route to Badrinath leads to at least two of the most fascinating places in the whole Himalayas, one of them is the Valley of Flowers (also known as Nandan Kanan or the Garden of Paradise) and the other is Hemkund or Lokepal Lake which claims to be one of the most venerable places of pilgrimage for the Sikhs.

It was September, 1956 and we four friends were going to Badrinath in autumn in order to avoid the rush of pilgrims and also to visit the Valley of Flowers, where flowers can be seen only during the three months of July, August and September. To have a first-hand knowledge of the Valley of Flowers or the Bhyunder valley we had read the book of Mr. Frank Smythe, the famous British mountaineer. He was the first European to visit the valley in 1931 and was responsible for making the place interesting to tourists and mountaineers as a garden of nature unique in its position and beauty in the whole world. In fact, our curiosity to visit this place was roused by Mr. Smythe's colourful description and also to some extent by the film of Mr. Buddha Bose at Calcutta. It is, of course, certain that Sadhus visited this place even in the earliest times. Lakshmana is stated to have chosen this place for worship on the shores of Hemkund Lake where Guru Govind Singh is also reported to have penanced for emancipation of Sikhism.

We had already arranged for our provisions but the extra luggage had to be discarded at Govindaghat, as we wanted to travel light and in this respect we received prompt assistance from the then keeper of the Gurdwara, Sardar Madan Singh. He arranged for the safe-keeping of our luggage, our guide and lastly for our night halt in their pilgrim shed at Ghangrya on the way to Hemkund as we had no tents. He was all in for help and the Sikh residents were also jubilant finding us interested in their place of pilgrimage. So, with their good wishes, we started from Govindaghat.

This narrative will be incomplete without a reference to the bridge which then existed there. It was, as my Diary records, a frail structure suspended from thin iron strings, the narrow footway being made of rotten planks some of which were physically missing! We had to cross this name of a bridge without any sort of a handrail whatsoever, balancing ourselves with a great effort. Under our weight

In this
Age of Steel
MODERN
ATTRACTIVE
STEEL FURNITURE
have become
A MUST
for
HOME & OFFICE
DECORATIONS



BOMBAY SAFE & STEEL WORKS PRIVATE LTD.
56, Netaji Subhas Rd., Calcutta-1
Phone : 22-1181
Authorised Dealer :
UNIVERSAL MERCANTILE CORPORATION,
2, Chowringhee Road, Calcutta.

for a brilliant and permanent writing

Rainbow *FOUNTAIN PEN* **Ink**

- WRITES EASY
- FLOWS EASY
- DRIES EASY

RAINBOW INDUSTRIES PRIVATE LTD.
2/2A, Armenian Street, Calcutta-1

"Our Puja greetings to all patrons."

the structure swung to both sides, high on the foaming torrent of the river and our position was nothing but precarious. I still have a vivid remembrance of that horrible experience. This bridge has since been replaced by an iron one with the donations of the religious Sikhs.

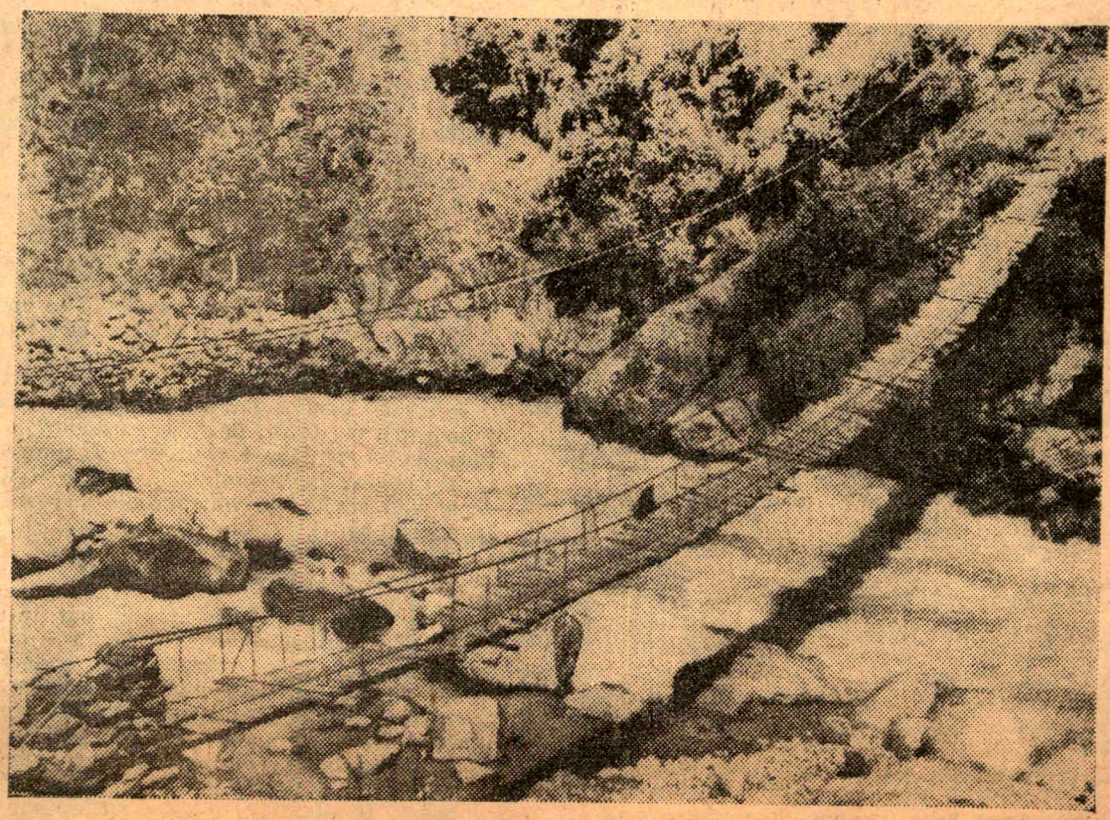
From the very end of the bridge the track began to mount steeply. It zig-zagged along the rushing stream of Bhyunder Ganga or Lachman Ganga which has its confluence with Alakananda some quarter of a mile below Govindaghat. The path lay through a dense forest interspersed with occasional cedars and willows. We also saw some Rudraksha trees whose dried fruits are used as chanting beads by Shaivaites. Peculiar scent, familiar only to trekkers in the inner Himalayas, was emanating from nameless shrubs on the way. The air was invigorated with cool and refreshing mountain breeze. Pines and chirs appeared in higher altitudes. Inhaling the fragrant aroma of the eucalyptus we went on climbing as a cheerful party of scouts while guide Nanda Singh and the coolie-cum-cook Amar Raj brought up the rear. The river was rushing through a gorge here and we had to trek along a fantastic path which, at some places, dropped to the river at least half a mile below. Indeed, the gorge was so deep that the sound of the rushing waters was all but muffled.

After a strenuous climb of about six miles we reached the tiny hamlet of Pulna. In the absence of any young men, who were working in the fields uphill, the old village-mukhva or headman received us in his hut. His only companion was a black and hefty Tibetan mastiff. After some rest we started again passing through terraced fields of rice and madua. We noticed some peculiar velvet-coloured little trees planted round the fields as fencings. The stems of the plants had bunches of soft thorns which came out in lump with the slightest touch. We came to know that the bears, who play havoc on the ripe paddy fields after harvest time, are afraid of these prickly thorns which keep them away.

The climb of about two miles from Pulna was only the forerunner of further exhausting climbs ahead. We were now in the kingdom of conifers ruled by pines and Himalayan deodars. It was afternoon when we reached Bhyunder, the last habitation on the way to the valley. Just below the village a side-stream has met Bhyunder Ganga from the west valley of Hathi Parbat, the Karnakul valley, also known for flowers and a temple built by a Bengali Sannyasi. Our guide happened to be the nephew of the village headman, Narayan Singh. He arranged for our night halt in the compound of the village temple—also used as the village primary school—in the absence of any chatty, while Amar Raj cooked for us.

Next morning we started for Ghangrya, the scheduled camping ground. The path descended to cross our own stream Bhyunder after which, on the opposite bank, the path divided in two, one going north to the Bhyunder valley and the other to the Karnakul valley to the east. We reached Ghangraya —Ghangrya Bangla as the Sikhs call it—at about noon after a non-stop climb of six miles. Ghangrya is at a height of about 10,000 ft. above sea level and a very cold place. It is a fairly big meadow amidst a rich forest of pines and deodars, surrounded on all sides by majestic rock peaks. It is at the confluence of the Bhyunder river fed by the eternal snows of the Rataban group of mountains and the tributary stream of Hem Ganga or Lachman Ganga falling down here in great chasms from the mountain lake of Hemkund or Lokepal. To our west, down below the meadow, the combined stream is obliged to rush through a deep and narrow gorge in a turbulent and raging fury. Its roars and rumblings never forsook us for a moment.

We saw no human habitation in Ghangrya save one half-finished structure of wood and tiles of slate



The bridge at Govindaghat

which told of human touch. We had been allotted one of the twin rooms and while we were trying to make ourselves as comfortable as possible in this cottage, Amar Raj soon made a fire for our tea and the evening meal of chapati and potato soup.

It was a mysterious night. In that inner precincts of the Himalayas amidst deep forests and high mountains we knew that we were miles away from civilisation but did not know if we were trespassers in that private sanctuary of the Himalayas, out of bounds for human beings. Outside, in the clear moon-lit night, the shadows of the leaves of pines formed a network of light and shade on the grassy floor of the meadow. Wears after the climb we soon fell into a deep slumber.

Next morning, we organised an early start towards the valley of flowers, our first objective, taking some prepared food for our lunch. Our belongings were left at Ghangrya Bangla. The weather was clear. After crossing the Hem Ganga or the Lachman Ganga by a log-bridge we headed towards the valley of flowers on the north along the bank of the foaming Bhyunder which also had to be crossed by another log-bridge. But then, abruptly, the route seemed to be lost on the base of the great buttress of the western mountain. The valley appeared to be closed on all sides with no opening except in the utterly unclimbable, and in some places precipitous, gorge of the Bhyunder. We had to force our way through this blockade by scrambling up a grassy cliff on the left for at least twenty feet to enable us to get a reliable foothold. Then, within a short distance, the gorge began to give way to form an open valley of incredible width and there the nature had kept her most pleasant surprise in store for us.

We were, at first sight, simply bewildered at the view which lay before us. It was the view of a vast expanse of an undulating valley floor covered with multi-coloured flower trees which grew in terraces anywhere and everywhere in the valley. The river Bhyunder meandered through this maze of a garden like a wide and shallow rivulet. The valley was looked over on all sides by towering snow peaks and the great mountain range of Rataban was commanding the northern outskirt by its dazzling silvery pryamid of pure ice.

HERE IS PARADISE

There is an inscription in the famous Dewani-Khas palace in Delhi's Red Fort stating "If there is heaven anywhere, it is here, it is here, it is here", which, I thought, should not be monopolised by any single object. As we were going deep into this rock garden of nature, it went on unfolding her beauties and we were getting lost in a plethora of flowers. They were of every shape and size depicting a veritable riot of colours. We could spot the mauve-coloured alp where Mr. Smythe had camped and the view of Gauri Parbat on its top was breath-taking. We passed through glaciers which literally overhang the valley. We could also locate the Khanta Khal Pass leading to Badrinath side. Presently, we came across a memorial tablet on which one Mrs. Ledge's name was inscribed. Nanda Singh told that Mrs. Ledge was a mountaineer who perished while scaling a minor peak in this region. As an ardent mountain-lover she had definitely had the finest possible grave for her! We started collecting flowers and even with our little knowledge of Botany, could collect some 36 different kinds of flowers of which we recognised as Daisy, Buttercup, Balsam, Potentilla, Marigold and Poppy from the coloured illustrations in Mr. Smythe's book. There were also varieties of ferns, junipers and rhododendrons. But we could not trace Saussureas or Brahma Kamal, one of the most famous of Himalayan flowers.

We advanced for about 4 miles in the valley upto the terminal moraine of the glacier of Rataban from where the River Bhyunder has emerged. It was a virtual chaos of boulders and the domain of flowers ended. We took our lunch on the bank of the stream with crystal-clear water which, incidentally, was freezing cold. It was about 2 P.M. and as the clouds began covering up the valley we started going back. Our afternoon tea was prepared in a cave on the way by Amar Raj. As the sky was cloudy we had to beat a hasty retreat from the valley and reached Ghangrya Bangla in the evening.

Our second night in Gangrya was eventful and memorable with a thrilling experience. After completing our evening meals we took to our beds early and were gossiping. I was inquisitive about the big holes I saw in the trunks of pine trees here. Amar Raj told that these were scraped out by the bears for their winter dens, having been driven out by wolves from the cosy shelter of caves. So there were bears also around us! Suddenly, just then, we heard a continuous scratching sound outside. We opened the window and there, a few yards away, a huge black bear was scraping the barks of a pine tree. We could distinghish his full profile in the clear moon light on the meadow. He might have got our scent very well, we thought. We also realised very shortly that we had no effective protection from any carnivora should they choose to come to us as the door of the room had no bolts or anything like that. Amar Raj, however, quickly rose to the occasion and bound some cloth to a large stick. He made it soaked with kerosene ready to set fire to it any time to face the bear. To our great excitement and agony we heard heavy footsteps on the verandah and the growl of a big animal and I have no hesitation to admit that I was very much frightened. We all waited with throats perched with anxiety for something to happen at any moment but, to our great relief, nothing happened for what seemed to us an unusually long time, when Amar Raj declared that the bear was gone. We had no more sleep that night.

It was very chilly next morning but we had to start very early to reach Hemkund before noon. Amar Raj prepared some food and tea for lunch and after a light breakfast we started. We had to cross Hem Ganga within half a mile of our camp by the log bridge mentioned before. The river was here falling down the slopes of the eastern mountain in a series of spectacular waterfalls on a pool after which it was rushing down the meadow in a torrent towards its confluence with the Bhyunder hundreds of feet below. The mountain itself was plastered with snow and on its top was our destination, the holy lake of Lokepal.

BRAHMA KAMAL

The path, which was nothing but an unidentified track a foot or so wide, lay through a dense forest of pine and deodar, both stately trees of thick foliage. We were climbing steadily and the view was opening on all sides. As we gained height pines and deodars were being replaced by shrubs of juniper and birch (Bhojpatra) trees whose barks were used in ancient times for manuscripts in place of paper. In addition to some varieties of flowers, which we already saw in the Bhyunder valley, we came across magnolia, Brahma Kamal (Saussurea)

and Fen Kamal, the latter a spongy romantic white flower whose petals disintegrated very easily.

We were already at the 13,000 ft. level and leaving the vegetation-zone, were going to enter into the region of snow and ice. We had to cross a steep and slanting snowslope on a wide gully where Nanda Singh led the way and we traversed very carefully. It was a couloir covered with soft granular snow and the debris of avalanches from the ice-cliffs of the northern mountain, which we took to be Saptashringa. The climb had been stiff from the very start and we were panting. The path went up in loops within a short span on the mountain face. We had chewing gums to moisten our throats drying up in the thin and dry air but still we were breathless at times. On the last slopes at well over 14,000 ft. we saw some more Brahma Kamals in full bloom. Our energy was running out and we wondered whether the path would ever end for our relief when, at the extremity of a gentle slope, the lake made its most dramatic appearance.

We had been covered by a thick mist and though the guide was of the opinion that we did arrive at the correct spot leading to the lake, we could not make out anything and were advancing slowly when the mist in front of us began to clear up and we saw that we were right on the shores of a lake of placid water. The mist was lifting up like a curtain and there lay before us a large lake of incomparable beauty. We sat on a boulder to take stock of our situation. We had been gasping for breath after one of the stiffest climbs of our trekking career, for the air in this high altitude was thin and cold, but gradually we settled down to admire the superb natural beauty around us.

The lake in front of us was of oval shape, a sheet of crystal-clear sapphire blue water from which the Hem Ganga or Lachman Ganga was rippling out in a small stream through a cutting towards the west. Five towering mountains of ice and snow flanked by mauve-coloured rock cliffs encircled the lake on the other three sides. The most prominent of them was the one which we presumed was Saptashringa with its ice-capped summit adorned in silver by the morning rays of the sun. Little ice streams were pouring down the glaciers of the mountains to send small chunks of ice floating on the calm waters of this glacial lake like miniature ice-bergs. We had also a grand view of the glittering icy spire of Nilkanta, the mountain described by Mr. Smythe as the queen of Garhwal, reigning supreme on the western horizon, but the views of the valley of flowers were denied us by the mountain on the north-west side of the lake.

PENANCE OF LAKSHMAN

For an hour or so we simply kept quiet and watched the time go by, enjoying the scenery to our heart's content. Then we got up to have a round of the lake which we could not accomplish owing to boulder debris on the shores. We then climbed a gentle cliff of some 200 feet to have a bird's eye view of the area and take some photographs, with our fingers already numbed on account of intense cold wind, which naturally did not do justice to the grandeur of the locale. Coming down we sat on the shores of the lake and took our lunch and tea for refreshing ourselves.

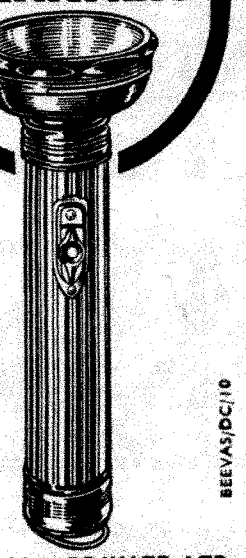
There were two stone sheds on the bank of the lake, one dedicated to Lakshmana, who in the Treta Yuga, is said to have penanced here and the other is used as Gurdwara by the Sikhs in the sacred memory of Guru Govind Singh. It is really a place for meditation. Nanda Singh told us that at night the gods and angels came to have their pleasure baths in the lake. Enquired if we would be able to see them if we spent the night there in the shed, he vehemently objected apprehending that we might die if we dared to witness that spectacle! We, of course, appreciated that the onlooker, without adequate protection from cold blizzard at this high altitude at night, would die surely of intense cold and exposure. Already the cold was becoming unbearable and the Thermometer kept by Meteorologial Department on the shores of the lake showed a minimum temperature of 35 degrees Fahrenheit.

The Valley of Flowers

It was noon and, as is the rule with high mountains, clouds began to gather, so we had to start down with heavy hearts after having a last look on this lake of ethereal beauty. Collecting some Brahma Kamals we began to get down quickly. We were extremely joyous for our visit to this wonderful lake. Nanda Singh was relating his experiences with a climbing party on the Hathi Parbat side and the mysterious lake of Rupkand which aroused a great amount of interest to us in those days. He appeared to be quite well-informed about Garhwal. Our joyous mood doubled the pace and we completed the descent in little more than an

(Continued on Page 188)

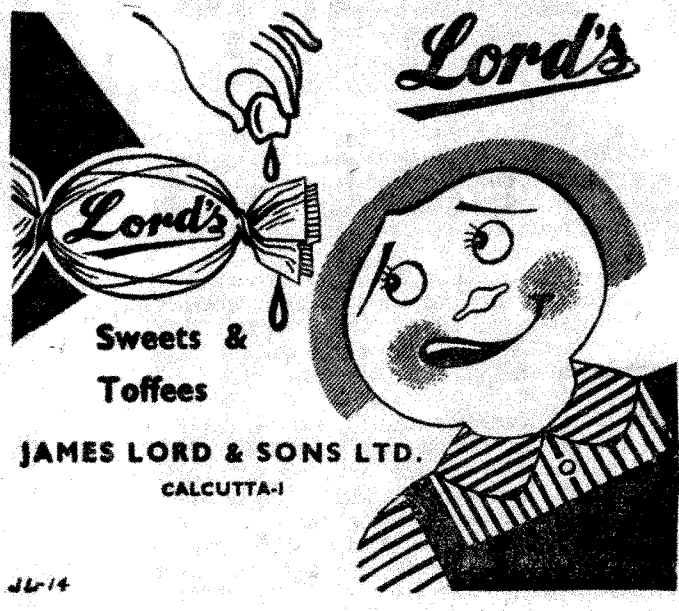
COMET
sees
right through
DARKNESS



BEEVAS/DC/10

DOZ & CO., PRIVATE LTD.
CALCUTTA-14.

Lord's



Sweets &
Toffees

JAMES LORD & SONS LTD.
CALCUTTA-1

THE FINISH PAPER MILLS' ASSOCIATION
HELSINKI | FINLAND

Sales Organisation for the Finish Paper Industry, Capacity about :
1.300.000 Tons

FINLAND

AGENTS

JAMES FINLAY & CO. LTD.
BOMBAY MADARS CALCUTTA NEW DELHI

NEW VOICES IN BENGALI WRITING

By KRISHNA DHAR

CREATIVE writing in any literature is a continuous process. It runs parallel to the social mood of change and progress towards new frontiers of thought. This corelation of two processes has played no mean role in shaping the literary image in Bengal. Modern man is an enigma and so also is his creative activity. Creative art, as we see it to-day is but a moving symbol of the deep complexities which a social individual bears in his personality. Bengali literature is no exception to that phenomenon which haunts the sensibilities of modern man and to some extent challenges his existence.

Bengali literature flourished under the great shadow of Rabindra Nath Tagore. The last two decades, to be precise saw an artistic revolt, if we may call it, against Tagorean concept. Creative writers in recent years have been consistently trying to free themselves from the olympian shadow impact of the greatest among the greats. It does not mean that Tagore has ceased to belong to the age we live in. The revolt has been caused by the urge of the new generation of writers to impress upon the contemporary readers the necessity to emancipate the art form from cliches and give it a new tone and texture.

It must be remembered that Bengali society received a serious jolt due to partition which came in the wake of independence. It was all blood and tears the like of which the new generation never witnessed except during the terrible days of the famine. Partition opened up new opportunities to the writers, like the famine, to perceive bitter realities of existence. Humanity was uprooted and finally the border was sealed. This was perhaps the greatest tragic event which Bengali social mind had to endure in silent tears. But strangely enough, this intensely human episode found no echo in the minds of the great Bangali writers. I do not venture to suggest that political events should always lead the writers to reorientate their attitude towards society. But here was a case which an alert and sensitive mind could hold on to give a new meaning to art and break the stagnation. The writers' response to the hungry millions during the famine was much deeper and more moving. The upheaval of partition failed to move them. It was a clear indication of the rot that the social consciousness of creative writers was suffering from.

The late 'forties were incensed by this frustration of ideals. Everybody was groping in the dark to get a new meaning and give a new significance to art. The elders fumbled. The fire in them perhaps left nothing but embers. A realignment of thought was urgently called for. In the preceding years, Tarasankar Bandopadhyay's great trilogy—'Dhatri Devata', 'Gana Devata' and 'Panchagram' and his moving realistic portrayal of Bengal famine in 'Manwantar' upheld the banner of humanism. The late 'forties demanded a renewed approach and a realistic one. Manik Bandopadhaya, the greatest among the realists was perhaps the answer. He wrote in rough and tough prose. But his insight was deeper. He may be called the forerunner of realistic experiment in Bengali novel which boldly faced the other face of life.

The new experiment in literary form and content made its marks explicitly in the last fifteen years. Both in prose and poetry, the younger generation came in the field with a new voice, newer images and something fresh to ponder over. How this new voice will take shape is yet to be seen. But the main handicap with the new generation is that it suffers unconsciously from a sense of rootlessness. It has freed itself from older values. On the other hand, it has yet to find out a newer faith. This sense of wilderness is more pronounced in modern Bengali poetry.

This sense of alienation in Bengali poetry is the result of subterranean forces of anger, frustration and resentment. But then Bengali poetry is more intellectual in appeal than Bengali novel. The import of new verse form and idea content is evident among the writing of the youngers. In the mid 'forties Sukanta Bhattacharya (1926 1947) developed a vigorous way of communication. It was direct, loud and intensely social in content. Bhattacharya died young. But his image walked like a living shadow till the end of the decade. Even in the 'fifties many poets recalled Sukanta. Poetry became partisan and articulate. But the craze soon faded away. Self introspection among the poets of the fifties acted like a tranquilliser and poetry once again took to personal tone.

The greatest influence on modern poetry was left by the unassuming and soft poet Jibananda Das (1899-1954). His lonely sojourn into moonlit space punctuated by soulful shadows of mother nature still create a nostalgia for the urban Bengali poets. He is most read and most adored of the difficult but intimate poets that the preceding generation produced. His contemporary Bishnu Dey has a different appeal of intellectualism to the youngers. while Jibananda's poetry is enriched with the fragrance and landscape of rural Bengal, Bishnu Dey's poems appealed to the urban mind

who had read Eliot and Paul Eluard. It was left to Sudhindranath Datta (1901-1960) to introduce masculine vigour and discipline in poetry. This trio determined to a large extent the trend of modern Bengali poetry.

Modern Bengali poetry is feebly trying to identify itself with the agony of the time. The legacy of the older poets, except a few, could not be borne by this generation. They are no doubt in earnest to communicate but the involved way of expression spoils their attempt. Poets like Subhas Mukherjee, Birendra Chattopadhyay, Manindra Ray, Ram Basu, Nirendra Chakravarti, Siddheswar Sen, Aloke Ranjan Dasgupta and some of the younger ones have certainly received an appreciable audience for their verses. But their communication of private experience remains as difficult as before to the uninitiated readers.

To the readers who have been brought up in the tradition of Tagore and his contemporaries, modern Bengali poetry would seem to be a hothouse of experiments. The undertone of lyricism is there but the structure is involved strewn with very difficult personal images. Unlike their counterparts of the preceding decade modern poets abhor pronouncements. They prefer to be quiet in tonality but complex in ideas. But the main complaint against this generation of poets is that they are more collective than individual, and that they demonstrate in their verses the patheic picture of horizontal living of the age. Their concern about agony and the brutal demolition of dream, however, leave the readers in cold detachment.

The poets are in search of a new method of communication. Verse dramas are being attempted. Experimental drama groups have even staged some of the modern verse dramas written in abstract language. The audience is eager but the right type of modern verse drama is not yet forthcoming. I think modern poetry will have to use this medium to get an escape route from the impossible position it is now put to. Whatever the medium may be experience has proved this beyond doubt that modern Bengali poetry needs new language and new image to resuscitate it from the sense of alienation. But alas, few of the moderns has the power to do it.

FICTION

Modern Bengali fiction has, of course, a wide but not altogether discerning readership. The maturer writers have built up a tradition of good story telling. And in fact, modern Bengali prose has fine specimens of short stories. But apart from the traditionally acclaimed novels. viz Tarasankar's 'Kavi', Bibhuti Bhusan Bandopadhyay's 'Pather Panchali', Manik Bandopadhyaya's 'Putul Nacher Itikatha', Annada Sankar Ray's epic 'Satyasatya', Narayan Gangopadhyaya's 'Upanibesh'. Amarendra Ghosh's 'Char Kasem'. Satinath Bhaduri's 'Jagari', the promise of the arrival of the real novel in the present decades has not been fulfilled. Prose writers are writing with a vengeance to reach maximum readership. But we are still waiting for the novel 'with its creation and inquiry, music and knowledge, myth and science, its human scope, its objectivity and irony', to use the words of the great novelist of the century Thomas Mann, which will make it the most representative and dominant form of writing. Narendranath Mitra, Jyotirindra Nandy, Bimal Kar, Ramapada Chaudhuri, Samaresh Bose are some of the writers of the decade under review who have established their reputation. Narendranath excels in short story writing. His theme centres round urban middle class, their hopes and frustrations of love and life. Jyotirindra Nandy is also a storyteller. His view of life is however, obsessed, by his preoccupation with sex abnormality. He is unconventional but is least involved with the inquiry of the age we live in.

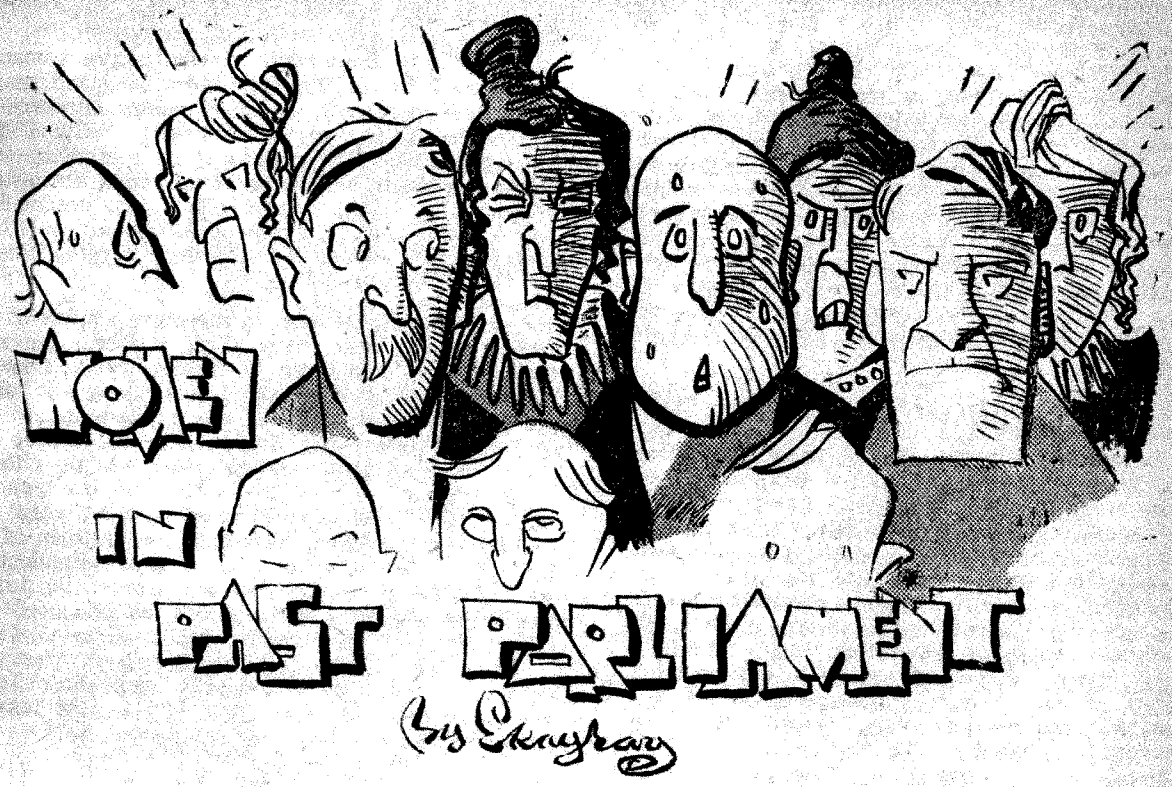
Ramapada Chaudhuri, is essentially a romantic. A nostalgia haunts him for quaint land and people. Sometimes he finds his escape in historical anecdotes which he retells with ingenuity. Bimal Kar is supposed to be the guiding spirit behind the anti-story movement which the more young enthusiasts are following. Kar is not a realist. He has made a world of his own, a world of probabilities where man and woman are tangled up in surging tide of passion and complexities.

The most remarkable of the prose writers of the decade is Samaresh Bose. This youthful but serious writer's triumphant entry into Bengali literature was through some bold and poignant short stories reminiscent of the early Tarasankar and Manik Bandopadhyay. His observation is deep and experience is varied. Though his style is clumsy, he places life in the raw. None of the younger writers have gone so deep into life. His 'Ganga' is a bold attempt to depict the life of the boatmen of the great river which reminds us of Manik Bandopadhyay who wrote that memorable saga of the turbulent river 'Padma'. He has also another predecessor in this river epic, Advait Malla Barman whose 'Titas Ekti Nadir Nam' is definitely a nearest approach to reality in this respect. But Bose's promise is failing He has succumbed to the temptation of superimposed romantic cliches which mar the sensibilities of many a young writer of the day.

We find promise in Amiya Bhusan Majumder, ('Gar Srikhanda') Prafulla Roy, (Purba Parbati) Kamal Majumder, (Antarjali Yatra) Gunamoy Manna (Junapur Steel) and Ashim Ray, (Rakter Haoa). All of them have attempted to break away from the common run of story telling. They have a new awareness, a critical and analytical mind. The hospitalised society, the etherised living of man, his fruitlesness and the outsider attitude tend to impress upon the very young generation of writers. The ideas are surely imported and therefore not easily assimilated in the thought process of the writers who are in a hurry.

The greatest living novelist Tarasankar Bandopadhyay has reverted back to what he calls 'our tradition'. His pursuit, however noble is not conditioned by historical or logical inquiry. It is an emotional feed back. Hence his message is foundering on the rocks of agonised soul of the modern man. On the other hand, less capable writers with limited sense of perspective are getting lost in the dark alleys of anger and disbelief. The journalese they produce in the name of literature is no answer to the great question which stalls our future.

The new voices are too feeble. We have, to be frank, no Sartre, no Camus nor have we that sublime voice of Gora, the great Tagorean character. We imitate, we falter and bleed on the thorns of life. The hero is demolished from the pedestal but the pharisees have not installed the anti-hero either. This ambivalent nature of modern Bengali literature truly reflects the attitude of the time we live in.



DELVING the old records contained in the history of the British Parliament written by authoritative compilers it appears that women formed an essential part of early deliberative assemblies even in the thirteenth century. Abbesses of Shaftesbury, Berking, St. Mary of Winchester, and of Wilton were summoned to Westminster during the reign of Edward I. A number of ladies of high birth, including Mary, Countess of Norfolk; Alienor, Countess of Ormond; Anne Despencer, Countess of Pembroke and Matilda, Countess of Oxford, were required by writ in the days of Edward III to give their attendance in the National Council Chamber,—though presumably these summonings in most cases were mere matter of form. A custom also existed of allowing peeresses to be represented by proxy and this continued till the time of Henry VIII, but when Elizabeth became the queen it disappeared altogether.

"I SAW PETTICOATS"

The presence of women as spectators in the Parliament became a subject of public comment. When on June 1, 1675, a debate was proceeding the Speaker (Edward Seymour) exclaimed—"I am sure I saw petticoats." The amused House, as eager then as it is today for anything in the nature of a "scene," cast away its business to look at the women who had crowded the back benches of the Strangers' Gallery and peered over the shoulders of the gentlemen in their front. "What borough do these ladies sit for?"—the Speaker enquired in mock severity. "They serve for the Speaker's Chamber," jerked out a Parliamentary wit. "The Speaker might take them for gentlemen with fine sleeves dressed like ladies," quipped another jester. And, laughing at its own humour, the House resumed the business of the day.

This incident gives us an interesting insight into the attitude of the House towards the women visitors in the legislative precincts about three centuries ago. Progressive as the Parliament has been in most things, in its attitude towards ladies it has in many respects retrograded. But in February, 1762, a well-known lady wrote to her friend,—"In the House of Commons everybody who can articulate is a speaker. . . . They sit late every night, as every young gentleman who has a handsome person, a fine coat, a well-shaped leg or a clear voice, is anxious to exhibit these advantages. To this kind of beau-oratory and tea-table talk the ladies, as is reasonable, resort very constantly. At first they attended in such numbers as to fill the body of the House on great political occasions; but a ghost (the Cock Lane) started up in a dirty obscure alley of the City and diverted the attention of female politicians." Many references are found in the gossipy records of the eighteenth century to the part played by the "ladies of quality" in the doings at St. Stephen's.

From these it is apparent that not only the women had admission to the public galleries, but that they actually occupied seats by the side of the Members. But this uncontrolled liberty was withdrawn for an incident displaying feminine fractiousness. On February 2, 1778, a debate on the state of the nation had drawn to St. Stephen's a large number of ladies who not only crowded the galleries but also trespassed upon some seats from which they were customarily excluded, and a blustering naval captain, who was a member of the House, was incensed at the monopoly of the strangers' benches by the fair sex and the consequent exclusion of several of his male friends and drew attention of

the House which issued orders for the clearing of the galleries. But it was easier to give this order than to execute it. The ladies, having come to the House for an evening's amusement, were not to be easily removed, and they turned a deaf ear to the commands of the House, their defiance not being of a merely passive character. They laughed and stamped and jeered. The authorities could not use force although it was impossible to permit the mandate of the House to be flouted. The only course open to the authorities was to oppose obstinacy to obstinacy and in the long run carried their point. It was full two hours before the skirts of the last of the ladies disappeared. Later, so rigorous was the ban against women that Mrs. Sheridan had to don male attire for listening to her husband's eloquence. The beautiful Duchess of Gordon was also seen in the Strangers' Gallery dressed as a man, as Wraxall mentions in his "Memoirs."

AMAZONIAN ATTACK

The outburst which occurred about the year 1738 was amazonian indeed, as has been described by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu in her letters. "At the last warm debate in the House of Lords it was unanimously resolved that there should be no crowd of unnecessary auditors," as Lady Montagu writes. Women were excluded, but they resolved to show on this occasion that neither men nor law could resist them. "They presented themselves," Lady Montagu continues, "at the door at 9 o'clock in the morning when Sir William Saunderson respectfully informed them that the Chancellor had made an order against their admittance. The Duchess of Queensbury, as head of the squadron, pished at the ill breeding of a mere lawyer and desired him to let them up the stairs privately." This denied and reported, the Peers resolved to starve them out. "The amazons now showed themselves qualified even for the duty of foot-soldiers. They stood there till five in the afternoon without sustenance . . . . every now and then playing volleys of thumps, kicks and raps against the door with so much violence that the speakers in the House were scarce heard. When the Lords were not to be conquered by this, the two Duchesses of Queensbury and Ancaster (very well apprised of the use of stratagems in war) commanded a dead silence for half an hour and the Chancellor who thought this a certain proof of their absence (the Commons also being very impatient to enter) gave order for the opening of the door, upon which they all rushed in, pushed aside their competitors and placed themselves in the front row of the gallery. They stayed there until after eleven when the House rose and during the debate gave applause and showed marks of dislike, not only by smiles or winks (which have always been allowed in these cases) but by noisy laugh and apparent contempts (which is supposed the true reason why poor Lord Hervey spoke so miserably)."

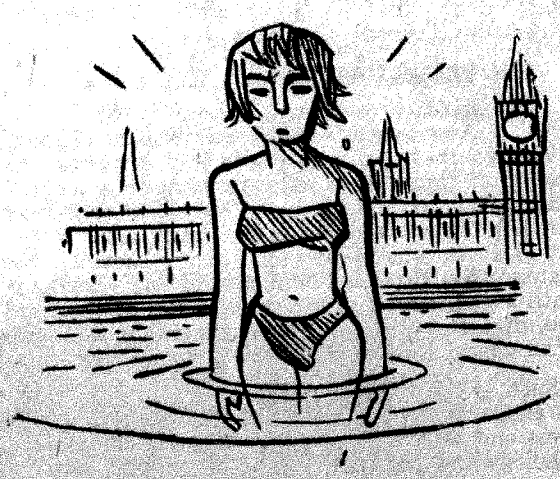
DOG-HOLE OF 1822

To these incidents, and perhaps others of a similar character which have not been handed down to us, is probably to be attributed the strong prejudice which grew up against the admission of ladies to the House of Commons. For a time they were kept absolutely at arm's length, but later, as a great concession, they were admitted to the lantern above the big chandelier which lit the old House. Not more than fourteen could be accommodated there at one time and the smoke and the heat made the atmosphere unbearable. Miss Edgeworth in her memoirs gives a description of a visit to this dog-hole in 1822. "We want," she says, "one night to the House of Commons. Mr. Whitbread took us there. A garret—the whole size of the room—the former chapel, now the House of Commons; below kit-cats of Gothic chapel windows stopped up appear on each side; above the floor and above roof-beams. One lantern with one farthing candle, all the light. In the middle of the garret is what seemed like a sentry-box of deal boards and old chairs placed round it; on these we got and stood and peeped over the top of the boards. Saw large chandelier with lights blazing immediately below; a grating of iron across veiled the light so that we could look down and beyond it."

Such was the state of affairs from the end of the eighteenth century until the fire of 1834, which changed many things, brought to the front the desirability of making adequate provision for women in the temporary House of Commons constructed in the late House of Lords (or Old Court of Requests) and a portion of the Strangers' Gallery not exceeding a quarter of the whole and capable of holding twenty-four ladies was set apart for their accommodation,—no member of the House being allowed to introduce more than two ladies in the course of one week. These measures were not carried out without strenuous opposition. Lord Brougham barked out—"If such a proposition is to be made, I enter my protest against it. . . . I think the ladies would be better employed in almost any other way than in attending Parliamentary debates. I like to see them in their proper places. The Marquis of Lansdowne was equally emphatic. "Ladies are not mentioned in the report," he said, "and, so far as I can prevent it, they shall never be."

The presence of women had a disconcerting effect on some noble orators. "The number of ladies who attended the debate (on Lord Ellenborough's want of confidence motion on May 12, 1885) created great displeasure among the peers. Lord Ellenborough said that it made him nervous; and Lord Lyndhurst positively refused to speak saying that the House looked like a casino, and not a place where business is transacted. Lord Redesdale was also very angry as the ladies overflowed from the gallery into the House. This invasion will, I fear, lead to more stringent and less agreeable arrangements in future." (Lord Malbesbury's memoirs.)

Notwithstanding these ungallant sentiments, speeches and events the ladies had their gallery in the new House and asserted themselves in other directions as well,—in the Lobby and dining rooms, on the promenade and the Terrace. The later history is extant on better records and evidence. Today Profumo cannot perfume the breach of the Parliament, a feminine stench is in the air.



A FEW GEMS FROM TAGORE'S SHORT STORIES

By KESHAB LAL DAY

RABINDRANATH'S "Post Master" is a story of hope that sustains life, despite the fact that there is almost invariably always an element of uncertainty about its fulfilment. When Ratan finds a refuge in the post master, life begins to have a meaning for her. But it is soon to fall to pieces when time comes for the post master to leave that far away village for good. Her heart breaks but she is consoled. There will still be another post master to take his place, both in the post office and in the girl's life.

* * *

Was it his foolishness that made Ramkanai to tell the truth about his elder brother's will? In the story (Ramkanaiyer Nirbuddhita) he is painted as a half-wit simpleton, a good-for-nothing and hanger on who depends on the charity of his worldly wise elder brother. The will deprived him and his son of a share in his elder brother's property. It meant poverty and starvation for them. If the will could be proved to be a forged one before the court of law, he might have been sure of a livelihood for himself and his wife and son. When a suit was filed alleging forgery he was briefed by his wife, and brother-in-law to give evidence in their favour. But during the hearing, he sprang a surprise. He told the truth, and only the truth and fell unconscious. According to worldly standards, he was proved a fool.

What does it matter if he is proved a fool? The truth has been told. Righteousness has triumphed. There is no hope for humanity so long as goodness will be treated as a synonym of foolishness. It gives only a fragment of Rabindranath's mind which was committed to truth and beauty. Only the simple at heart has a right to truth, though wiseacres will ever pity him for being a fool.

* * *

"Was this the face that launched a
thousand ships
And burnt the topless towers of Illium?"

Though in an entirely different context, the spirit of the girl whose skeleton hung in the study of the student of medicines inspires such a musing as in the above-quoted outburst of Dr. Faustus at the sight of Helen in Marlowe's "Dr. Faustus". The skeleton ("Kankal") had flesh, and life. The flesh had beautiful shape, and inside there was a heart that loved, dreamt, wept, felt disappointed, and finally lost all charm for life.

Such is the transitoriness of the world, of life, with all its vanity and pride, its joys and sorrows, its success and failure. It is a symphony of philosophy, psychology and phantasy, composed with an artistry which only a few like Rabindranath are heir to. Here is the tragedy and irony of the human drama—that behind this fiery facade of life is the skeleton.

How many pairs of feet had left their prints on the stony steps of the ghat on the bank of Ganga? Countless no doubt, but that is not all. They are the footprints of cavalcades of generations which the Ghat as a macrobiotic being had been witness to since its birth ("Ghater Katha"). The footprints, the stories of the bearers of the feet, were engraved in the stones of the Ghat. And perhaps only the Ghat knew them.

Such a story was Kusum's which the Ghat alone knew. Her husband who had left her unnoticed some time after marriage and remained untraced for long years, appeared as a Sanyasi on the scene of the Mandir attached to the Ghat, and met Kusum there. Kusum was staying in her father's house near the Ghat after she left her husband's home. She wanted to live a life of seclusion and austerity after he gave her the slip. When they met at the Ghat, they recognized each other. Kusum nurtured a fond hope that they could unite again as husband and wife. But the husband, now a Sanyasi, gave her advice as a preceptor to lead the life of a nun, and vanished one day, this time never to return. The only way left to Kusum was to seek a watery grave in the Ganga, and she found it.

* * *

Home, after all, is the place for woman, and it is the haven where she is bound to return however much she might love the stormy, unchartered sea and perilous voyage. This miracle, however, is made possible only by love. So the wayward Mrinmoyee at last accepts the unromatic household of her husband, and makes peace with it (Samapti). Mrinmoyee is more like a boy than a girl, turbulent; pranksome and something of a delinquent. But young Apurba would take no other girl to wife but Mrinmoyee who fascinated him. After he marries her comes the trouble. There is little of feminine sweetness in her to make her an ideal bride and daughter-in-law to shine in the circumscribed world of home-life. In course of time she too learns to find her place in this world and is reconciled to it.

* * *

It is perhaps his short stories which prove more than anything else he wrote, that Rabindranath was not a poet of the ivory tower. His acquaintance with life in all its reality was deep, and his sympathy with the common man, and understanding of his little problems and joys and sorrows was sincere. In no other literary medium the question of craftsmanship is of so supreme an importance as in short story. And Rabindranath's stories were models of craftsmanship, to say the least.

POETRY AND THE REALM OF VALUES

(Continued from Page 28)

tery evokes the subjective quality of wonder in its primal freshness when the morning stars sang together at the beginning of terrestrial time. And it is the quality of wonder and its perpetual rebirth, like that of the fabled Phoenix, that poetry celebrates and preserves from decay. In it are embalmed the moments of profound wonder that the human spirit has experienced in the course of its encounter with Reality—embalmed not in death but in life. Poetry integrates the broken fragments of life on the physical plane by fusing them in terms of value.

What Time divides Poetry unites. Poetry takes our fleeting moments and gives them the texture of eternity and thus enslaves Time itself.

In the world of time and sense, in the midst of life we are in death; in the realm of poetry in the midst of death we are heirs to a richer life which is free from the shackles which we habitually wear in body and mind, because it evokes a state of awareness which is whole in itself and not a means to some remoter good.

In the realm of poetry we are perfectly free because we are perfectly unexpectant in terms of personal advantage. The gem like perfection of poetry is not something we seek to possess but a benediction which is bestowed on us and by which we are profoundly moved. If a rainbow moves and stirs us to the very depths of being through a profundity of confused feelings which have no name we do not wish to frame the rainbow to place in a festal hall.

In fact in the highest poetic sympathy and realization even the mind is laid to rest. We shed the sheaths of mind and body and are reduced to the essential elements of soul and spirit, thus becoming pure, palpitating entities wholly identified with the specific stuff of poetry. It is a state which is common to poetry and religion. It is the common experience of the mystic; it should be the equally common experience of the devotee of poetry. It is a state of beatitude. It cannot be explained for it is a state of awareness which has to be realized to be understood. But this is not to say that it lacks reality; in fact it appears to be the one avenue leading to the highest reality; transcending the intimations of reality received through normal channels under normal physical and mental conditions. Poetry requires a persuasive discipline of a high order both for the poet and for the devotee of poetry. Milton realized this when he endeavoured to make his life a true poem. The true poet has a sense of vocation and dedication to which he is willing to sacrifice all other things. The poet should be like the trader in pearls who having found a pearl of surpassing value bought it in exchange for all the lesser pearls he had gathered in a life time. One of the great disadvantages of modern life is the difficulty of living adequately in terms of the demands of true poetry. The fragmentary and distracting quality of modern living makes it extremely difficult to attain that unclouded upgathering of the spirit which is so essential for the sustained quality and integrity of poetic inspiration.

Another danger which also stems from modern conditions is that of abusing inspiration by misusing it to subserve political or economic groups or blocs.

TRUE POETRY

True poetry is bound to languish behind the bars of such confinement. True poetry cannot flourish unless our living is geared to it; it follows that neither can the values which poetry seeks to convey—values which can only be revealed by the sweep, and strength, and energy of unalloyed poetic impulse.

One can only hope that humanity will ascend from the valley of modernism, at best of chequered light and shadow, to the broad sunny uplands where the impulse of poetry can be free of extraneous limitation, free to roam as its spirit listeth, knowing no vicissitude and acknowledging no alien jurisdiction.

In the realm of values poetry would appear to have a pervasive and prerogative place for the insight which is peculiar to it has a vaster ambit than that in the case of the other arts. Music approaches it most closely but cannot rival it.

Poetry by virtue of its comprehensive range of media can draw on all the other arts for it is freer of the bonds of the perceptual. It can convey the spirit of sound and motion, of form and colour without the aid of the sensory basis which the other arts draw upon in the communication of specific effects.

As an expression of life, heightened and intensified, its range is as unbounded as that of life itself, in fact it is more than that, if such an expression be allowed, for it lifts life out of its own rut and reveals it in its potential nobility as transcending the limits of it both in the spirit of heroic resistance and heroic endeavour. It is at this point that man can apprehend the summation of values—the value of values in their ultimate synthesis. It is the Pisgah-sight of the Celestial City of which he is a denizen and from which he is exiled—but not for ever. This vision of the Holy of Holies—the rightful dwelling place of the spirit of man, is revealed in the highest poetic flights.

Like the quality of mercy, the spirit of poetry is twice blessed, blessing both the receiver and the giver.

From the heights of poetic insight the different values, aesthetic and ethical seem like a pattern of shot silk in which the threads of one colour blend perfectly with those of another, creating a fabric of shimmering beauty, wondrously harmonious and fairylike.

The various elements of the realm of values blend and merge, and the divisiveness of finite consciousness falls away like the chrysalis of a butterfly.

Poetry at its best and highest and widest can lift the spirit to this rarefied height where it can breathe a new air and see a new universe of transcendent values which exist by their own inner strength.

The high calling to which poetry beckons demands inner discipline and the ruthless discarding of all that stands in its way. This is a hard and steep path which leads upward to reality—a reality which ultimately resolves itself into a reality of values, just as the reality of matter has resolved itself into a reality of impulse in the form of electric charges.

The basis of epistemology is shifting from intellection to intuitive perception. All history shows us the defeat and disaster of logic, for even with the past to learn from mankind has made a mess of the business of living and bids fair to make of the earth, his dwelling place, a veritable holocaust.

Poetry and the spirit it engenders and fosters are needed even in the lower sphere of social values as never before. Moral values have been rudely shaken and shattered and the eyes of a sick and harassed world scan the horizon for a new sign. The way of poetry, the true poetic outlook, can take the place of the light which has failed. It can brace the Spirit to fan the embers of despondence till they glow with the fire of worthy and heroic endeavour.

THE OLD HOUSING PROBLEM

By A. N. KERR

HOUSING problems in the underdeveloped areas of the World make one of the most important items engaging the attention of the United Nations. These problems can be solved only by the expansion of housing and urban development, the adaptation of measures for mobilizing National resources for the expansion of low cost housing, encouraging research, evaluation and information, and drawing on International resources.

About 70% of the World's population reside in the underdeveloped continents of Africa, Asia and South America and the rate of increase in population is the highest in these continents. The population is estimated to have increased at the rate of about 18% per annum. The corresponding rate of increase in these continents was over 2%, as compared to about 1.8% in the U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. and less than 1% in Europe. There were about 1,400 cities in the World with a population of 100,000 and over, the number of such cities in the three continents was only about 630 or 45% of the total number, even though these continents accounted for 70% of the World population. They are already densely populated with low agricultural productivity in relation to the high rate of population growth.

According to a United Nations report by 1965 the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America will require 24 million structures annually to house the increase in population to meet the existing shortage over a period of thirty years. This means ten dwellings annually per 1,000 inhabitants.

The magnitude of these requirements can be gauged from the fact that even the highly developed Nations of the West, with their rapid expansion programmes, to-day build no more than 6 to 7 dwellings annually per 1,000 inhabitants.

In Asia the per capita income of most of the countries is less than Rs. 500 per annum. It has been estimated that an industrial working family in our country cannot afford to pay more than 10% of its earnings in rent, this would meet however, only 25% of the annual cost of a dwelling built according to accepted technical and health standards. In our country only 5% of the population in rural areas, and 12% in urban areas can afford the economic rent of a low cost dwelling whereas 15% of all households in Ceylon and Philippines could similarly afford an economic rent. According to the statistical year book published by UNO, Canada has 6.7%, U.S.A. 10.4%, U.K. 7.3% of the houses with 1-2 rooms, whereas India has 69%, Ceylon 75.6%, Japan 34.1% and Chile 67.6% of houses with 1-2 rooms. Industrially as well and economically advanced countries have houses with three to four and five to six rooms covering more than 70% of the total number of houses of different categories. In most of the advanced countries, more than 40% of the urban houses have tap water, better facilities of garbage disposal, better road and transport facilities, sanitary latrines and electric connections etc.

The eleventh round national sample survey on housing conditions in India conducted in 1957 revealed that in our country about 39% of the houses had only one room, 30% of the houses are two-roomed, 13% of the houses are three roomed and 18% of the houses are four-roomed. About 49% of the dwellings had floor space of less than 200 sq. ft. per person and 47% of the households has floor space of less than 50 sq. ft. per person. About 42% of the houses had no latrines, about 20% has separate latrines and 38% had common latrines. Shortage of housing today is a universal problem; and in India it is a major problem.

Although we have made some progress in other directions, we have a leeway to make in rural, urban and industrial housing. The standard of housing will have a bearing upon the standard of living of the people and depend on the climatic condition of the place. The majority of our people today live in sub-standard housing conditions. Due to pressure on urban land and concentration of population in townships, urban housing is changing its character. The vertical expansion in the shape of multistoried buildings has become a necessity resulting in community living and a greater civic sense.

Today our problem is not how to add to the existing land areas but how to make better use of them. The days of land expansion are gone and the hopes derived from it are no longer capable of sustaining our fresh efforts. The balancing of local resources is a complementary process to the establishment of a balanced world economy and the two go hand in hand. Control of urban land values through fiscal and legislative measures, so essential to urban planning, can also be achieved by the excercise of a little foresight and design. With urban planning thus completed and land rates frozen the little resources that are available in the developing country may just be adequate to provide the infra-structures and frame work of urban development. It should then be possible to provide within this frame, housing and other civic and essential amenities as the national income increases in the years to come.

URBAN AND RURAL

As compared to urban housing, rural housing has not changed its character very much. There is still not much demand for home-stead land in rural areas, except for the due allowance for growth of populations which is met by extending existing accommodation.

According to the 1951 census, there were as many as 6.44 crores occupied houses out of which 5.41 crores were in villages to accommodate a population of 29.5 crore, and 1.03 crore in towns to house 6.19 crore of urban population. This comes to 6 persons per house in towns and 5.5 persons per house in villages. A test survey was carried out, and it was found that there were 112 households for 100 rural houses and 124 households for 100 urban houses. It was also found that there were 441 persons for every 100 rural houses and 471 persons for every 100 urban houses. Accepting the desirability of one house for each household, we find that in 1951 shortage of houses per 100 households, i.e. 471 persons in urban area was 24 and that for the rural area was only 12 for 441 persons. Thus for an urban population of 6.19 crore, the housing shortage is 31.5 lakhs, and for a rural population of 29.5 crore the housing shortage is 1.22 crore.

The urban housing situation in every developing country is a story of acute shortage and dis-

tress, and will continue to be so, so long as incomes are low and urbanisation grows at its present tempo and pace. Although increasing efforts have been made in India, the backlog of housing is tremendous and it is difficult to keep pace even with current requirements. In the third five-year plan for India, efforts are being made towards setting the problem in its proper perspective in order to arrive at a satisfactory solution. But the urban housing development is closely related with the prevailing house rents in the locality. With the rise in standard of living, more amenities are required to be provided. One has to plan ahead by anticipating future demands in respect of amenities. The obsolescence is becoming quite an important consideration in urban housing and large houses are being pulled down, to be replaced by houses with better amenities.

At the end of the second five-year plan and after the 1961 census, the statistical figure for urban population was 7.78 crores according to the Registrar General of Census operation. The household pattern is also changed to some extent due to socio-economic changes. But if we assure that the household pattern remained unchanged during the last ten years, we shall find that there will be shortage of about 34 lakh houses. On this basis if we add the present shortage of 34 lakh houses to this accumulated shortage upto 1951 i.e. 31.5 lakh, the total shortage of houses will be 65.5 lakh for urban population. But the actual shortage will be more if we add certain percentage due to demolition, slum dwellers' house unfit for human habitation and replacement of old houses etc. This will give us an actual shortage of housing of about 85 lakh for urban population.

During the period of 1951-61 it was expected that approximately 4 lakh dwelling units might have been constructed by the various authorities. Thus still there will be a shortage of about 81 lakh houses in the urban areas in our country. Although the development of housing is being controlled by civic authorities and certain minimum requirements are to be fulfilled by owners, care should also be taken so as not to increaase the density of population in residential areas by vertical development in the shape of multi-storied tenements.

The policy of urban housing should be considered on the basis of the following:—

(a) A National population policy, with an eye to stabilisation instead of permitting the threatened decrease;

(b) A policy of urban land nationalisation which will liquidate the present structure of urban values and permit large scale reconstruction to be economically carried on, in a fashion favourable to balanced family life, and balanced communal life relationships;

(c) A national policy of industrial de-centralisation;

(d) A policy which will progressively disperse more population out of the city proper and other large centres;

(e) Regional administration units that will undertake the task of resettlement and building outside the existing municipality and will co-ordinate the work of the municipal authorities;

(f) Control of indiscriminate expansion of urban area;

(g) Rigid application of building rules and bye-laws and their effective implementation so that slum like structures cannot crop up (this can be done by heavy taxation to the slum owners);

(h) Ceiling on land value specially in urban areas and banning land speculation;

(i) Ceiling on rates for essential building materials viz. steel, cement, bricks, woods, paints, etc. should be fixed.

The lack of planned development in rural areas will one day present us with a serious problem, which may result in the abandonment of a whole village, after it has turned out to be a plague-spot. The problem cannot be solved only by constructing more and more house and letting them out on reasonable rents. The planned development of rural housing also envisages development of communications and transport, drainage and water supply, educational institutions in order to effect all round development in community living. In rural areas one does not visualise the growth of permanent structure on a large scale. Rural housing will develop out of necessity, size of family and surplus savings. Unless the present rural agronomy developes substantially, the character of rural housing cannot be expected to change very much. As there is no ready land, no ready materials at site, nor the technical expert and skilled and unskilled labourers to implement this heavy gigantic task, it cannot be tackled specifically. It has to be dealt at the National and International level by controlling the abnormal growth of population, by restricting the unplanned urban expansion, and by dispersing undesirable elements having very little urban function to perform within the city.

UNUSED FUND

In our country efforts of the Government for partial solution of the housing problem were with emphasis on (1) low income group housing, (2) middle income group housing, (3) plantation labour housing, (4) rental housing scheme for Central and State Government's employees, (5) rural housing, (6) slum clearance and (7) subsidised industrial housing schemes. In addition to the above schemes, substantial housing programmes have been undertaken by the Ministries of Rehabilitation, Defence, Railways, Steel and Heavy Industries, Communication, Works and Housing Ministry, etc. The funds were earmarked for the above purpose in successive plan periods but unfortunately they were not fully utilised either by the Government or by the Co-operative Societies and Industrialists due to rigid rules and regulation framed by our Government. Therefore our Government should immediately relax their rules and regulations, so that the Co-operative Societies and Industrialists of our country might avail of this opportunity. I believe these societies can solve at least 30% of the present shortage of housing in the urban and rural areas.

Eighty-two per cent of India's population live in rural areas. They make the backbone of the country and any effort made to improve the living conditions of rural dwellers either by the Government or by societies will naturally be a practical contribution to the National and International advancement.

A quarter of the world's population is housed in poor, unhealthy dwellings. While food, health, labour, agriculture and industrial development have received the attention they deserve, housing on a world-wide scale has so far been neglected. I hope that it should be implemented by all the developing nations of the world and particularly by a developing country like India. The United Nations should play their part on National and International levels to reach this goal.

EFFICACY OF BIOLOGICAL MOVEMENT

By Dr. SIVATOSH MOOKERJEE

IN a way movement is synonymous with life. Every kind of living being is symbolised by some kind of movement. The credo is in essence that there cannot be any life which is not at work. Though we often inaptly say that the plants are incapable of any movement, whereas it is the privilege of the animals. This is a very superficial way of looking at the plants, because the plants in course of their existence, do show their own kind of movement, which may not be like the animals'. Movement is not necessarily concerned with the gross body movement. It could be very subtle, even invisible, concerning itself with the molecular rearrangements. Movement is a vital sign of existence. Some of the engineering principles of movements in the living system will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

Muscles of our body are primarily responsible for movements like walking, jumping, swimming etc. but there could be movements without muscles. Perhaps the most symbolic travel was that of Tenzing and Hillary when they went all the way to make a conquest of the highest point of the earth. Symbolic in the sense that in such a quest not only the sturdy muscles of the heroes worked indefatigably but such travel represented the noblest of our aspirations. Besides this kind of bodily displacement from one place to another, one can exhibit movement by sitting or even in sleeping. Muscles of the heart tirelessly contract till death, they have no apparent respite. Cardiac muscles constantly make the heart work.

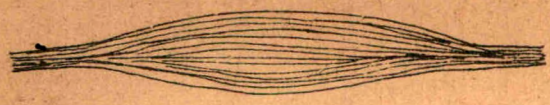
Another kind of muscle is found in our viscera, like the stomach or intestine. The contraction of these muscles allows the movement of food in the gut. Chronic spasm of the vascular muscles results in blood pressure. Asthma is the cause of muscle contraction of the respiratory passage by which the calibre of the respiratory tract causes inconvenience. Colic is caused by an abnormal contraction of muscle fibres. These are some of the well-known examples of movements caused by muscle contraction. Insects also have flight muscles which cause movement due to tetanic contraction. The octopus has big muscles to effect sharp movement. Locomotion of the earthworm wonderfully demonstrates the contraction and expansion of circular and longitudinal muscles.

Besides the muscular movements, there are ciliary and amoeboid movement which are seen in a good number of organisms. Cilia are minute hair-like structures which move in one direction like stiff rods and make the organism move. There are many unicellular organisms which have ciliary mode of locomotion. Some, instead of having many cilia, may have one or two flagella which are used for about 20 beats per minute. Sponges and mussels utilise their cilia (they have ciliated cells) for causing water current inside their body. Ciliated cells are found in all animals except in nematods and arthropods. Our own trachea and bronchi have on their surface many cilia. They beat constantly in direction away from the lung to keep the surface clean from dust particles.

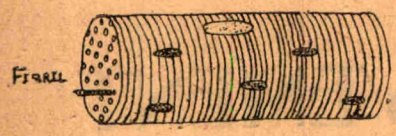
SPECIALISED CELLS

The spermatozoa are very specialised cells, they store all energy to swim across the genital tract. The movement is effected by a lashing of their tails across the seminal medium. When a cell divides, the chromosomes separate into chomatids which travel to two poles to bring about the completion of cell division. The movement of amoeba is in a way extra-ordinary. Amoeba utilises the various points of the surface of the body to bring about locomotion. Minute projections from the body make the rolling in of the cytoplasmic mass. These temporary projections are known as pseudopodia. Lastly almost all types of cells show the movement of their fluid content inside the r cell. This kind of churning movement is seen in amoeba. The plant Nitella beautifully exhibits the inside movement of the endoplasm.

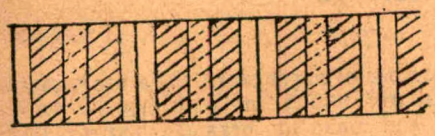
The muscle tissue is quite complex. There are about 639 different muscles in our body. In males, muscles constitute about 40 p.c. of the body weight and 30 p.c. in females. There are specialised cells in muscles. Muscles are composed of many lengthwise fibres. Each fibre is again formed by many delicate fibrils. They are either striated or smooth. The striated muscles are voluntary while non-striated muscles are involuntary. Muscle cell has sheath,—the sarcolema—inside which numerous fibrils are present. Between the sheath and the fibres is found the sarcoplasm—the liquid part of the protoplasm. Often muscles are attached to the skeleton which serves as a frame. Muscle fibres are also attached to a nerve and the nerve to the brain. It is believed that no organised movement is possible without the skeleton. However there can be movement without the frame. It has been suggested that a mediumsized muscle contains about ten million muscle cells and six thousand million fibres. With great difficulty one may however imagine that



WHOLE MUSCLE



MUSCLE FIBER



ISOLATED MYOFIBRIL

possibly billion muscles are mobilised for a piece of movement. The cardiac muscles are different, they form a net work. They are involuntary.

Fibrils are known for their excitability, extensibility and elasticity. They become shorter and thicker. Biological science owes a great deal to A. V. Hill and his students of the Cambridge University for the knowledge about muscle contraction. Through their researches, the idea was developed that the muscles may have two phases of existence. When contraction takes place, muscles are in 'active state' and when relaxed they are in 'plastic state'. Fibrils in the muscles represent the contracting elements. It has also been worked out that a chemical substance known as actinomysin, a kind of a protein present in the muscles fibres is primarily responsible for muscle movement. Mysin is present in the thick filaments of the fibrils and actin is located in the thin filaments. Muscle contraction is essentially a phenomenon of molecular contraction.

DEAD MUSCLES MOVE

One of the best understood phenomena of movement is undoubtedly the muscle cells. A large amount of fruitful data has recently been gathered to know more about the biological process of contraction. It has been shown that during the working of muscles lactic acid accumulates and until the lactic acid is removed muscle fibres cannot function. Our body has a special system of removing the poison as we work. A great result was produced by a great scientist—Albert Szent Gyorgyi. The result was so extra-ordinary that on the face of it, it appeared a part of fiction. But the observation is repeatable and after the design of the original experiment by Szent Gyorgyi, a host of similar experiments on different materials were found to be confirmative.

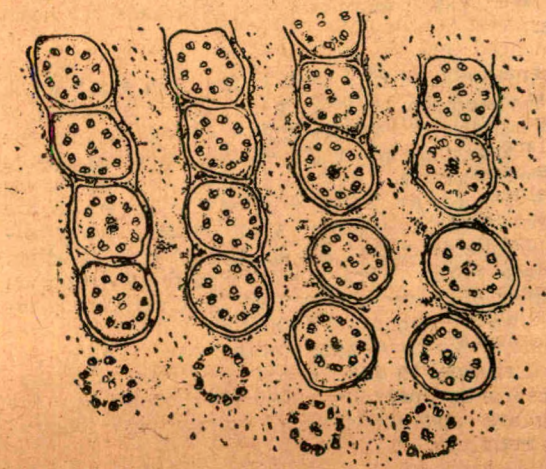
Let's see what Szent Gyorgyi did with the contraction of muscle cells. His experiment began with the contraction of muscle cells and storing them in cold solution of glycerine. Glycerine is employed as a kind of preservative and naturally when living muscle cells after dissociation were put into glycerine, it took away the life. Even after taking away its life, the general texture of the muscle fibres was there. With an ingenuity, Szent Gyorgyi added a very special chemical, commonly known as ATP, an abbreviation of Adenosine triphosphate, was added to the dead muscle fibres preserved in glycerine solution. And to the surprise of all, these dead muscle fibres showed signs of contraction at the instance of ATP. Inference was that ATP gives energy to muscles.

A series of interesting result came following the discovery that dead muscles fibres contract by adding ATP to them. Different categories of moving cells were glycerenated to be activated. When similar experiments were done with sperms, the tails of dead sperms showed signs of movement with adding up of ATP. Young connective cells known as fibroblast also contracted similarly.

One is led automatically to assume that unless there is some kind of common molecular bas's, such widely diverse category of cells cannot show similar phenomenon of contraction. The different structures which manifest movement were critically analysed and found to be made of a highly contractile protein-actinomysin. It led to the study of the biochemical nature of actinomysin. Again we owe our thanks to Szent Gyorgyi for providing a new understanding of the contractile protein—actinomysin. He showed that the two important counterparts of myosine and actin of the muscle fibre can be synthesised, in the test tube and some kind of artificial muscle (synthetic) fibres formed which again contract when ATP is added.

A contractile protein like actinomysin (spermosin) has been isolated from sperms. Broken flagella contains enzyme capable of releasing ATP. Another organism, namely slime mould, which shows vigorous movements in some phase of life, seems to contain a protein akin to actinomysin. This is a contractile protein. Recently in our laboratory in the Presidency College, we have shown that in hydra in addition to muscle cells, presence of contractile fibres is traced. The elegant movement of the hydra is very likely due to this protein fibres.

Other locomotory organs like cilia and flagella show interesting ultra-structures which are supposed to be involved in effecting movement. The internal structure of cilia and flagella as revealed under the electron microscope are strikingly similar. The flagella are many times larger cilia. Internally each of them is made up of fine filaments. There are two central filaments surrounded by a ring of nine circular filaments. Nine outer filaments are paired structures. It is assumed that by the effective con-



Ultra-thin filaments within cilia

traction of these filaments, the movement of the entire flagella and cilia is brought about.

STREAMING IN AMOEBA

Wonderful streaming movement is seen in amoeba but no filamentous structures have been found in amoeba. Electron-microscope has not revealed any visible structures in streaming movement.

Amoeba move by throwing a tiny portion of the body, known as pseudopodium, into which the protoplasmic content of the cell streams in. Constantly new pseudopodium is formed and the protoplasm rolls into it. The surface of amoeba is quite thick. It is visible under the ordinary microscope.

Scientists differ in regard to the actual progress involved in movement in amoeba. Allen and his co-workers in Princeton University, believe that the locomotion in amoeba is brought about by the shearing of its cytoplasm. They assume that whenever there is a movement in amoeba, a 'fountain zone' is formed in the anterior region from where the movement will take place. A kind of tunnel is formed within the cell, through which the cytoplasmic material from the rear end passes forward from the *gel* to *sol* condition. With the streaming of the cytoplasmic material and eventually the passing of the fountain zone, it assumes again *gel* condition and becomes stiffer. Continuously the fountain zone advances which also literally makes amoeba move forward. The other view-point of movement in amoeba has been advanced by Goldacre. His theory is that rear-gel material contracts which generates the motive force of advancement. The most important thing in both theories is that movement is possible by molecular rearrangement.

The miracle of a fertilized egg is to convert it into the adult. During the formative stages when the different structures of the body are being formed, embryonic cells move in a perfect order, sense and time. Cells move from one place to another and in the course of the movement they carry the message of differentiation from one place to another.

In the frog's embryo it has been seen that for prospective epidermis cells are apt to move outside the embryo and for mesoderm and neural plate cells move away from one another.

The migratory activity and adhesiveness of embryonic cells raise a peculiar problem. Surface-contact during normal morphogenetic movements is as yet almost unknown in embryos, though Holtfreter claims that the various cells acquire their histogenetic shape mainly through amoeboid activity.

We have investigated the properties of normal interfacial connections in developing tissue like notochord and have found evidence of an ensuing closeness of cell-to-cell contacts during morphogenesis. It is interesting that contact between notochord cells is effected by increase in their polyhedral surface areas—a good example of increase of surface area to volume. However, it is not certain whether for all differentiating tissue cells increase of the surface contacts is the case; blood remains a unique tissue where necessity of cellular contact is unimportant. White blood cells are peculiar. They move around independently and can leave the circulation and go into any tissue. They behave like an amoeba.

Cell-specific organisations of tissues are often traceable in individual cells in culture. Notochord cells are capable of becoming polygonal and epidermis cells tend to flatten in isolation. The cell membrane seems to be associated with the assumption of histogenetic shape by changing its round configuration. Waddington has expressed the view that ". . . . . arising from the adhesiveness of the cell membrane plays a part not only in the in-turning of the invagination stream but also in producing it." In an analysis of the nature of membrane process, it is often advanced that contact between two different cells is a reaction very much similar to antigens and their homologous antibodies—a concept due to Tyler and Weiss, Biological constant to all surface.

The intracellular matrix of the developing cells can be easily disrupted and soon the mass of cells disintegrates. The cells fall apart singly or in groups and isolated cells show the peculiar morphodynamic characteristics and amoeboid activities. The surface layer of these cells are mobilized in the form of pseudopodial bulge which often rotates round the cell. For this reason, the shape of the cells is variable. In some cells, needle-like projections are often thrown off. The amoeboid movements are thought to be the result of localized and reversible state of solution of the oriented lipid molecules of the cells surface. The process of dissociation of embryonic cells has been found to be reversible in nature. The disruptive force which breaks the surface liaison and converts the embryo into a heap of dissociated cells, can be spared if the treated embryo is immediately passed through successive changes of normal culture solution before the complete liquifaction of their ground substances. On removal to culture solution, the surface attachment between cells is once again restored and stabilized, and differentiation may proceed normally.

Fertilization is essentially a phenomenon of cortical reactions in the egg. From the beginning of the entry of the sperm till the first zygotic division, the surface layer of the egg shows variable permeability. In immature eggs, the surface layer remains impenetrable to sperms. However, the property of this layer undergoes precise changes with the initiation of the fertilization reactions and continues till they are completed.

The part played by the surface layer in living cells is now beyond doubt, and thus its dynamic structure merits a close examination as a gateway of many potent physiological reactions. The concept of inside-outside gradients, controlled by enzymatic factors, is also becoming recognisable. The surface layer of cells is no longer considered as protective covering of no physiological import.

BIOLOGICAL CONSTANT

A new interest has recently been aroused in regard to the understanding of cell surface not only for showing movement but also for other vital phenomena. All cells seem to be covered by a membrane.

The resolving power of ordinary microscope is about a thousandth of a millimeter which is really unable to reveal the structure of a few molecule—thick membrane. There is a striking similarity between cell and membrane of cells belonging to a bacterium, a plant and an animal. There is some kind of biological constant to all surface in their structural make-up. The electron microscope reveals that the membrane is 75 angstrom unit.

The situation is becoming such that many will not regard that the outside of the cell is really not outside, it is a part of the inside, because the membrane is a continuous system. There is membrane inside the cell in the form of canal or sinus. It is clear that membranes make new membranes. One can distinguish at least three stages in the formation of membrane from the initial cytoplasmic stage to

(Continued on next page)

QUESTION OF LANGUAGE

(Continued from Page 14)

languages and their literatures, there was no special animus against English. There was, however, in certain quarters, the sentimental objection that English was a foreign language—at its worst, the language of the exploiting and repressive foreigner from whose colonial and imperial control as well as what was described as "spiritual domination" India was striving to be free.

But after nearly 200 years of close contact with English, the language still reigns supreme in India, primarily because it filled the lacuna which existed in India for a Common Modern Language of all-India administration, of higher education in science and culture, and of international contacts. Not only does English continue to flourish, but non-officially (and below the surface with its anti-English furbishings) English is becoming still better entrenched — particularly among commercial and industrial groups who formerly had not much to do with English. English has become established as the indispensable language of modern civilisation and communication, and the enthusiasm with which it began to be cultivated in India from the beginning of the 19th century right down to now (the very recent growth of international contacts in business and politics and science has given it a great fillip during the past few years) made it for all practical purposes an important language of Modern India. Outside the Home, it was English everywhere. Although, as it is alleged, less than 1 per cent of the Indian population may know English, its importance far transcends any numerical figure. It is the "microscopic minority" of an intellectual *elite* knowing English that acts as the leaven and supplies the shaping and directive mind in the affairs of present-day India. There was at any rate, for the *elite*, no difficulty for adjusting, and adjusting with profit, the claims of the Home and the Outside with English. It may be said that in some parts of the country attempts have been made to restrict severely (if not to suppress entirely) the English language from the school, but that attempt has proved futile and harmful. The attraction of English is once again on the ascendant, though outside the school, and ere long, there will be registered a higher percentage of Indian persons knowing English. And, in spite of what some people may have said to the contrary, all our Modern Indian Languages also substantially benefited by their contact with English, being disciplined and enlarged in the modern way of thinking and expressing. In this way, both English and the Modern Indian Languages under the guidance of the English succeeded in enabling the Indian peoples to modernise their minds and to extend the scope and the horizon of their literatures.

No one has ever suggested the suppression of the mother-tongues—the Modern Indian Languages—by English. As a matter of fact, it has been found practical, as the only suitable thing at the present moment, to have a stage of Bilingualism in all the departments of our corporate life, including Education in all its various stages. The Mother-tongue (or the State Language) *and* English—this is the only solution we are gradually coming to. And that will put an end to the further development of the ugly spectre of *Linguism* which is now looming large in the Indian scene, and creating one of the most potent factors of Disintegration, which we must suppress, and suppress with knowledge and with a spirit of sweet reasonableness going hand in hand with firmness.

SHAKESPEARE'S TRAGIC SOURCE

(Continued from Page 32)

disease! Behind the confusion there is order, behind division unity, in the heart of despair a burning hope, whose flame human agony, cruel and spiteful, cannot extinguish: out of chaos, division, suffering come peace and joy bringing hope and security to mankind. Left to himself, man is the author of anarchy, prey to fear; sustained and strengthened by Faith there is no danger he cannot face, no sufferings he cannot endure. This truth he reveals most eloquently in the most painful drama of KING LEAR; MACBETH, OTHELLO, HAMLET, CORIOLANUS, JULIUS CAESAR, TIMON OF ATHENS reinforce this truth which seems to be hidden in the mist that covers it.

Shakespeare had done all that a man could do to read the signs of the times, to analyse the situation, to tear the veil off the face of things; when he had written the last play, was it THE TEMPEST? he could breathe to himself: *consummatum est!* His work was indeed finished, he had fulfilled his mission beyond the expectation of man. He had given the world a complete Vision with the consummate thoroughness of a creative artist. Then he felt the urge to retire from the field of his labours, from the scene of his fall and rise, to the comparative seclusion and safety of his beloved Stratford-upon-Avon; he retired into relative oblivion crowned with a glory which Age could not wither nor Time decay.

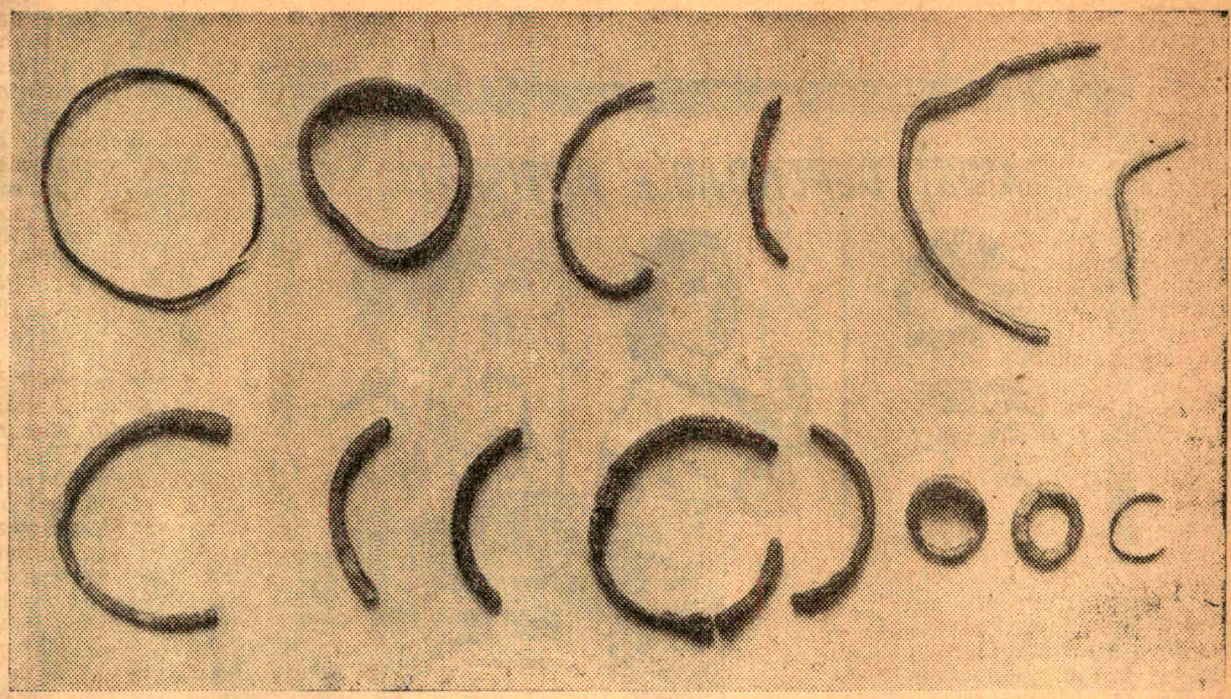
Shakespeare, now a soul at peace, cared little for the enmity of the world. He had tamed his flesh and cured his soul and drunk the blessings of Heaven by the grace of God; his heart could resign itself only too gladly to the inward peace, joy, and desire which he enjoyed after many years of expiation for the sins of his romantic manhood. Because of his redemption, urged by a yearning for domestic happiness, with his great Achievement he left the stormy world of London for the quiet life of his birthplace, "where every third thought would be his grave". A pious wish, a happy fulfilment.

BIOLOGICAL MOVEMENT

(Continued from previous page)

endoplasmic reticulum and eventually as membranes separating portion of cytoplasm. Membranes are supposed to be pushed into cavities. It is natural to infer that complex cells emerge out by drawing in the surface. Human R.B.C. is the simple example where no organelle is found within.

We are increasingly led to believe that the surface membrane separates colloid system from another or from a different kind of medium. A variety of evidences indicates that plasma membranes are basically a lipoid layer with protein layers absorbed on either side. It is a sort of sandwich-structure having a thickness of about 200 A°. Lipid molecules are considered by many as one of the key molecules in the origin of life. These molecules in water have a capacity of coming together. It is not unlikely that lipid gave some kind of container when other molecules would conveniently be housed. The phenomenon of movement is an example of dynamic flux where lipids and proteins are playing important part. In the animated system of life ATP seems to be the fuel and the protein is the machinery. ATP comes from food and sun as heat energy or entrophy as the second law of thermodynamics. Movement thus in terms of fine structures is essentially a phenomenon of molecular rearrangement caused by the dissipation of some energy.



RELICS OF A COPPER AGE IN BENGAL

By PARESH CHANDRA DASGUPTA

Director of Archaeology, West Bengal Government

THE ancient mounds of Pandu Rajar Dhibi stretch from east to west on the southern side of the river Ajay in Burdwan district of West Bengal the main routes of communication being from the railway station of Bhedia before Bolpur from Calcutta and from Panagarh across Radhamohanpur and Ramnagar.

The finds of Pandu Rajar Dhibi have amply revealed that the civilisation of Copper Age which once illuminated other parts of India besides Mesopotamia, Egypt and various other regions of the ancient world had also bloomed in the lateritic terrains of West Bengal centuries before the preamble of written history. The reddish soil-formation with laterite outcrops and occasional knolls and hills that extend from Midnapur to Birbhum, among others, appears to be very ancient. A few fossil woods from Birbhum which have been studied by the Geological Survey of India probably appertain to an age millions of years ago. In such a geological and palaeontological context a number of unifacial pebble tools of quartzite comparable with similar ones from the Himalayan Ice Ages including those from the well-known Sohan valley have been discovered in the basin of the Suvarnarekha and the Pitanau in Midnapur district. Palaeolithic Abbevelio-Achevlian hand-axes were found in the valleys of the Kansavati and the Mayuraksi, apart from the numerous microlithic tools, flakes and cores lying scattered in a wide zone, and polished neolithic celts amidst old alluvium and hills of West Bengal. The proto-historic remains of Pandu Rajar Dhibi belong to such a chain of evolution of human culture and they throw a new light on the chalcolithic civilisation of Bengal which seems to have developed in the basin of the Ajay somewhere in the latter half of the 2nd millennium B.C. As a matter of fact systematic explorations and excavations at the site as undertaken by the Directorate of Archaeology of West Bengal have placed the valleys of the Ajay, Kunoor and the Kopai in Bengal in the archaeological map of the diffusion of Copper and Bronze Age civilisations of Asia.

Though well-known for several historic ruins in the surrounding area the proto-historic importance of the mounds of Pandu Rajar Dhibi remained long unknown in the absence of any sustained exploration. Apart from local legends of a certain king named Pandu whose palace is said to have been buried in the core of the main mound, the chalcolithic treasures of the area were never recognised until the year 1961 when the mounds were explored by the Directorate of Archaeology, West Bengal. The excavation yielded examples of black-and-red ware, a few microliths and a single fragment of a bowl of lustrous red ware bearing a painted design which obviously seemed to belong to a hitherto unknown proto-historic civilisation.

PROTO-HISTORIC

The explorations were continued after a study of the materials and field works resulted in discovery of fragments of beautiful channel-spouted bowls of black-and-red ware of undoubted proto-

MOST DEPENDABLE ANTISEPTIC

in cuts and abrasions, insect bites and stings, for mouth wash and gargle, and disinfection of rooms, floors, linens, etc.

ANTOL

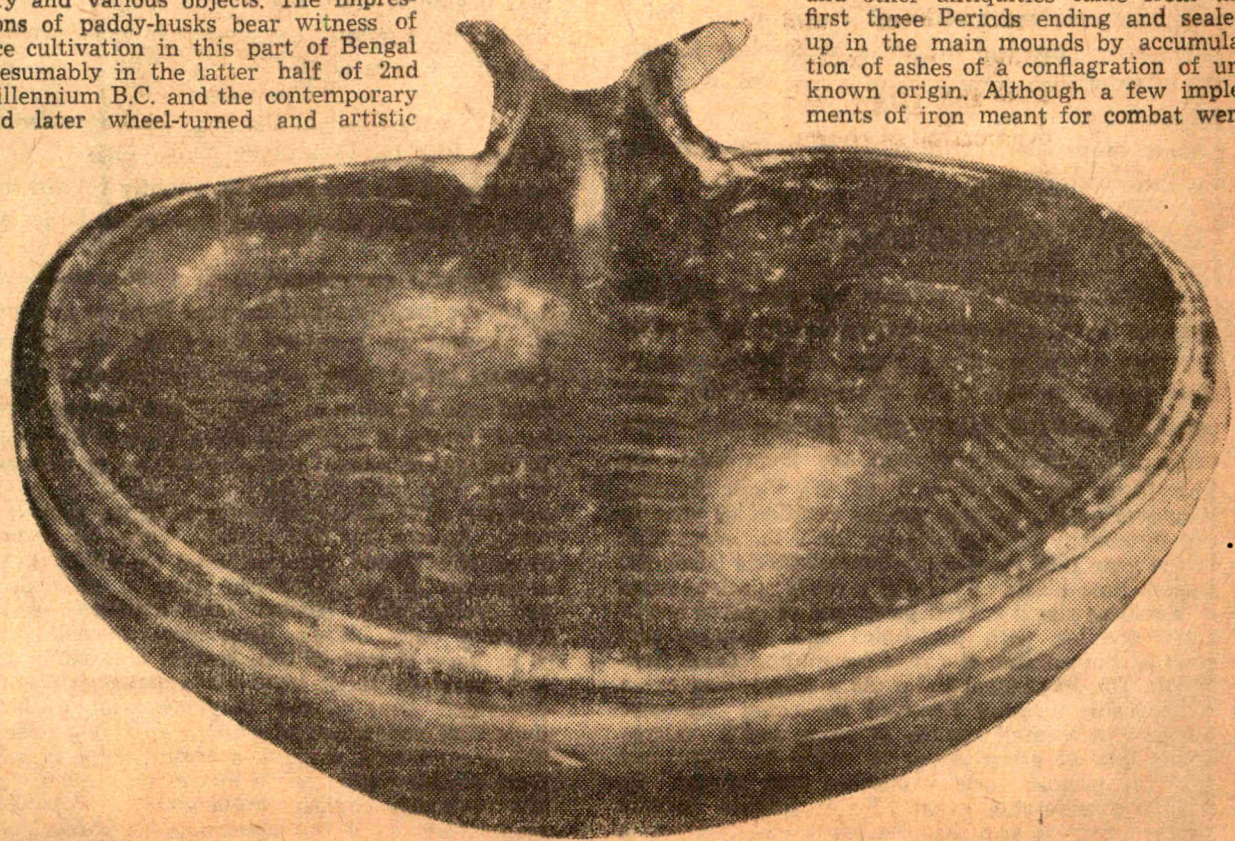
Available in bottles of 55 ml., 110 ml. and 450 ml. and in tins of 4·5 litres (1 gallon)

a Bengal Immunity product

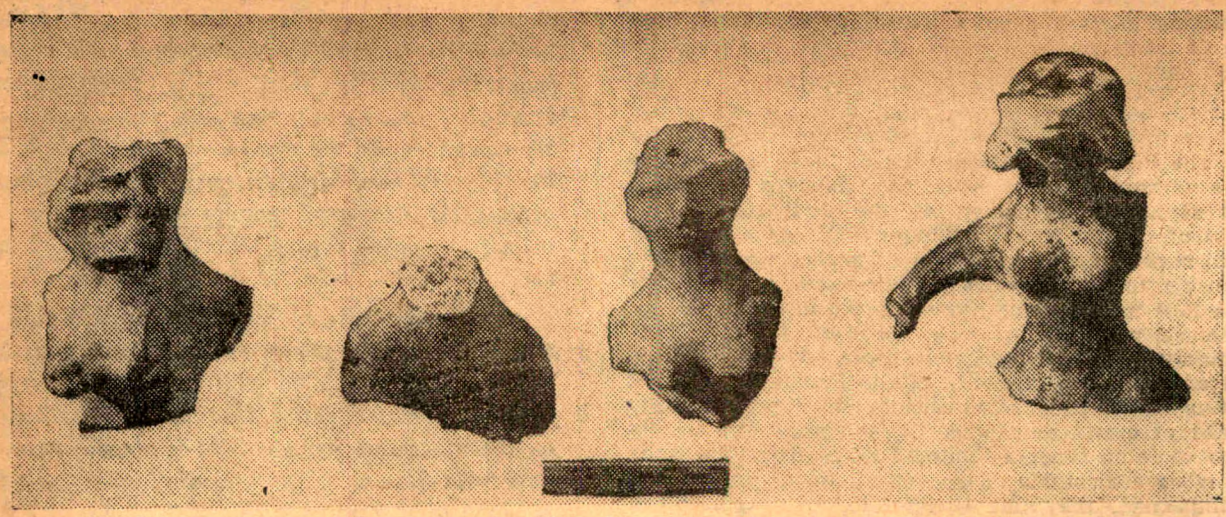
historic origin as also significant examples of painted black-and-red and lustrous red wares, perforated pottery, microliths, neolithic celts, beads of semi-precious stones and a few bits of copper. These antiquities proved that the site was first inhabited long ago in proto-historic times and a strange affinity between some of these findings and those from Central India and Rajasthan indicated the possible chronology of the civilisation somewhere in the 2nd millennium B.C. As a sequence of such discovery attention of experts were drawn to the unique importance of the mounds which were kindly visited by the eminent pre-historian Dr. H. D. Sankalia, Director of Deccan College Post Graduate and Research Institute, Poona in the month of January, 1961. While Pandu Rajar Dhibi was immediately recognised to be a proto-historic site of outstanding importance mainly due to its distance of about a thousand miles from the analogous chalcolithic sites of Central India and Rajasthan, the State Directorate of Archaeology made preparations for an excavation being encouraged by the Government.

The trial digging as carried out in the Spring of 1962 revealed many an interesting aspect and it was noticed that the earliest inhabitants of the area lived on an earth surface of mottled sandy silt more than 12' (feet) below the surface of the back of the mound. While the first inhabitants appeared to be a simple agricultural people who lived in mud houses and had an industry of hand-made grayish or pale red pottery of thick fabric bearing impressions of paddy-husks, the phases immediately after showed traits of an urban civilisation whose general equipments included painted black-and-red and lustrous red wares, channel-spouted bowls of graceful form and bright red outer surface like glowing ember, perforated pottery and various objects. The impressions of paddy-husks bear witness of rice cultivation in this part of Bengal presumably in the latter half of 2nd millennium B.C. and the contemporary and later wheel-turned and artistic ceramics seem to disclose an era of immigration of a people who lived in a chalcolithic civilisation besides the evidence of painted or simple channel-spouted bowls which recall similar specialised wares from the proto-historic Narmada valley and Rajasthan in India and the more distant countries of Iran and the eastern Mediterranean world wherefrom comparable excavated pottery or lime-stone tray belong to ancient epochs several thousands of years ago.

The black-and-red wares as appertaining to the proto-historic phases of Pandu Rajar Dhibi are occasionally painted with oblique strokes, dots, hyphens, chevrons etc. in translucent white pigment on the inner side though there is a small carinated vase with flaring rim as typical of the age which is found to be painted with a row of curved strokes in creamish paste on the shoulder. The lustrous red wares on the other hand have a very smooth surface and a fabric distinct of Ajay culture. The paintings as occuring on them on one side or occasionally as it were on both sides are generally touched in black or in creamish white pigment the designs being mostly geometric or conventional patterns like solid triangles, simple bands, stepped chevrons, lattices, dots, ladders and wavy lines. While the black-and-red ware was mainly represented by knife-edged or lipped bowls and small carinated vases with bevelled rims the examples of painted red ware included shallow bowls and basins with extended rims besides vessels of other kinds. In all five Periods were noticed in the excavation of 1962 and the proto-historic pottery and other antiquities came from the first three Periods ending and sealed up in the main mounds by accumulation of ashes of a conflagration of unknown origin. Although a few implements of iron meant for combat were



Channel - spouted bowl of black-and-red ware — Pandu Rajar Dhibi.



Terra cotta mother goddesses — Pandu Rajar Dhibi.

unearthed from the level of Period III, the metal was totally absent in Periods I & II when copper was known. If Period III goes around first millennium B.C. this emergence of iron will not be surprising as the metal was once used by the Hittites and the Philistines of western Asia in the 2nd millennium B.C. while objects of iron were even found in the grave of Pharao Tutankhamen of Egypt apart from its occurrence in proto-historic Troy in Asia Minor, Sialk in Iran and Alamgirpur in India. Being situated in the vicinity of the iron-producing area the mounds of Pandu Rajar Dhibi offers a new problem in Indian archaeology though the cause of such occurrence of carbonised iron may be attributed to an age of transition if not to the coming of invaders who might be responsible for the last conflagration.

VEDIC STEEL

In this connection it may be pointed out that recently Leonard Woolley has expressed his conviction that Rigvedic Aryans knew the preparation of steel (*avas*) though there is another opinion that primitive *Asurs* of Chotanagpur plateau once instituted the metallurgy of iron and from them the knowledge was transmuted to the Vedic Aryans. Whatever might be the precise position of iron in the chronology of Pandu Rajar Dhibi the excavation in the year 1962 revealed in proto-historic levels the smooth lime-plastered floor of a fairly spacious room or a hall as also a curved pavement of beaten terra-cotta nodules with post-holes and diagrammatic rows of lime-plastered ovens resembling those from Navda Toli in Central India. As a trench dug at a considerable distance revealed the same sequence along with a small scraper of stone and a micro-lithic flake of green jasper it could be presumed that the proto-historic habitation once spread up over a considerable area: By a further careful study it may be said that the upper levels above a thick layer of ashes overlying Period III belong to an early age though later pits were recognised here and there. The foundations of brick-structures and thick storage vases evidently bear evidence of an altogether different culture beginning from early historic times.

In order to have a clearer view of the proto-historic culture of Pandu Rajar Dhibi a more elaborate excavation was taken up at the site in the beginning of 1963 by the Directorate of Archaeology West Bengal, on the 3rd February of this year. The excavation brought to view various evidences of the past beginning from the chalcolithic times down to the historic age after the afore-mentioned conflagration of unknown origin.

The excavation in the year 1963 revealed four periods the last one having two phases. So the sequence of the last year was slightly revised in the light of further stratigraphy on a much larger scale.

Period I commenced from a very early period when the inhabitants of the area lived on the surface of mottled or spangled sandy silt and practised human burial with east-west orientation i.e., the head was turned to the east. While the burial might be of fractional type (the upper part of the skeleton found was missing), the very nature of inhumation within the mottled sandy silt seemed to be very striking as it indicated in appreciable ancient culture. Among the fine pottery wares as recovered from this period mention may be made of small fragments of black-and-red ware, a class of pale red vases with beaded and bevelled rim and globular body. While these were unearthed along with plain sherds of thin section and sandy fabric and parts of thick hand-made pottery like those excavated ones of the previous year, a uniform deposit of yellowish and whitish sandy silt overlying this occupational *stratum*, a reminiscence of a flood from the Ajay also noticed in the last year, has made the sequence slightly problematic. Among the scanty remains of this layer dots of charcoal, a few microliths and a kind of chocolate ware with whitish painting are of special interest as those mainly

occurring in dark patches seemingly belong to an age of transition from Period I to Period II which must have witnessed the river flood.

TYPICALLY CHALCHOLITHIC

The Period II of Pandu Rajar Dhibi seem to have witnessed a very flourishing stage of civilisation as now we meet with systematically aligned floors of houses occasionally superimposed made of reddish peletty laterite bearing signs of post-holes as also traces of a paved passage which appears to be a lane flanking two houses, an elaborate human cemetery, numerous examples of painted pottery, channel-spouted bowls, microliths including one with crested medial ridge and copper ornaments. The culture of Period II is thereby typically chalcolithic recalling various sequences of this culture in other parts of India from the Indus Valley to the Deccan across Rajasthan, Malwa and Saurastra. The relics of the Ajay Valley throws a new light on the epic of this development and diffusion of proto-historic culture with regional variations revealing a hitherto unknown horizon of possibilities. In another Trench where an extension of the cemetery already mentioned was found two human skeletons of both extended and secondary burials were uncovered along with a convex-sided bowl of lustrous red ware painted in black, a bowl of the same ware with a cluster of perforations at the base, a pair of copper bangles including a significant spiral one and a microlithic scraper flaked on a piece of fossil wood all coming from the level of the grave pit. This assemblage clearly reveals as in other trenches that the men of Period II of Pandu Rajar Dhibi practised burials with east-west orientation and at the same time they were the users of microliths, copper ornaments including spiral bangles of seemingly West Asiatic affinity besides painted and perforated wares.

The human cemetery of the second Trench succeeded the earlier cemetery of Period I and here six skeletal remains were discovered, four lying extended from east to west and two in urns of plain fabric covered by lids of black-and-red ware one of which was found almost intact. A study of these skeletons bring to us several very important points which can be considered in the light of discovery of similar skeletons at other archaeological sites of India and outside. One of these has a slightly flexed condition with arms and legs joined together. The legs of this skeleton are further severed from ankles as it happened at the chalcolithic sites of Chandoli and Nevasa in Maharastra besides the alignment of skeletons remotely recalling the tradition of very early secondary burials like that of the upper Palaeolithic triple burial at Barma Grande in Europe. While it appears from the drawing of Verneau that two of the skeletons at Barma Grande in France are without their ankles, Jacquetta Hawkes has commented 'that the practice of interment after the flesh had decayed, another custom frequent among primitives and usually linked with the idea of a final setting free of the spirit to join its fellows, seems not to have been observed before Mesolithic times'. (*Prehistory and the Beginning of Civilisation*, Vol. I, UNESCO publication 1963, page 209).

An almost intact skeleton of a supposedly long-headed primitive male or a female was also seen as lying in the same east-west orientation i.e., the head pointing to the east though turned to the south along with two afore-mentioned urn-burials, one very close to the feet and the other a few feet away from the head in an undeniable alignment. The extended burial of the skeleton of an adult was noticed with a tubular copper bead and barrel-shaped bead of agate as still sticking to the jaw. Such meagre trinkets as to be seen a few thousand years after burial recall various proto-historic human burials with beaded ornaments like those of chalcolithic Nevasa and Natufian Palestine among various other instances of the ancient world.

BENGAL & EGYPT

Apart from these first evidences of proto-historic inhumation in eastern India, the painted red ware and black-and-red wares of Period II are of outstanding archaeological importance. The lustrous red ware is generally represented by bowls with or without straight extended rims and other vessels and the paintings on them are mostly done in black or whitish pigment of subdued tone. Besides the fine fabric of occasionally well-levigated clay which is typical of the Ajay Valley the painted patterns included among others solid triangles, wavy lines, simple bands sometimes joined by uprights, lattices, hatched lozenges and leaf or wavy lines flanked by *sigmas* as if the formalised motif of a stream with a hovering flock of birds. Apart from the white painted chocolate ware bowls coming from layer (6) composed of compact whitish or yellowish sandy silt with scanty remains of material culture, a class of dishes with concave inner surface of black-burnished ware belonging to Period II are embellished with rows of strokes of translucent white as it is so typical with painted black-and-red ware as unearthed from early levels. Among other pottery types mention may be made of a class of inverted helmet-shaped globular vases of black-and-red ware with abruptly extended rims after a fold at the neck which somehow resemble the essential forms of a class of pottery from Tell Halaf in Western Asia and a kind of silver vessels from Troy as belonging to 'The Treasures of Priam' though the analogy may only be superficial. Besides, there is another class of elegant conical basins of the same ware resembling flower-pots with a cluster of perforations at the bottom and signs of later drilling at the neck evidently meant for suspension for ritualistic or any other purposes. Occasionally, paintings in translucent white occur on the inner glossy black surface of black-and-red wares as those found on similar excavated pottery of the trial digging of 1962 and these uniformly comprise chevrons, dots, *sigmas*, hyphens, oblique strokes and other symbols recalling similar paintings on excavated black-and-red wares from Gilund and Ahar in Rajasthan. The channel-spouted bowls of black-and-red ware generally found in broken condition and bearing painted strokes in white have also profusely occurred in this level and they are comparable with the terracotta channel-spouted bowls of Navda-Toli and Maheswar in the basin of the Narmada as also a unique find of copper from Khurdi in Rajasthan besides those from Tepe Giyan in Iran, a lime-stone tray from Catal Huyuk in Asia Minor and the Early Minoan pottery with *beak, teapot-spouts* or *bridge-spouts* from Vasiliki in the island of Crete in the eastern Mediterranean world. While the channel-spouted tray from Catal Huyuk stratigraphically belongs to 7th-6th millennium B.C., the characteristic Minoan wares from Vasiliki are supposed to have been 'evidently modelled on similar copper and stone vases of the Egyptian Old kingdom Period' by Donald A. Mackenzie (*Myths of Crete & Pre-Hellenic Europe*, The Gresham Publishing Company, London, page-209). The origin of the Cretan *schnabelkannen*

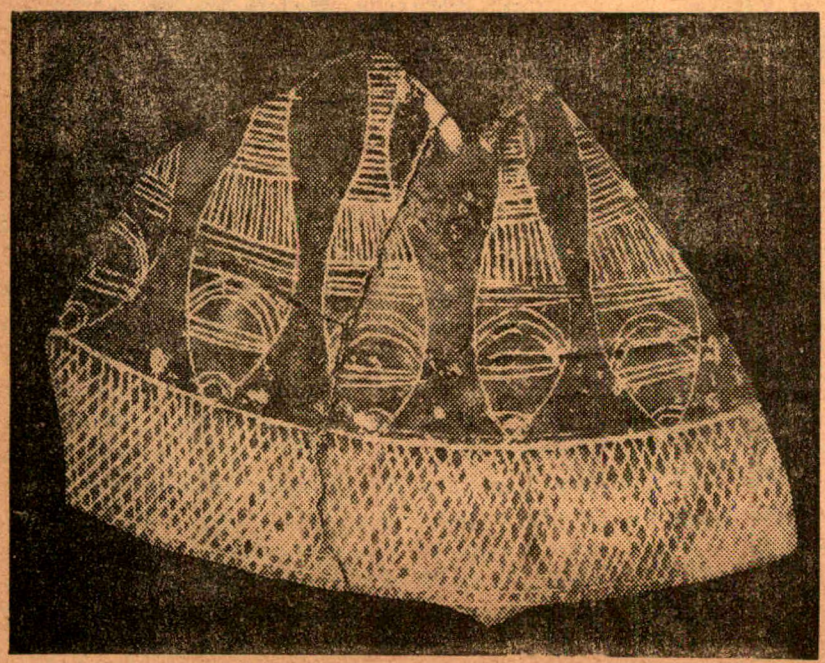
(vase form) has been attributed to "trading relations between the Cretans and the Nilotic peoples" (*Ibid*). As the splayed end of the *teapot-spouts* or *channel-spouts* appear to be similar (as studied from photograph) with those from Vasiliki, are we to suppose a similar relation between Bengal and Egypt in a period when this part of India was not dominated by Vedic Aryans a few thousand years ago? This may be answered by further diggings and explorations in the lateritic and hilly terrains of West Bengal and the neighbouring Chotanagpur plateau. It is true that the channel-spouts of Pandu Rajar Dhibi are more allied with Early Minoan types than with the Iranian or Central Indian forms which are straight instead of being splayed at the end.

ELEVENTH CENTURY B. C.

Apart from the various other excavated antiquities like beads of semi-precious stones including a leech-shaped one etched in white, bone arrow-heads and mutilated examples of what appear to be bowls-on-stand, the Period II has become more remarkable for a number of floors of houses made of beaten peletty laterite or *moorum* bearing signs of post-holes. These floors of reddish complexion reveal a systematic layout and occasionally they are superimposed upon each other. At one place at the highest crest of the mound a beautiful yellowish lane or a pavement was seen as separating such two houses at a depth of 13' 9" from surface. So the inhabitants of Period II lived in houses with walls of mud-plastered reeds as it is amply evidenced by lumps of clay bearing reed impressions. Such a lump of mud-plastering bearing reed-impressions was also unearthed from Period I. In one Trench on the northern slope of the mound a heap of burnt clay tiles or plastering, which appeared to be the debris of a fallen roof, was noticed in the level of Period II as lying on a floor of burnt earth immediately upon the uneven surface of whitish sandy silt of layer (6) probably deposited by flood waters in some unknown proto-historic phase. In Period II ascribed to 11th century B.C. by Radio-carbon examination the occupation at Pandu Rajar Dhibi might be thick and the supply of water was obviously good which might have left its mark on the greenish tint of some thin sandy layers of this level. Among the skeletal remains of animals which are now being examined by the Anthropological Survey of India mention may be made of partly fossilised small bone of supposedly a **Nilgai** unearthed from cemetery level besides antlers recalling that of a *Sambar* deer as excavated in the year 1962.

The material culture of Pandu Rajar Dhibi remained almost the same in Period III though the emergence of polished neolithic celts with pointed butts as also the occurrence of a few war-implements of iron like points and blades had been noticed. Apart from the recovery of various examples of beautiful painted pottery and vase-stand as those of the preceding age, the microliths included fluted cores occasionally associated with chalcolithic civilisation besides recalling similar ones from Sukkur and Rohri in Sind. This cultural phase which may be called as *chalcolithic-neolithic* in the language of V. D. Krishnaswamy (*Ancient India*, No. 16, 1960) is well-represented by microliths, copper objects comprising bangles, rings, eye-pencils and a fish-hook as also neolithic celts, painted black-and-red ware and red ware. Apart from floors of houses made of peletty laterite or *moorum* like those of preceding period there are traces of a deeply penetrating sullage pit and an extensive layer of ashes bearing witness of a serious conflagration that might have destroyed the glamour of proto-historic civilisation of Pandu Rajar Dhibi.

In one of the trenches at the peak of the artificial knoll such a floor with a post-hole and a debris of what appeared to be the roof of the house was found within this layer of ashes while the most spectacular was the finding of a white painted channel-spouted bowl of black-and-red ware which was seen as lying invertedly on this floor. This complete channel-spouted bowl with sagger base, graceful convex sides, slightly incurved rim with a groove and splayed edge of the spout is a magnificent example and offers a significant land-mark in the growth and development of proto-historic civilisation of the Ajay Valley in Bengal. While the interior of this channel-spouted bowl is symbolically embellished with seven vertical rows of whitish strokes recalling the early concept of the **vasudhara**, it may be noticed that the channel-spouts of Period II are more slender than those of Period III when these appear to be broader and have more noticeable splayed edge like fish-tail.



Fragment of a black-burnished ware incised with a row of fish.

That the area of the so-called citadel within the main mound was devastated by an extensive conflagration cannot be doubted and it is also to be considered whether the few iron tools of Period III bear evidence of influx of a new people. Is it possible that the conflagration of Period III was the result of an invasion preceded by trade of implements of iron ? Above the layer

(Continued on Page 188)

SCULPTURES of KORANGANATHA

By S. R. BALASUBRAHMANYAM

SRINIVASANALLUR is a village on the northern bank of the Kaveri, situated about thirty miles west of Tiruchirapalli and six miles from Musiri in the Madras State.

In this village, there are five temples which seem to have been in existence from the early Chola period; the most important of them all is the Koranganatha temple.

Alexander Rea visited this temple as early as 1908 and remarked that it is "an interesting temple of very early date and of unusual design in many of its principal features"; and he also carried out some extensive and urgently-needed repairs. At the same time, he lent weight to a wild popular belief that "worship was never performed in the temple owing to its having been defiled by a monkey (kurangu, in Tamil) after its consecration," and added that the temple had derived its name from this fact. This is a historical myth, and the credulous world of scholars and laymen have given currency to it. We have unimpeachable epigraphical evidence that this temple enjoyed the benefit of worship from various grants and endowments from the period of its foundation some time before A.D. 895 (24th year of Aditya I) to at least the 21st year of Kulottunga I (A.D. 1091), i.e., for a period of about two centuries. And the name 'Koranganatha' should be explained by a popular belief that the temple might have been consecrated or worshipped by one of the monkey-heroes of the Ramayana, Vali and Sugriva. We find in the Tamil land other temples which are so associated with these epic characters. Two of them are Valikandapuram in Tiruchirapalli District and the temple of Tiruk-kurangaduturai at Aduturai in Tanjore District, Madras State.

According to the oldest local inscription, the deity of this temple is called *Tiruk-kurakkattut-turai Perumanadigal*; and its location is described as the *Brahmadeya* village (village gifted to Vedic scholars) of *Mahendramangalam* which seems to be the ancient name of the modern village of Srinivasanallur. Mahendramangalam should have derived its name from that of the Pallava king Mahendravarman I of the early 7th century A.D., during whose reign Pallava rule had been established over the Kaveri basin. An inscription describing the achievements of the *father* of Mahendravarman I mentions that "he conquered the land of the Cholas, which has as its garland the daughter of Kavera (i.e., the river Kaveri) and as its waist-band (mekhala) the rice-fields, the rich fields of sugarcane, the groves of palm-trees and plantains." The Velurpalayam copper-plate grant of Pallava Nandivarman III corroborates this very conquest of the Chola country by Simhavishnu, son of Simhavarman. The description of the Chola country in this

grant follows the same lines as in the earlier grant, using almost the same terms. Even today, there is a hamlet of Srinivasanallur, called Mahendramangalam, which perpetuates its ancient name.

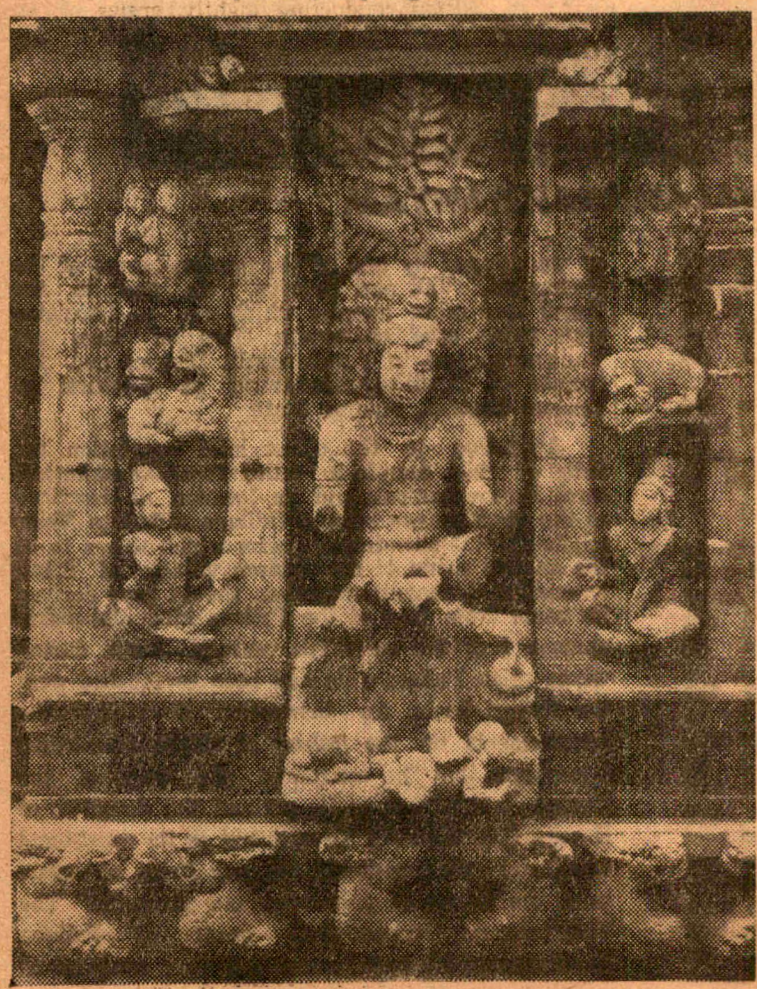
The main temple of old consisted of the garbhagriha (sanctum), the antarala (vestibule) and the ardha-mandapa (porch in front). All these three parts are really original and form an integral unit from the time of its foundation. It has two storeys (*talas*) surmounted by the *griva* (neck) and the *stupi* (the crowning element, square and curvilinear). This superstructure is a later construction during the time of its repairs and conservation. So these parts of the superstructure cannot be considered reliable for a study of the genuine architectural and decorative features characteristic of the Early Chola age, however, much they might have been modelled on the ancient originals. Surrounding the temple, there should have been, as in the case of other early Chola temples, eight subshrines for the *Parivara-devatas*. Neither the subshrines nor any sculptures thereof are extant.

EMPTY NICHES

The *garbhagriha* has projections and recesses. The three main *devakoshtas* (niches for the guardian-deities), which are found in the projections, are well-developed niches flanked by pilasters and surmounted by *makara-toranas*. The front two niches where *dvarapalas* (temple guardian-deities) are generally installed, and the two side-niches on the outer walls of the *Ardhamandapa* are now empty.

The western *devakoshta* on the back-wall of the sanctum is also empty. But the *makaratorana* over this niche encloses in the centre a sculpture of Narasimha. The northern *devakoshta* has a sculpture of Brahma, and the southern one of Dakshinamurti. The spreading tree, the *jata-bhara*, the graceful countenance, the silent teaching of the Lord more eloquent than words, the fine ornamentation, the delicately-finished Nandi, and the wriggling of the monster of Evil (*Muyalakan*) crushed under the foot of Siva, the decorative motifs, the embellishment of the pilasters, the *rishis* and the animals sculptured on the sides—all these make the figure of Dakshinamurti one of the finest creations of the Early Chola sculptors.

In between these main *devakoshtas*, there are other improvised niches, which are flanked by round pilasters and are adorned with sculptures whose natural charm in every limb and fine workmanship enrapture the visitor. Their naturalism, artistic perfection, and dignity are too deep for words. Similar sculptures adorn the outer walls of the *sanctum* of the Nagesvara temple at Kumbhakonam. Owing to the lack of data, it is a mere speculation if these male and female figures are portrait-sculptures of royal patrons, or of Apsaras, or other divine or semi-divine dignitaries. One of them is sometimes identified as *Chandesvara*, the Head Siva's followers.



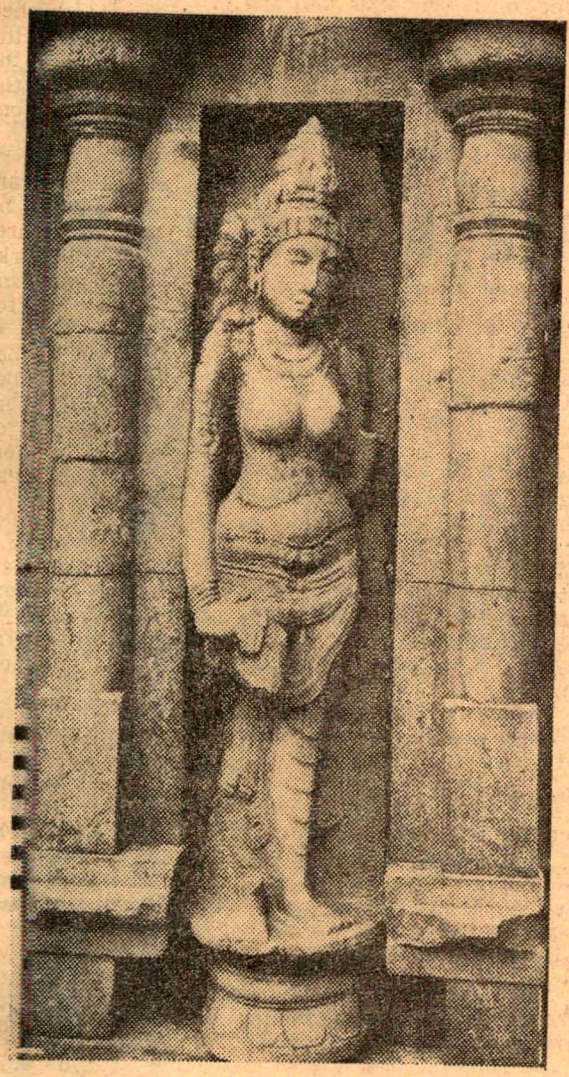
Dakshinamurti.

About the date of this temple there is a long-persistent historical error. Jouveau-Dubreuil wrote about it half a century ago as follows: "We know the style of the Chola art at the commencement of the 10th century from a study of the temple of Koranganatha at Srinivasanallur. It is extremely remarkable not only from its style, but also by the numerous inscriptions on its walls and the perfection of the sculptures with which it is ornamented. This represents the Dravidian style of the age of Parantaka (A.D. 907-949)." This view is based on an earlier wrong lead given by the Government Epigraphist that the earliest inscription on the walls of the temple was one of the 20th year of Parantaka I wherein his 19th year was quoted. And this initial error has vitiated the opinions of all later students of Chola Art, who also subscribe to this view that the temple is of the age of Parantaka I.

But the earliest inscription on the walls of this temple is one of the 24th year of a certain Rajakesarivarman. This is inscribed on the basement on the south side of the **ardha-mandapa**, which, as has been stated already, is an integral part of the original temple. Below this, there is an inscription of Parantaka I. From the archaic features of the script and its high regnal year (the 24th year), we can safely assign it to Aditya I (A.D. 871-907). Therefore, the temple must be considered as one built some time on or before the 24th year of Rajakesarivarman Aditya I (A.D. 895). The plates of Sundara Chola credit Aditya I with having built on both banks of the Kaveri tall stone-temples, from the Sahyadri mountains (the Western Ghats) to the sea, as monuments

of his success. And the Koranganatha temple at Srinivasanallur is one of those temples built in his days. We are not sure if he was its builder.

This earliest inscription of the days of Aditya I records a gift of land for burning a perpetual lamp. The donor is said to have invited the *Sabhai-variar* (village-administrative committee) and the *arika-bhattarar*, and proclaimed his intention to



A female figure in a niche.

make the gift to the temple, and he further agreed to pay the land-revenue due on the gifted land.

There is one other notable feature about this temple which deserves mention. As already stated, the earliest inscription of the temple mentions a body called *Arika-bhattarar (Ariya-bhattarar)* and a later one designates it *Chaturvedi-bhattap-peramakhal*. This body of Vedic scholars was in charge of the administration of the gifts and endowments made to the temple.

Such was the popular respect for learning, ability and character, during the heyday of Chola rule. And we have enough evidence to infer that this body of learned men fully justified the confidence and trust reposed in them; and we have on record that they, on the whole, rendered a good account of themselves and discharged their duties ably and well. We find similar local committees functioning in the Early Chola period in other centres like Allur Sembiyan Mahadevi and other villages.

The Koranganatha temple at Srinavasanallur is one of the finest of the Early Chola temples built during the reign of Aditya I, and the sculptures on its walls are of the most beautiful workmanship and among the best of those of the latter half of the 9th century A.D.

FANTASY IN ENGLISH FICTION

(Continued from Page 21)

Barlow takes the orthodox Christian view, that man cannot save himself—only God's love can save him —the love that hangs on the gibbet with the bleeding Christ.

The third and final writer of my trio presents a fundamentally comic rather than a tragic vision; but it is comedy with a dangerous cutting edge. Anthony Burgess worked in Malaya and Brunei and his early books have a Far Eastern background. But a major breakthrough was his savage farce *A Clockwork Orange* published last year. Set like Barlows *One Half of the World* in the "near future", this tour-de-force pictures a Socialist Britain infested with teenage thugs (Burgess develops leading tendencies of the Teddy Boy—Stilyagi cultus) conducting nightly orgies of rape, robbery and razor-slashing (making the gang-leader hero of *Brighton Rock* look like a sissy!) The book follows the adventures of one leader of a group of thugs who goes about his bouts of violence with the music of Beethoven on his lips and Russified English slang on his lips. The book gains a whole new comic dimension by Burgess's teenage argot compounded of Russian, Romany and Jazz. The serious point of the book is the attempted "conversion" of the juvenile thug hero by Pavlovian conditioned response technique. That freedom is necessary to the creation of a moral order and that evil must be a possibility contingent upon this freedom is of course the classic Christian argument. Burgess in his own comic way is as horrific a writer as Golding; but his vision of the modern European scene is like Barlow's—based on selective observation. He has caught and perhaps only slightly exaggerated the atmosphere of senseless violence and teenage tyranny which surrounds the urban jungles of Europe and the U.S.A. Burgess differs from both Golding and Barlow in his deliberate and zestful manipulation of language and his Joycean multilingualism.

All three writers are pre-occupied by the catastrophes that modern society faces. They evoke —but only to dismiss—the ghost of George Orwell and *1984*. They seem to me to be rooted in the Christian beliefs which Orwell abandoned. The co-existence of the novels of Golding, Barlow and Burgess with modern Science Fiction of a philosophical and even theological bent (Bradbury, Blish, etc.) is intriguing, but I have no time to explore it here. Equally significant is the gulf that stretches between their books and the work of the leftish "Angry Young Men.'

(NOTE: James Barlow's *The Patriots* and *Term of Trial* are published in Penguin Books; and all Golding's novels are available in cheap editions. As far as I know there are no cheap editions of Burgess as yet).

RELICS OF A COPPER AGE IN BENGAL

(Continued from Page 184)

of ashes iron occurs frequently along with completely news types of pottery belonging to early historic and later times when houses of kiln-burnt bricks were made flanking rubble pavements. On the basis of such revolutionary change between the material cultures of Period III and Period IV with its sub-phases it is obvious to conclude that there was a break of culture (suggested by Sri B. B. Lal, Director, Delhi School of Archaeology) and desertion of site after conflagration. The earlier antiquities which are sometimes found in post-conflagration level may be attributed of pits and it is difficult to ascertain whether they sometimes represent a kind of survival. In one of such pits of Period IV was found a round stone seal bearing in relief a mysterious design of hatched triangles, a wavy line and a curious centepede-like figure. Among other excavated antiquities from this level various examples of stamped and incised pottery as also several terracotta animal figures seemingly belonging to early historic period and a few sprinklers may reveal that the site was largely re-occupied in post-Mauryyan times. Whereas a class of terracotta beak-headed mother-goddesses with pin-hole decorations and one having accentuated breasts from this level seem to have an early tradition, the lower part of a terracotta fertility goddess with splayed hips encircled by a symbolic girdle represented by pin-holes as found in the layer of ashes upon a floor of Period III may recall the artistic trends of pre-Mauryyan times. A careful study of all these relics originally revealed that the chalcolithic habitation at Pandu Rajar Dhibi which might have begun in the latter half of the 2nd millennium B.C. continued to flourish in spite of recognisable change down to the beginning of 1st millennium B.C. Recently, a Radio-Carbon analysis of excavated charcoal sample from the cemetery level of Period II of Pandu Rajar Dhibi as conducted by Dr. Shyamadas Chatterjee, Head of the Department of Physics, Jadavpur University, Calcutta has fully confirmed the expectation by dating the chalcolithic phase to B.C. 1012 $\pm$ 120. It is obvious that Period I belonged to earlier times. Here Period IV may again be divided into two phases. Phase 'A' represents a layer of early historic times after bearing prominent signs of intrusion of much later periods as revealed by a scattered distribution of a class of red ware, plain vases and conical cups among others which may be conveniently put under Phase 'B'. Among the important findings of Phase 'A' of Period IV may be mentioned a fragment of a vase of black ware incised with a row of fish on frieze above a hatched band vaguely comparable with motifs of Post-Harappan incised pottery of Bara and Salaura in East Punjab and a retouched neolithic celt evidently showing signs of long use.

The excavations at Pandu Rajar Dhibi have revealed the existence of a Copper Age civilisation in eastern India which had once a close relation with the chalcolithic civilisation of Central India and Rajasthan as illuminated by a comparison of cultural assemblages of these regions. While the eminent experts of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research in Bombay have opined that the culture of Pandu Rajar Dhibi developed as a diffusion from Central India wherefrom the culture also diffused to western India there are various points yet unsolved. This eastern Indian chalcolithic civilisation which was mainly confined to the basin of the Ajay in West Bengal so far revealed by systematic explorations as undertaken by the Directorate of Archaeology of the State may suggest a proto-historic route connecting the ancient Chotanagpur plateau and the flood-plains of the Bhagirathi near Katwa where the Ajay mingles up with the river. These chalcolithic sites in the valleys of the Ajay, Kunoor and the Kopai belong to Burdwan and Birbhum districts. The eight sites discovered are Jashpur, Mandira and Surath Rajar Dhibi in Birbhum district, and Basantapur, Rajar Danga, Goswami Khanda and Ganga Danga in Burdwan district besides Pandu Rajar Dhibi. This discovery of chalcolithic mounds and the sequence of Pandu Rajar Dhibi have fascinatingly brought Bengal in the map of Copper and Bronze Age civilisations of Asia by suggesting occasional relation with lands beyond inaccessible terrains and the Sea both towards the west and the east in the forgotten epochs of proto-historic times.

THE HOLY LAKE

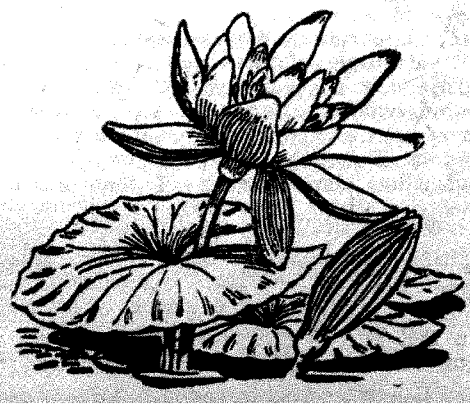
(Continued from Page 165)

hour while it took more than 3 hours to ascend.

It was 2 P.M. when we reached Ghangrya. Nanda Singh said that we could, if we liked, go down to Govindghat that very day as there was ample time. We, therefore, collected our gear and drinking some tea, started for Bhyunder. It was raining in Hemkund area and we thought us to be lucky enough to get a fair weather so necessary in the high mountains. We went on descending till we reached Bhyunder in the afternoon. There we had to part company with Nanda Singh only to remember him for the rest of our lives. We were entertained by his uncle Narayan Singh, the village-chief, in his house and after taking leave from him we started again on the steeply descending path of the gorge.

We crossed Pulna in the evening. With the night darkness was closing in to cover us up in the gorge and as we were afraid of being benighted in this No-Man's land, we were trying as if to rush down to safety and comfort in Govindaghat. But night overtook us before we were face to face to tackle our last problem, the bridge of Govindaghat! People had already collected on the far side of the bridge to extend their moral support. We crossed the bridge in complete darkness, we did not know how. Probably the gods of Lokepal were kind to us!

The next day we were on our way to Badrinath with sweet memories of Hemkund and the Valley of Flowers and last, but not the least, the blessings and good-wishes of the Gurdwara. Thus ended our colourful journey to a holy lake and a heavenly garden.



POWER OF 20 MILLION HORSES IN HARNESS

By TARUN CHATTERJEE

PICTURE an endless array of horses standing close to each other covering the whole length of the Equator one and a half times. How many horses are required for this? The answer is 20 million. The rockets which place some of the recent spaceships in the orbit command the power of 20 million horses each, which is equivalent to 15000 million Kilogram-metres of Kinetic energy capable of melting and evaporating steel ingot as heavy as a spaceship.

The wheel is said to be one of man's greatest inventions. That is quite true. The wheel was no doubt a product of brilliant imagination. One can imagine how much more daring and conjecture were necessary to overcome the force of gravitation which was the key to Gagarin's earning the title "Columbus of space" and which will some day take the "Gagarin of the Universe" beyond the bounds of the solar system.

Who could have thought, say 100 years ago, that man will ever be able to overcome the force of gravity? Addressing the British Association in 1838 the eminent scientist Dr. Lardner said, "Men might as well project a voyage to the Moon as attempt to employ steam navigation across the stormy North Atlantic." But why go so far back? Let us look back as late as 1934 in Britain, one of the most scientifically advanced countries. At that time when the father of Soviet rocketry Konstantine Tsiolkovsky was engaged in astronautical research in Moscow even the idea of jet propulsion was regarded as eccentric by the British official circles. So when an Interplanetary Society was founded in England by P. E. Cleator, the gentleman received a letter from the Under Secretary of State which said:—

"We follow with interest any work done in other countries on jet propulsion but . . . the possibilities have given no indication that this method can be a serious competitor to the air-screw engine combination. We do not consider that we should be justified in spending any time or money on it."

Such short-sighted views received a rude blow from Hitler's V missiles and the Russian flame thrower "Katyushas". Not that the conservatives have overnight become far-sighted but they are compelled to change their views because technological advance has started to turn fictions into facts.

FROM FICTION TO REALITY

The first moon voyage "story" was written in the second century A.D. by the Greek satirist Lucian. But the first serious scheme was put forward in 1865 by Jules Verne in the form of a space gun for shooting man into space at a speed of 7 miles per second which is actually the earth's escape velocity.

In Czarist Russia in the year 1881 a young revolutionary named Kibalchich, when he was awaiting the Czar's gallows in prison, drew some diagrams of a space rocket which were later found from the police archives in 1917, long after his judicial murder. It ultimately fell on Tsiolkovsky to give concrete shape to the idea of space rocket. Side by side with him Robert Goddard, an U.S. scientist, Herman Oberth, a Rumanian professor, Johannes Winkler and Werner Von Braun the two German scientists were working on the same problem. The last mentioned scientist was the creater of V2 rockets which were some sort of space vehicles measuring 40 feet and weighing 40 tons.

The first space rocket which opened the first page of the history of man's conquest of space, shot sputnik No. 1 into an orbit around the earth. Success followed success, record followed record. A space ship invaded the realm of the Moon, another became the 10th planet of the sun, yet another photographed the reverse side of the moon, one left for destination Venus, another for Mars. Meanwhile man himself has made rendezvous in space repeatedly and he is now on the threshold of a journey to the Moon. In all these breathtaking achievements, the booster rockets have been playing a signal role. It will be frightfully interesting to peep inside them in order to have some idea of their power and propelling system.

Our familiar flying machines as well as jet propelled planes are useless in airless space because while the former has to grip the atmosphere with air screw and use its wings for the lift, the latter has to draw oxygen from outside. So in airless space a flying machine must be fundamentally different from piston or jet planes. Such machines are rockets whose acting principles were discovered as early as the 13th century.

SELECTION OF FUEL

Rockets are reaction-propelled means of locomotion in which in the words of Tsiolkovsky "one matter is ejected rightwards, while the projectile moves leftwards by virtue of recoil. Explosives or fuels, by combining with the reserve oxygen compound produce jet velocity. When the explosion occurs part of its energy is imparted to the apparatus while the other part is expended in the gas jet."

The reaction principle was scientifically formulated by Newton in the 17th century. At the end of the 19th century the Russian scientist Nikolai Zhukovsky scientifically formulated the Force of Reac-

tion of an outflowing and inflowing liquid which is used today, all over the world.

Tsiolkovsky's rocket astronautics was born in 1903 in the form of an article titled, "Exploration of space with Reaction instruments." His subsequent article, "The Rocket in cosmic space" envisaged a motor which can combine all contradictory requirements of a liquid fuel space rocket.

The liquid fuel of a rocket usually consists of two different fluids one of which is known as the 'combustible' while the other is the 'oxidiser'. Tsiolkovsky called the former "a 'hydrocarbon' which could be gasolene, kerosene, alcohol or aniline. Strong nitric acid, hydrogen peroxide etc. can serve as oxidiser." Such rockets can develop half a million horse power.

But there is a serious drawback of the liquid fuel rockets. Their engines are too greedy for oil. That is why such rockets are bound to be too heavy with fuel load. Say, in order to attain a height of 40 kilometres such a rocket will require 9 tons of fuel.

Again it was Tsiolkovsky who pointed to the way out of this difficulty. He suggested a 'rocket train' with several autonomous compartments each of which will impart a thrust by turn from behind the train. Each will automatically detatch itself from the train after its fuel is consumed. In our days this 'rocket train' is known as multi-stage rocket.

Inasmuch as the usual chemical fuels do not contain sufficient energy to ensure the velocity necessary for cosmic flights, selection of the proper fuel is of signal importance for success of space flights.

For a space rocket to be placed in a 300 kilometres high orbit, each kilogram of its weight must receive an energy of over 3 million kilogram-metres. In taking off from the launching pad the thrust of the manned rocket engine must exceed the weight of the ship i.e., it would have an environment free from gravitation. An increase in the acceleration of the rocket makes it possible to reduce the amount of fuel spent to break away from the earth's gravitational field. This is very important because the scarcity of space in a rocket makes it imperative to reduce the amount of the propellant. For an exhaust speed of the gases of 4000 metres per second and an acceleration 10% above that of a freely falling body the fuel to rocket ratio will be 378 : 1. So acceleration load of a manned space ship must be very high and the cosmonaut must be sturdy enough to stand the strain and stress.

FUTURE PROSPECTS

The performance of a rocket engine as a heat engine depends on the ratio of the chemical energy of the burnt fuel to the kinetic energy of the exhaust gases. When the rocket flies at a speed equal to that of the exhaust gases, all the kinetic energy produced goes to propel the rocket. But if there is a difference between the two speeds some kinetic energy will be wasted. In fact the total efficiency of a rocket engine at the beginning of the flight is rather low which is only one-tenth to one-fifteenth of the efficiency of the steam engine. At that time shooting up at a speed of 20 metres per second it develops only 50 horse power per kilogram of fuel. But when it flies up at 10 kilometres per second it will develop 30,000 h.p. per kilogram of fuel per second, thus increasing the efficiency by 350%.

F. Tsander, the first Soviet engineer and follower of Tsiolkovsky's ideas whose designs of an interplanetary space ship was submitted to Lenin as early as 1920, advanced the idea of using certain metals including some metal parts of the ship itself, as combustibles. This idea has now been thoroughly studied.

Other prospective fuels too are being investigated. Particular mention should be made of electrically neutral molecular particles of hydrogen, hydroxylic and methyl groups which are known as "free radicals". When excited, they develop a store of energy considerably exceeding that which is characteristic for the state of equilibrium of the given molecule. One kilogram of a free radical can produce upto 55,000 calories of energy. In place of 230 — 270 kg. per sec/kg thrust of the present rockets the free radicals can produce a thrust amounting to 600 kg. per sec/kg and more.

Free radicals can be obtained by imparting to the molecules such great energy as would make them decompose in the form of heat energy, electric discharge, ultra violet and cosmic rays etc. It is necessary then to stabilise the radicals thus obtained by cooling the radicals down to a very low temperature.

It is interesting to note that in the upper layers of the atmosphere, at an altitude of 100 kilometres, the molecules can turn into free radicals under the effect of sun rays. They can be harnessed for propelling rockets then and there by making them stream into the engine. When this technique will be possible, space rockets will not require much special fuel. Reaching a distance of 100 kilometres above the earth they will use the limitless energy from the surrounding space.

The most bright prospect for future cosmic rockets is offered by atomic energy which is millions of times more powerful than chemical energy. it requires only 20 kilograms of uranium or plutonium for a space vehicle weighing 1000 tons to go to the Moon and come back. But before creating an atom-propelled rocket there are many serious technical difficulties to be overcome.

The whole world acclaims the series of victories of Soviet rockets and space ships in the battle to conquer space. The cosmic journeys of cosmonauts from Gagarin to Tereshkova have become a symbol of the Soviet State whose remarkable history has travelled at a breathtaking speed from the wooden plough to the apogee of space orbits within a span of four decades only. We in India have not heard the roar of the fabulous 20 million h.p. rocket motors but my mind can hear it in unison with the gunfire salvo of the battle cruiser 'Aurora' heralding the October Revolution, in unison with the din and bustle of the 5-year plans, the reverberations of the anti-Fascist 'Katyusha' guards mortars and the rhythmic pulsations of the 20-year plan efforts of the Soviet people. I am absolutely sure that it will be the Soviet space vehicles driven by the power of the atom and photon and travelling with the speed of light, which will test Einstein's Theory of Relativity which says that Time will decelerate itself on such a rocket. And the cosmic explorers on such rockets will thus gain a longer lease of life.

OUR UNIVERSITIES

(Continued from Page 22)

process of lowering the standards is to insist upon removal of anomalies of the types noted above. The U.G.C. is the only Central agency which has the moral authority to initiate reforms in this direction. Left to themselves, the Universities are not likely to move towards the right track; pulls and pressures are persistent and strong.

UNIVERSITY ORGANIZATION

The most striking feature of University organization in this country is the predominance of non-teachers. We have forgotten the simple fact that a University is a society of teachers and students assembled together for a common purpose, *viz.* pursuit of knowledge. We have converted Universities into convenient pastures for non-academic men seeking power and employment.

In practically every University the highest officer is the Governor of the State whom the University Act calls the Chancellor. A Governor may be the Chancellor of half a dozen Universities. In this respect we are loyally following the British precedent. Chancellorship is a compulsory duty imposed on every Governor without reference to his capacity, interest and inclination. But the Chancellor is by no means a figurehead for ceremonial purposes. He has many and varied powers, *e.g.*, nomination of persons to different University bodies, approval of University statutes, etc. These powers are exercised by him on the advice of the State Government. The name of the Chancellor is used as a convenient camouflage by the State Government for interference in University affairs.

The most important power vested in the Chancellor is the appointment of Vice-Chancellor. In most cases his choice, *i.e.*, the choice of the State Government on whose advice he is bound to act, is confined to a panel of three persons nominated by a University body like the Senate or the Syndicate. But this nomination is usually nothing but a curious legal fiction. The initiative is usurped by the State Government; it selects a person and gets his name included in the panel through the votes or the influence of those members of the nominating body who accept its whip. The other two names in the panel are 'dummies', for the Chancellor cannot consider their claims because the State Government has already made its choice.

It is not surprising that this system should bring in Vice-Chancellors who are not educationists in any sense of the term. Judges, bureaucrats, politicians hold the *de facto* headships of most of Indian Universities. Some of them are able and successful men, respected in their own spheres of life; but they are obvious misfits in the field of education where they are inexperienced intruders and nothing more.

The U.G.C. pleaded more than once for appointment of teachers as Vice-Chancellors. Neither the Central Government nor the State Governments took that plea seriously. The committee appointed by the Union Ministry of Education for framing a model constitution for the Universities is reported to be strongly in favour of excluding non-academic persons from controlling positions. But no recommendation to that effect is likely to be acceptable in political circles. Vice-Chancellorship is a prize post, both in salary and in status, and we can hardly expect that teachers will be given a monopoly in preference to non-teachers with closer contact with V.I.P.s.

The greatest Vice-Chancellor in the history of Indian Universities, Sri Asutosh Mookerjee, was not a teacher. But men of genius and towering personality are above all rules. Moreover, he became Vice-Chancellor after long and intimate association with University affairs. To-day we find Vice-Chancellors coming directly from High Courts, Secretariats and Public Service Commissions without any previous contact with Universities or educational matters. Such transfers require no preparation or training.

Look at the effect of this system on the psychology of the teaching profession. A young man entering a particular profession knows that he can rise to the top in that profession by dint of merit; he has to compete with members of the same profession and not with outsiders. But a teacher knows that the highest prize in the educational field is practically beyond his reach. Men from other fields will rush in as competitors, and they will have a decided preference. Teachers who have devoted their lives to teaching and research and studied educational problems through daily contact with them must comply with policies framed, and decisions made by Vice-Chancellors who are new-comers and do not know the job. Can they be blamed if they lose interest in their work and succumb to the routine of obedience?

This is one of the reasons which keep away promising youngmen from employment in the educational field. A bright M.A. or M.Sc. can join the I.A.S. with the hope that in 15 years' time he will control education as Education Secretary, and he can reasonably expect a Vice-Chancellorship on retirements. If he joins a University as a Lecturer he can normally hope to retire as a Reader; a Professorship he can hardly venture to hope for, and a Vice-Chancellorship is totally beyond his reach. Why should any really capable and ambitious young man prefer the long and dreary course which the teaching profession stands for?

Apart from their practical monopoly of the post of Vice-Chancellor, non-academic men usually occupy a prominent—and sometimes dominant—place in the executive bodies of our Universities. In an old University, for instance, the Act lays down that 8 members of the highest executive body consisting of 23 members (including the Vice-Chancellor), *i.e.* more than 33 p.c. of the total number, *must be* non-teachers. Apart from this statutory minimum, non-teachers come through different channels, and they may secure even 50 p.c. or more of the total membership. With a non-teacher Vice-Chancellor at the top and with 50 p.c. of the total membership secured by non-teachers the executive body becomes a predominantly non-academic body.

This non-academic body does not deal with administrative matters only; its jurisdiction embraces a large academic field. It prescribes the qualifications of University and College teachers. It appoints University teachers of all ranks. It frames rules relating to studies in Colleges, University examinations, etc. It finalises the results of University examinations. It decides whether Doctorate degrees are to be conferred in particular cases. In most cases it acts on the basis of expert advice, but it has the final authority to accept or to reject advice.

It is not easy for non-academic men to make right decisions in purely academic matters. The difficulty becomes greater when they are new-comers. The introduction of large scale elections as a popular method of constituting University bodies has made it possible for men without any contact with University affairs to enter straighway into the highest University bodies. No period of apprenticeship is

(Continued on next page)

SOCIETY OF THE FUTURE

(Continued from Page 18)

drawing on the bank of the accumulated life-sense of a race which now presents almost a blank bank balance.

INTERNATIONALISM

Internationalism is also one of the forces which have helped in the liquidation of a compact and organised life of the community. It is still an idea rather in the air, an uncertain but potent inspiration waiting for its embodiment in a definite form. Internationalism has found its most concrete expression in the Communist programme of a rule of the proletariat, a world brotherhood of workers banded to capture political power by eliminating capitalism. As a counterblast to this challenge of the have-nots, the great nations of the world have brought into being the U.N.O. and its ancillary bodies. But its main effort hitherto has been towards the prevention of outbreaks rather than the construction of a new sense of world-solidarity. No doubt there is much more contact to-day among nationals of different countries and considerable advance in the way of mutual understanding. An Englishman may now feel at home in Vienna, or an Indian in Paris without bothering about any other kind of society than that in which they are directly interested. Intellectuals and artists of all countries seem to have developed a cosmopolitan outlook without penetrating into the secrets of the national temperament and the significant, shaping influence of social manner. Each one is after garnering experience on his own without storing it up in a common granary. In the literature of the more advanced countries of the world, local colouring seems to have faded almost to the point of obliteration. The more backward, obscure areas of American life provide a touch of local colouring, an intimacy of local customs in some recent American fiction. The China painted in the novels of Pearl Buck is already a thing of the past and the naked truth about its present self only provokes violent revulsions of feeling.

GOOD TO DREAM

The extended horizons of international life make it unnecessary to relate it to a definite social background. It is still a matter of speculation and experiment, not one of intimate grasp and realisation. It is an abstraction which can hardly be steeped in the strong colours of personal feeling. A society which is co-extensive with the whole earth is but a nether version of the blue immensity of the sky overhead. It is good to dream about, not so good to live in. Man without society is without a steadying and stabilising influence, a conditioning reality, and his flesh and blood seems somehow lacking in the requisite stuff. He may indeed outgrow society as he may one day outsoar the force of gravitation. But the question is: will he be the same man as we know him to-day?

The society of the future is yet to be built-up. It must grow round other centres and be planned after more generous proportions. The international vision, with its far-flung thoughts and feelings, its more spacious needs of body and soul, must revolve round a much wider axis and take a fixed shape and motion much transcending the narrow limits of our present gyrations. It must receive some kind of social embodiment which may be securely grasped and confidently handled with a knowledge of the laws of its working. We must build a temple high enough to contain the deity we propose to put into it. The new god of internationalism should not be left without its appropriate habitation and shrine.

OUR UNIVERSITIES

(Continued from previous page)

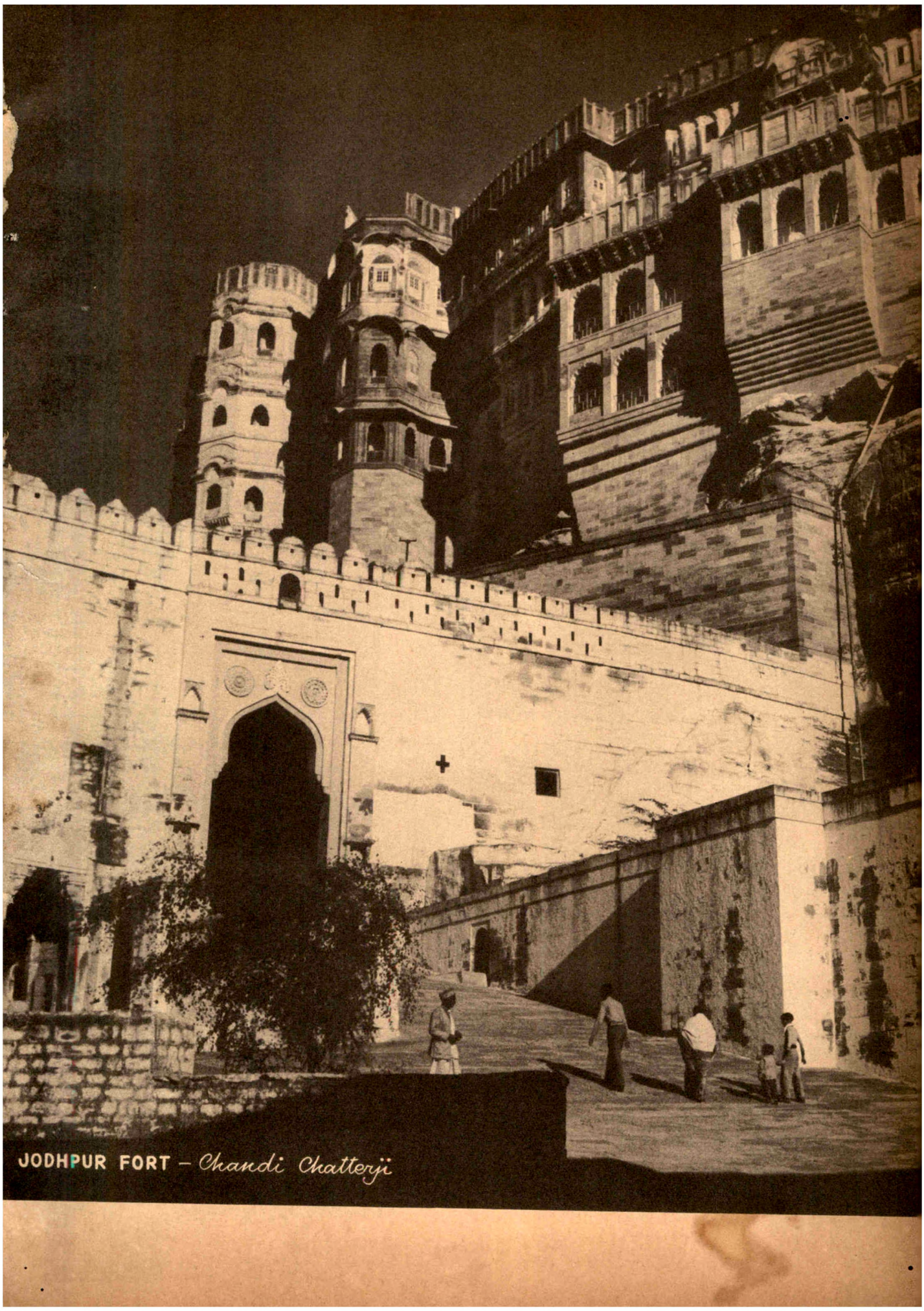
necessary; a non-teacher can directly become a member of the University High Command if he can manage an election. He adds little weight to the deliberations of University bodies, but his ignorance or prejudice may vitally affect their decisions.

UNIVERSITIES AND COLLEGES

Efficient post-graduate teaching requires efficient teaching at the undergraduate stage. In order to ensure that the undergraduate Colleges function properly and produce graduates with proper equipment for post-graduate studies it is necessary that the University should exercise continuous control over them. No college should be granted affiliation unless it can prove to the satisfaction of the University that it has adequate financial resources to maintain itself on an efficient level. And after affiliation is granted the University should keep a strict watch on the College so that nothing likely to impair its efficiency can take place.

Some Indian Universities have laid down fairly strict conditions of affiliation. Colleges within their jurisdiction have a fair start in respect of financial resources, buildings, libraries and laboratories, teaching personnel, etc. Other Universities are more tolerant; they are satisfied with a bare minimum. But their readiness to affiliate inadequately equipped Colleges is doing a serious damage to the cause of education. It is one of the factors directly responsible for the deterioration of educational standards.

The problem of post-affiliation control has two aspects. First, some Universities have extremely limited statutory power in this regard. A College may ignore or even defy the orders of the University seeking to correct abuses or to improve efficiency. The University can, of course, disaffiliate such a College, but in practice disaffiliation raises complicated issues. Secondly, the University may be prevented by its own inner tension from taking a strong line towards a below-standard College. Sometimes some of the non-teachers in the Universities have political or personal interests in defending such a College. Sometimes a lenient view is taken under a false impulse of generosity. Sometimes, again, there is the usual reluctance to face a troublesome situation, and the magic word "tact" comes into play. To save friends or to save one's own sleep becomes more important than saving education.



JODHPUR FORT – *Chandi Chatterji*

GOOD TO BE OLD
– Sankar Ghose

CHINESE AGGRESSION AND A PAIR OF BANGLES

By TARASANKAR BANDOPADHYAY

THERE would have been no necessity to set down this story if like the ladies present at the meeting on that day, Jagatdhatri did seek to donate her bangles or some of her other gold trinkets.

In a big village in the district of Birbhum, a meeting was held to protest against the Chinese aggression of India. It was a mammoth gathering and the largeness of its size exceeded all idea of plentiful amplitude. Everybody would have averred that there was nothing to be wondered at that spectacular sight. The country as a whole extending from the shores of the ocean up to the foothills of the Himalayas was awakened by that onslaught in cruel anger and frustration. Frustration was the major feeling in that the cause of the attack was beyond human comprehension. Just ponder, even the other day, the shouts and slogans of "Hindi-Chini Bhai Bhai" swept the country like a storm and agitated the air to the sky. The rainy season was marked by scanty rainfall, the winter lost its rigour and the summer its heat but no ebb-tide set in the flow and flux of those shoutings. Every city resounded with the cries of that slogan. Their echoes reverberated far beyond the villages to the hats and marketplaces, to the fields and the plains. It was all along trumpeted that our relations with China were friendly and brotherly—were thousands-of-years old. In the new epoch that friendship was reputed to have attained such a stability that any deterioration or loss thereof was an impossibility. On top of it, a Communist doctor was returned to the Assembly in the last two successive elections from that local constituency. Once in every month, the doctor would lead a "red" procession with red flags and would hold a meeting. The audience would be wrathful when the story of the sufferings of the people was delineated and in the same measure they would grow hilarious when the story about China was unfolded before them. China was lauded up as a paradise. There were no good souls anywhere like the Chinese. Their leaders were visible gods. They bore inexhaustible love for Bharat and for the people of Bharat. Many great men had lectured about China after their return therefrom. The people had read those lectures in the newspapers and they had heard them. Many writers had written big books.

That China of people's imagination had launched an attack on India. Are the Chinese traitors? The mortification following the betrayal of confidence is more deadly than anger.

That village, already a big one, had now developed almost to the dimension of a town. The Communist Party had even a "cell" there. Some of their experienced field-workers had come there from outside. Ten local youngsters from the group of the unemployed along with six others from the group of the half-employed had joined them—this complement of 16 people being like the sixteen phases of the full-moon—to keep up the full moon of their propaganda all through the twelve months of the year. One of them was locally known as Lal Chand, the "Red Moon"—a non-descript technician having the surname of Chakravorty. At the start of the Chinese skirmish, he attempted to convince the people that it was all bosh. China had not made an attack on India. China, the leader of the peace movement could not do it. China can never do it. Incited by America, India had grabbed a large chunk of Chinese territory and India was repeatedly requested to vacate it. As she failed to give it up, the Chinese had driven out the Indians. This was all that had happened. They must do it as the tract was a part of their territory.

But that presentation failed and was totally disbelieved. China must quit, China must go away. Look here, we have got another neighbour. Thrice in a month they would make inroads into India, carry away the cattle, cut away the paddy, kidnap the people. Sometimes the depredations are accompanied with looting and forcible occupation of land. Are we to believe that the country which in the face of these acts of violence does not show any bellicose tendency but sends protests only has usurped the Chinese territory? You are only circulating a canard. The other day in such a small

gathering in the neighbouring village, a youngster appeared before him from nowhere with rolled sleeves and hard look. "Red Moon" was asked to stop. He made a turn to move out. But the people would not let him off. He had to eat the humble pie and was at last set free. But this incident was merely superficial like the foam of the tide. The intrinsic thing to be looked at was the cruel censure in the mind and the heart of the people against the treacherous act and the hard anger out of the sense of extreme mortification caused by the inflicted wound. My wonder knew no bounds at this spectacular sight. I knew my people. This was my village—my birth-place. I worked with all these villagers from 1921 to 1930. All my writings were centred on the new shape they had taken in that community of people who were once so quiet, docile and indifferent.

I wistfully looked forward to witnessing this kind of transfiguration. This was the reason that drove me to my village. I had been to Delhi, I had been to Calcutta. I had read reports from all places in India. As soon as I came back to Calcutta from Delhi, I hurried to my village solely to see it. I wanted to see what was going on in our village. As I reached it I was told that a meeting was going to be held on that very day where the District Magistrate, many officials and political leaders would come to join. It would be a protest meeting. At the end, donations would be accepted for the Defence Fund. I rushed to the meeting uninvited. I was bewildered at what I saw. What a vast concourse of people! Their facial expressions overwhelmed me. Men and women, boys and the aged, the rich and the poor, the Hindus and Muslims, had thronged there in waves.

I was cordially received by the official body and was asked to deliver a speech. I agreed. It was my village. It served as my training ground from 1921 to 1930. I had gone there to see my village, my mother, in her new lineaments. Why should I not make a speech?

I was the last speaker. I dilated upon my pet thought. I told the audience that I was in their midst on that day to see my birth-place, my village Nabagram, in her new shape of a marvellous transfiguration. Every country in the process of the suns undergoes transfiguration in every age. This is specially true of India. In the depth of her earthy body is seated in contemplation the conscious self of Mother India. The conscious self is the glorious fountainhead of all powers. She comes out of her muddy vesture and stands before us and awakens us. She commands us "Awake, arise. Drive out the evil. Give up your life for justice. Be immortal. Lay down your life before my feet, give up everything and receive the sacrament of nectar out of the pitcher of nectar in my hand. Once at such a posture of national crisis, the Mother said in Chitore—'I am hungry'. In the crisis of the Chinese aggression today, Mother has arisen in the same way and is proclaiming—'I am awakened. Bring forth your worship'. Those who have eyes to see have seen her glorious revelation. Those who have ears to hear have heard her call. The other day our Prime Minister made a speech in the Lok Sabha and said, "Before my eyes, a strange scene is unfolding. The veil that covered our mother's face is being lifted away. The Mother is awaking from the very depth in her Divine Form. I have seen her image. There is fire in her forehead, there is fire in her eyes. In her hands, she holds blessings and boons, arms and weapons. She is repeating, "Bring forth your articles of worship, bring forth your wealth, your honour, your life. Worship me." The grand worship has commenced throughout India. I have seen it in Delhi! What a grand worship! The rich are pouring forth their wealth, the beggars are giving away their mite, the jawans are sacrificing their lives, people are donating their blood, the women are offering their service, donating their ornaments. This is not the end of the story. I have seen a strange worship by a glorious lady. She is the Sarwati Debi of the Punjab. She has come to the pandal of worship with her son aged 16 years who held a telegraphic message in his hand. Her husband was an army man. The War Department has informed her that her husband was missing. It bore a cruel report. She did not break down under the impact of the sad news. Neither did she weep. She led her son to the pandal and said 'Mother, accept the offering, this young son of mine will fill up the vacancy caused by his father and will worship you.' One old Rajput came with three grandsons to offer them for the worship. One blind Sannyasin walked all the way from Benares to Delhi with a blanket which was his sole possession. 'Accept this, Mother, as my humble offering.' Mother India has stood today in the midst of our village mother Nabagram. Once she came in 1921 and then in 1930 when I called you all here. You gave away your offerings. Unfortunately I was not here in 1942. She again stood here in 1947. Today she has come again and is standing in our midst saying 'Bring forth your worship. Bow down your head. Bande Mataram'. Closely following that shout, 'Bande Mataram,' it seemed as if a sea roared back 'Bande Mataram'.

There was no need to remind the audience of the articles of worship. There was fire in the sacrificial ground, there was fuel too. At a moment's notice it blazed forth at the breath of my emotion. But I did not employ my words in a tricky way. It was my village, my birthplace. I do not belong to

'Red Moon' was asked to stop

that group of thinkers who would hold that the feeling of love and devotion for the soil of one's birth-place is a spacious sentiment and that there is no glory in that kind of feeling. Be that as it may, the people were pressing towards the dais. I noticed as I was speaking that some were eager to raise their hands, the men were putting their hands in their pocket, some held money in firm grip. The youngsters were busy with their rings. One was sitting so long with the fountain pen lifted from the pocket. The ladies were sitting on the left side. The western side was in front of them. The afternoon glow of the winter sun was falling on their faces. They were weeping since the time I told them about Sarwati Debi. They were handling their bangles, ear-drops, necklaces and rings. In the front row a lady was sitting motionless, a stranger to me. She had a steadfast look and was quite unmindful, not even wiping out the tears rolling down her eyes on the skirt on her lap.

As I finished my speech, I sat down. The donated articles were being placed on the table in my front in quick succession. The organisers pleaded that the articles be placed one by one, so that they might write out the names of the donors. But who would listen? A regular scramble ensued for placing the articles. I thought on the women donors. They would give away in plenty by taking off their ornaments. Their donations would be more valuable. But they could not make way as the crowds were pressing. I came forward with one assistant to write the names. I spread out the corner of my wrapper—"Please Donate."

At the start, the wife of our Nitya Babu took off her pair of bangles and donated them. I murmured, "Good". The second lady was just taking off her ear-drops. She was a nubile girl. The third one was a daughter of a poor man in our village. She was ready with her ring. Next to her was that stranger lady. She was still sitting motionless absorbed in herself. Her tears were still sparkling in her eyes and they were not wiped out. Perhaps she was a newcomer, not known to me. Perhaps the wife of some officer or a school mistress or the daughter-in-law of a well-to-do family, not at all a maid of the village. Her eyes and face bore marks of city-culture. Her hands were full of golden bangles. There were many blemishes in her face but still there was a pervasive beauty in the countenance. She was not quite young. As I was thinking about I almost came before her and she seemed now to be self-conscious. She wiped out her tears and said with a smile "Your speech was very good. I could not check my tears."

I said — "Your donation please".

— "Ornaments?" Her look underwent a change.

— "Yes. Whatever you please. It is offering to the Mother."

She cast a strange look at me and said, "I have given my donation. It has been previously given."

— "Once again, please."

— "I will, when time will be ripe. But it is dusk, I can't take off my ornaments now to the prejudice of my husband's well-being,—moreover, there is no cash money with me to make any gift."

My mind was rudely shocked. Her protest made my mind away. I replied, "This would bring blessings to your husband." The young lady sharply looked at me. At the next moment she restrained herself and said, "Please excuse me. I have taken up a vow. I am unable to take off my ornaments." Then she smiled and said, "There are others. They are ready with their offerings." So saying she stood up and gloriously glided away in quick steps. Once again I cast my look at her and then diverted it to another direction. "A strange lady! a proud and doted on wife." A crooked smile beamed in my face. Next I approached another girl. When she donated her ear-drops, she said, "Don't you know her?"

I replied in the negative and felt no urgency for further information. There was no need for unsolicited calumny. I stepped forward and went around. When I slid back to my seat after the collection, the corner of my wrapper was filled up and heavy with the collected articles. I touched my forehead to the ground of my native village and came back home. It was past evening.

I sat in the verandah in a get-together mood. As I looked at a natural scene, a sense of wonderment crept in my soul. The moon had arisen in the heavens as I sat self-absorbed. It was the bright fortnight and the moon was in her fourteenth phase. The earth was flooded with her spotless white radiance. For a long time I had not seen such a regaling moonlight—so peerless in beauty. It was early December. Coldness was conspicuous by absence. Still in that moonshine the dangling thin film of mist appeared like a milk-white outer scarf. It struck me that my mother the native village was standing, self-absorbed in contemplation, covering herself with an immaculate white garment. I got down from the verandah and stood in the courtyard garden. I cast my eyes upwards. They were glued there. Waves of moonlight were playing free and unrestricted over the village scene—the tops of the palmyra trees, the attic room of a building, the corrugated roof of a two storied mud structure, the longish leaves of the cocoanut trees standing in the yard of Satya Babu,—the whole series shone, glittered and dazzled in that flood of moonlight. The firmament was transparent blue and a cluster of bright stars was hung aloft.

Suddenly I heard a grating sound and my mind was diverted from the upward sky. Somebody was opening the wood-and-iron framed gateway at the approach of the road. The rusty gate bolt would spark a sound if someone operated upon it. Who was there? A womanly figure was visible, attired in washed clothes. She was brownish in colour, had no veil over her head and she possessed a head of dishevelled hair—a figure just in keeping with the mood of imagination at the moment. I doubted if she was my daughter-in-law, the wife of my nephew who looked after me and arranged things accordingly just like my daughter. She was a good girl but unfortunate—a widow. But who was she? —A married lady with dazzling bangles in her hands!

She entered the compound and bowed down her head in reverence. I looked at her face as she raised it. I at once came to recognise her. She was that proud lady whom I met in the meeting. Perhaps she was a stranger and came to me in a repentant mood.

She smiled as she spoke, "Perhaps you don't recognise me?"

I felt a bit surprised, for the pattern of her

smile was familiar to me but I could not recall her face, who was she?

"Fie! Fie! Why should I cry? It is the insignia of the rich people."

I replied,, "Mother, don't mind. It is exactly so."

"How you speak? Why do you call me mother?"

— "Then a daughter."

— "No, why should I stand in that relation?"

— "Then sister."

— "Not so."

I had to laugh and said, "Then the next relationship is not possible with a man of my age."

— "Quite possible—the relationship of a sister-in-law. Old people can have a young sister-in-law."

This time I was lost in surprise, "Then you are . . . . .

— "Yes —Srimati Jagatdhatri — D.D.P. — Destroyer of Demon's Pride."

— "Oh! Oh'. I clasped her head against my chest."

Exactly it was so. She was Jagatdhatri herself —the youngest daughter of my uncle-in-law, perhaps of the same age, it might be less as my third daughter Ganga. I was not at fault. I did not see her for an age, it might be 22 years or more. I took up my lodging in Calcutta in 1339 B.S. after I left my village. I did not keep up any contact with my village up to 1359 B.S. except some rare breaks. Once in the year 1342 B.S. I stayed in the village for two months at a stretch on the occasion of Ganga's marriage. My mind became filled with agony. It was just two months that Ganga had become a widow. Oh, the pity of it.' I heaved a deep sigh.

"How you speak?"

I said, "Night has descended on the life of your 'in-law. Everything has been covered up."

She understood me and replied in a grief-stricken voice, "I know everything."

— "Oh, come inside."

— "Let us go within. I have not seen you for an age. I read about you in the papers in distant land, saw your printed photos and told the people that you are my '-in-law. Will you believe me that they didn't believe my words?"

Self-control comes spontaneously. There is no need for any exertion. What is needed is diversion to a subject-matter of sweeter content. There is no other sweeter diversion than eulogy. This is what I understand as I write down my recollection of that day. I replied to Jagatdhatri, "Why didn't you tell them about your D.D.P. title, about the giver of it. It was he who alone could confer it on you?"

We got on the verandah and seated her in a chair in front of me. As she sat on the cha r she said laughingly, "I have told them so, and also many other things."

— "What was their reply?"

I thought at once that she should be treated to some refreshment and ordered Dhiren to prepare tea.

— "I won't take it. I have got an ulcerous stomach."

— "Then?"

— "Please don't mind. Besides I am fasting today. I have taken a vow. Don't you notice that my hair is loose? I have taken a bath after I came from the meeting."

— "What kind of vow? And at this time?"

— "It is my new-fangled vow. I fast on the 14th day in the phases of the bright moon and also on the new moon day. During day time I listen to the recitals of the Chandi by the Brahmin. And I count Mother's Name one hundred thousand times during the night."

I was taken aback and felt a pang of sorrow. Religiosity had taken hold of her quite early. What would happen to her next? She would develop into a morbid maniac! What a lively girl she was—always romping and ragging, very much outspoken and bright. Quite a redoubtable girl. Some would describe her as a tree-climber girl, some as blunt-tongued. I stuck to my D.D.P. title. I remembered to have told her once that she would understand herself if she was married to a husband of my type.

Her retort was sharp—"My God! How do you rate yourself. I would be married to a better qualified husband than what you are. You are vainglorious about your jail life and your writings!"

Her audacity stunned me. I responded — "Halt. I would have to marry you. I would ask my uncle-in-law to stop further searches for any groom for you and would ask him to marry you to me. Do you know the grandfather of your father married sixty wives? The existence of a co-wife is a matter of no moment in a Kulin's family. Besides, you will have your cousin as your rival. You will find no difficulty."

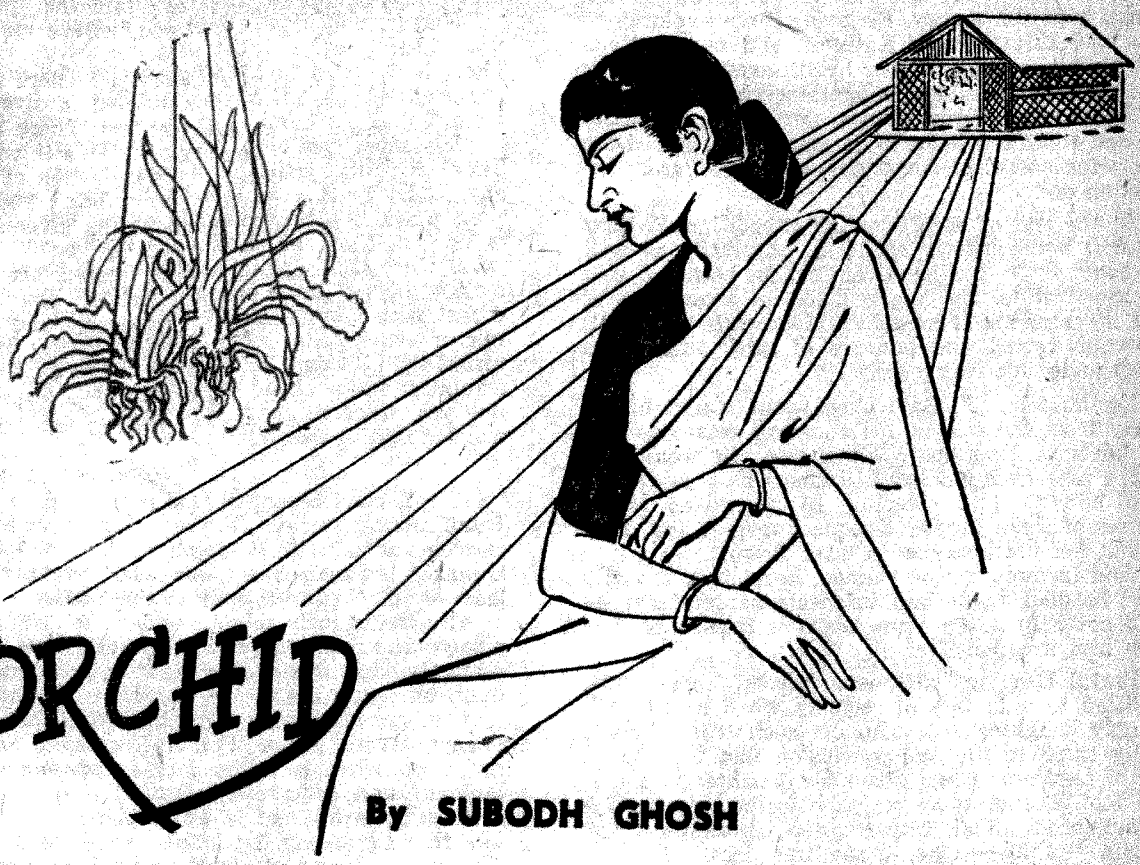
She retorted — "Then there would be no end to your miseries. We two sisters would pull you through endless sufferings by running a cord through your nose. I don't accept the theory of sin."

I wondered how Jagatdhatri had been transformed into such a creature! I saw tears in her eyes in the meeting. From her brief utterances, some similarity was detectable. It flashed on my mind that I should ask her why she behaved in that fashion in that gathering. But I hesitated. After all, she had come to me after a long spell of time. I stopped.

Jagatdhatri cut in — "Just tell me what you are thinking? Why this sudden silence?"

I did not suppress myself and told her how she had put on years. how she had changed and had

(Continued on Page 202)



ORCHID

By SUBODH GHOSH

THE tourer has a noiseless engine. The latest model. It makes no more than a hiss when imperceptibly it comes to a smooth halt near the gate of the house. Not so mute, however, is its siren type horn. It doesn't blow — it expodes, it clangs in a sudden flourish of wild exultation. Karuna understands — it is Gunakar. He has come!

There — it is Ramtahal the servant pulling the grills open. But what is that strange noise? Something clanks and rattles. Does the servant's hand slip off the grill? Does he stumble and break his head on the iron to make that jazzy sound? Or is it Gunakar's arrogant, brand new tourer dealing the closed gate a jolt in a bid to break through all barriers with a crash?

And, what if it is just as much? Should he find the gate shut against him when she knows he is due, and at that very hour? What makes her so bold? It is more than boldness—it is rank impertinence. It's discourteous and foolhardy. The servant should have had clear instructions, that he should keep the gate open for Mr. Sen, and wait. And, of course, he must not forget to salaam thrice as soon as the Sahib arrived.

She had thought out all this in advance, but forgot about it at the required moment. The servant had been dozing in some safe corner. Startled by the hooter he had hurried to the gate to open to Gunakar. And perhaps the annoyed and impatient tourer had hit the gate with a disdaining push before the servant could reach it.

But no, he did not break open the gate. Peeping through the window, Karuna finds Gunakar's car crawling along the gravel towards the porch. Ramtahal closes the gate.

This house today will be blessed to dedicate itself as a token of gratitude to Gunakar's generous will. So much depended on his coming, including, perhaps, her very existence in the same house since this day, and also of Pranab her husband. The mounting debts were soon to swallow the house. Besides, it would no more be that same house with the spacious, neatly laid out garden, the herbarium and laboratory, the greenhouse and the dainty lily pond — things so dear to his heart and destined to fade out as dreams. And Pranab Basu the botanist would no longer be the remain the detached researcher lost in the mystery of plant life.

Life was wonderful for P. Basu the botanist. He would let hours slip by, just observing a favourite orchid in his greenhouse, and not know. The lunch drowsed on the table, and Karuna on a chair nearby, still and speechless, while P. Basu watched a bunch of rare mosses heaped on a dish, as if nothing else existed.

Karuna calls, "Do you hear me?"

"Yes?"

"The rice is getting cold."

"I remember," says P. Basu.

Perhaps he does, because a minute later, he starts, and like one waking from slumber reaches for the food.

"Wash your hands," says Karuna.

"O, I remember," says P. Basu.

It is five years since P. Basu came to live in this house. He sold all that accrued to him as patrimony — an ancient house in Guptipara, a solid structure,

square and courtyarded, bordered on three sides by tanks, and on one side by a garden. The massive architecture had stood the ravages of time although its elephant portal was crumbling. It fetched a god good price. P. Basu gave shape to many of his dreams with the money. He made three exploratory trips to Sikkim, two to Kashmir, and one to Naga hills. No honeymoon trips or health excursions—they were perilous treks and mountaineering demanding grit and daring. Tents, ponies, porters and guides punched enormous holes in his purse. He combed the forests for botanical curiosities, and rare and interesting orchids.

At the end of each exacting expedition, P. Basu returned home utterly spent — physically as well as financially — but he never perhaps bothered if it was worthwhile. He never made an accounting of what he gained or if he didn't. Meanwhile basketfuls of orchids rotted, and bunches of rare wild flora wilted under his very gaze.

Fortunately, P. Basu had spent a part of the money from the sale of his ancestral estate to buy this house at Madhupur. Otherwise, he would not have a roof over his head. Perhaps he would have ended himself just sleeping in the deep shady recesses of some jungle. Karuna knows it too. That is what her brothers say in utter disgust.

And in moments of passion, her father too said it till he died. Loose and insensate banters. But he could not help it. An acute sense of frustration had made him irresponsible.

Pratul Das the attorney, whose high hopes solidified to a feeling of security when he married his only daughter to a man of such rare talent, finally came to this sad conclusion that by a cruel joke of Destiny he had given his daughter to a half mad fool. Pranab gave no grounds for suspicion. A thoroughbred in all respects, and handsome in the bargain — that was he, to say the least. Both at home and abroad his records were sparkling. He studied four years in California, U.S.A., and passed with medals. A fat salaried post in the Government's Agriculture department was the least one could expect for him.

Pratul Das, the attorney, could not dream that her daughter's lot was so soon to be reduced to this mockery. Neither did any of her relations. Karuna also had not even an inkling of such a dreadful prospect. — That she would have to rot in a far off place like Madhupur in this wild haunted house. Who was she to dress for ? Who was she to sing for ? What if she slept all day till it was dark — there was nobody to seek her out and, caressing her hair, to say, "It's no time to sleep, dear."

There was only one man — the solitary soul who reigned in the house — who could say that. But he would not. So what could she do ? Herself her sole company, Karuna was alone — alone.

Was she the same girl who once said to her friends, "Hills for me, for me the hills in summer. Never the plains, nothing doing."

"And Calcutta in winter, am I right ?"

"Can't say exactly."

"Why ?"

"Winter is the season to pack up for outings. I will ask that gentleman to take a month's leave. Besides, wherever we go, we are not travelling by rail. It will be a drive — there's no travelling except in one's own car."

Her own car ! The recollection whipped her to a consciousness of the present. A squirrel also leaps on the ivy overhanging the window. Following the squirrel, her eyes catch the morning beams reflected by the shiny body of Gunakar's latest model tourer. That way lies a picture of promise, beyond any shade of doubt. Karuna can set out on a journey by car today itself, or any day from now. She has only to wish it. She has Gunakar's standing offer: "Don't be shy. Tell me straightway whenever you feel like, wherever you want to go. The car is yours."

Karuna only listened to his advances in silence. She did not reply. But today she must, perhaps. There is no point in keeping mum in hesitancy. She has prepared herself today to accept a benevolence from Gunakar's hand — a cheque or cash.

His shoes creak up and down the verandah. There are three seats but Gunakar has not taken any. Today he is in no mood to be any more satisfied with a seat in the verandah, as he was yesterday, or one of those hundred days during the past one year. Were it any of those days, Karuna would have by now herself come out of her room and offer him a seat with a smile of reception. But today, the mirror which reflects her smile distresses her. Is she afraid then ? Come on, there is nothing to fear. It is smallness to be afraid of a man like Gunakar. This one year's acquaintance has been her treasure — a wonder that charms.

To Karuna Gunakar was not at all a stranger from another world. Maybe, his emergence was sudden and a trifle stunning to the house, although Gunakar the man is not one who could dazzle — least of all, dazzle anybody of this house.

He is distantly related to Pranab. Besides he is a successful man well known to her father. It is that same Gunakar who was a clerk in a Builders' firm only seven years ago. He was once to the States also to buy machinery for his firm. There he met Pranab several times. Pratul Das the attorney did not know when he came back or opened his own builders' and contractors' firm. The day he knew it he sank in his seat in glum silence and remained like that for a long time. Mrs. Das, his wife, and Karuna's mother had asked, "What's the matter ?"

"No dear, it is nothing serious."

"What is it anyway ?"

"I mean, that Gunakar has shined."

"Which Gunakar ?"

"You remember Bidhu-da of Kalna ? It is his son."

"Yes I remember."

"So I was thinking....."

"Yes ?"

"If I could give her to this boy, Gunakar."

"Destiny. It is inexorable they say."

"Absolutely." You cannot explain it otherwise—a man with so much learning and foreign training turns nutty!"

It is a year ago that Gunakar first came to this house. Karuna's father was present during that visit. He had come here to see her daughter's strange lot with his own eyes. A bridge-building contract had brought Gunakar near Madhupur. He ran into Pratul Das one day on his way to the market-place. Pratul Das was pleased to meet him. He invited him to his daughter's house and introduced him to his son-in-law.

Gunakar was intrigued by Pranab's ice-breaker. It was just an unceremonious "Let's go."

"Where ?" said Gunakar a little bewildered.

"To my greenhouse. You will see a discovery of mine."

"What's it ?"

"*Calanthes Karunaina.*"

"What does that mean ?"

A new orchid."

Gunakar laughed. "Well, I am a mazdoor, who understands only concrete and hardware. I have no time to stare at orchids."

"Any interest ?"

"Not even that."

Karuna brought tea. At the first sight and hearing she was sweeter and more fragrant to Gunakar than the tea she brought. Pratul Das told stories of big earnings in his attorney's career, and Gunakar of his struggles as a builder and contractor.

Karuna said, "I have a complaint."

"What is it about ?"

You have not brought Mrs. Sen."

Gunakar laughed out loud. "You are mistaken. It is an unfounded complaint."

"You have not brought Mrs. Sen"

Pratul Das explained, "Gunakar is not married."

Gunakar : "I am off today."

Karauna : "I hope you will come again."

Gunakar smiled : "Only if you are not annoyed."

Karuna : "We won't be — not at all."

Her lovely face lit up with a mellowed suggestion of welcome as she said goodbye.

It is the same lovely face after a year. Today it has got to be lovelier with a blush. A minute from now, her hands would be outstretched in acceptance of a stark truth — that from today Gunakar is a friend of the family.

She did not forget her father's sigh when Gunakar left after the first visit, and his words uttered despair: "Worthless wretch!"

The glore of his eyes hit the greenhouse with a ballistic of contempt. It shook her to the marrow as she stood behind his father unnoticed. Even her shadow betrayed her agony. Surprised Pratul Das turned round. Her placid face was aglow, two soft petals of orchid for her lips quivering. It looked like a smile, but ——

Gunakar came next day before dusk. She received him with a smile, the same sweet smile and cup of tea.

"What a surprise," he said, "I have met Mr. Basu several times before."

"You may have," said Karuna.

"Perhaps in America."

"Maybe."

"But he doesn't seem to recognize me."

Pratul Babu butted in, "Not he. He has hardly a mind to rember with.

"But he is great botanist."

"Heaven knows. But he has not earned a dime up till now."

Gunakar looked grave. "But how long — I mean, they can't go on like this. ——"

"Not at all," said Pratul Babu, "The next scene will be on the streets. So I say it again, he should get himself a job as soon as he can. I have come here to persuade him to his senses. The Government's Agriculture department wants a superintendent. Our Naresh writes from Delhi he can negotiate it for him."

The suggestion lashed Gunakar on his face. It made him smart, quite unaccountably "What a job," he whispered.

Karuna started. The smile on her soft lips flickered. A wind from somewhere swept past, and the orchids trembled.

"That is a mali's job, I say," said Gunakar clarifying. "Growing pumpkin and potatoes. He can be without it."

"All right", muttered Pratul Babu, "then leave them to fate."

That Pratul Das is no more. He did not live to see with his own eyes the shape of that fate. In a year many, many orchids bloomed in P. Basu's greenhouse. The lily pond was near choked with rampant growth. Two German tourists were impressed with the herbarium and left with a large number of seedlings and young plants. They offered a price, but P. Basu said, "I have no need of money, I don't need it at all."

It gave Karuna a burn that charred her angelic smile. A wonderful man from dreamland! In this land clouds of white orchid laugh, pollens fly with the breeze, petals quiver and sprouts thirst for morning dew. And P. Basu is happy. He does not know what happened to Karuna's ornament box. Does he notice the vanishing gold lines on Karuna's body? He doesn't. He has no eyes to see it. Soon the wedding ring, the last to go, will go, inevitably, and he will not know. And then one day a hungry P. Basu pining for something to eat will walk to the dinner table laid with empty crockery.

Yet, and yet he is happy. He has not known any cares this one year. One who is committed to the welfare of trees and herbs, one who carries a mission to develop species like non-poisonous "dhutura", coloured "punarnaba", fragrant "palas" and sweet "neem", is beyond the reach of worldly cares.

Once, down came two cousins of hers from Kulti. Pranab told them of his worries about the colour of "palas" and taste of "neem." They were horrified.

"Karuna may come to stay with us now and then, say three months in a year". Suggested the dazed cousins. "Here she too will go mad."

Dhirenda laughed. "What is the name you call your new orchid by, Mr. Basu?"

Gaganda laughed too. "It is *Calanthes Karunaina.*"

"What on earth is that?"

"You don't understand? It is named after

"I mean, did I eat yesterday ? Do you remember ?"

Karuna. Mr. Basu says it is a discovery from the jungles of Sikkim."

"After all, it immortalizes our Karuna", said Dhirenda, laughing still.

"Mr. Shahjehan the Second", added Gaganda. "A rare lover."

Then they frowned at Karuna. "And the fool, she still smiles. Looks as if she loves to put up with this monstrous nonsense."

She is not going to endure it any more. She has the realisation at last. For five years she had cherished the smile, and now it is about to be shed from her lips with streams of blood. She does not mean anything to Pranab. She does not form a part of the house. She does not forget the tears in his eyes when once a dragon fly chewed up a whole orchid. How he suffered! She would be happy if he expressed half that concern when nightly she coughed herself out. But he was deaf, and worst of all, he did not hesitate to ask her to send him a cup of tea to the garden when she was in the grip of a violent paroxysm of cough. But she did not resent. She made the tea coughing all the time, and carried it to him in the garden.

It is not a wife living with her husband—it is something of a nurse charged with the care of a dumb, capricious baby, cruel and wayward. The man who stripped her bare of all her hopes, dreams and yearnings to make a rubbish heap of it all is her husband—the mad botanist who has no sleep thinking of the problems of plants and trees.

This one year has been different in a way. It has brought a touch of novelty in her denuded existence. After all she has someone to talk to. Gunakar came and went. He did not brag about himself, neither was he curious about her life. He felt gratified just to come. Rather, he liked to hear about Pranab whom he held in reverence. He did not hesitate to say, "They are the most wronged of all men—they are not understood. I tell you here is hope for all humanity in this petty accounting world—that at least one of us is a dreamer who is undaunted in his isolation."

"But I have to account, to keep going."

"There's no reason why you shouldn't."

"But how long can it go like this ?"

"Don't worry, it is dynamic world."

There was great consolation in it—something for which one should be respected. Gunakar who was nobody in relation to this house appeared to be a sincere friend of its tormented soul.

He seemed to think something. Then he burst out with a strong note of protest. "No Mr. Basu should not be dragged into the drudgery of a world which works for an income. Let him do unperturbed what he is doing. I also request you to carry on." The reply swelled in her in a mad urge to be told, and it nearly burst her ribs. But she could not tell—she cannot. Yet she has to. "What am I to do, what have I ? The whims of an insane misfortune has squeezed me empty."

Yet she must tell. Even to Gunakar. There was no point in shying. Why shouldn't she tell the man who turned a respectful eye even on a nonentity like her, who did not despise a crazy fellow like her husband, who would be only happy to see peace established in the house.

She had a feeling that a sympathetic heart like Gunakar would himself suggest it without waiting for her to tell it. But he did not give so much as a hint. And slowly the shadow was spreading to swallow the house—the shadow of starvation and death. Her jewel box was empty.

Didn't he understand even the day when she failed to serve him a cup of tea? Obviously he didn't. His loud and hearty laugh proved it.

Tea leaves, sugar and milk were things of another world. The rents in the door curtain yawned, the ragged end flapped with a whiff of breeze, baring a part of her room. His eyes did not seem to rest. Repeatedly they darted keen searching looks through the gaps as though to discover some new wealth in the meagre furniture of her room, in the coloured saris hung on brackets, in the face towel dangling from a hook on the mirror.

He did not turn up for ten days since that. He should have come. She was restless, and kept looking through the gate on to the road at some distance. Would she write, "Come once, immediate. It's urgent."

Meanwhile botanist P. Basu staged a quaint comedy one day. He rose from sleep before dawn, and straightway walked to Karuna's bed.

"Listen, do you hear me", he shouted, waking her up.

Startled she screamed, "Who's there?"

"It's me", P. Basu said.

"Who is me?" She asked, confounded, in a voice trempling with fear.

"Me, P. Basu, your husband", he said smiling.

"What's the matter?"

"I mean, did I eat yesterday, do you remember?"

In the dark, she could not discern any line of

pain or puzzlement in that boyish, innocent face. But she buried her face in the pillow, sobbing.

P. Basu repeated, as if in a hurry, "Come, say it quick. I have work to do."

"You did, yes", She shouted.

"So!" P. Basu hastened out of the room.

Strange she could tell this great and ruthless lie out loud. The man who had neither lunch nor dinner yesterday, went away happy and reassured because she said he had it.

After this, an evening of clouds. There was lightning but no thunder. Gunakar came. Unabashed, without a falter, she said, the first thing, "I need some money."

"How much."

"You may guess."

"Five thousand, will that do?"

"It will."

"When do you want it"

"Today itself."

"Cant you wait till tomorrow?"

"I can."

"All right, let me go now."

"When are you coming tomorrow?"

"When do you want me to come?"

"In the morning."

Very well."

And he did not fail. The morning warmed up with the fresh smiling sunbeams. Gunakar has come to end all the worries that ailed the house.

So it is, that the shoes creak so emphatically. So now a little smile to brighten up the weary face. A touch of the comb to rule the storm tossed hair, a twist to tip up the coiffure in place. And then,, stand on the threshold to look out where Gunakar paces up and down the verandah and call,

"Come in."

But what's the matter with her? Why does her smile take the hue of a flaming fire? Standing in front of the mirror she stares at her smile with two blazing insane eyes. The ears redden smitten by the insolence of a creaking pair of shoes, pacing haughtily up and down.

Not that way. She rushed to the corridor inside opposite. Not here either. Here the creaking from the verandah chased her ears. A shadow of fear haunted her, fiercer than a tiger, peeping greedily to and fro from that end, mad for a pull at her sari's skirt. Her helpless soul groped for a safe refuge of protection.

She ran and ran to stop at the door of that dear greenhouse of her husband's.

P. Basu shouted bewitched and stupefied.

"You here?"

"Where else have I to go?" she gasps.

"Look, there—" says P. Basu.

"I can see."

"Calanthes Karunaina !"

"The orchid you love."

"Yes".

"Lovely!"

P. Basu again started, almost scandalized. He

(Continued on Page 210)

"I don't need it."

CHINESE AGGRESSION AND A PAIR OF BANGLES

(Continued from Page 196)

become sweet-tongued. "I think your D.D.P. title should now be replaced by another title, S.T.—sweet-tongued and if you add another letter "S" to it, you would also be sweet-smiling."

Gagatdhatri started laughing.

—"It might not so happen in the presence of a big boss like you."

—"Stop, stop. Today I confer on you my new title. I have forgotten to ask anything about you.

"He returned"

I was not present at the time of your marriage. What is your husband doing?"

—"He is in the army."

My old memories came back.

—"Yes! yes! Did he not go to the front during the last war just after his marriage?

—"What you mean by "just after"? He took me home after the bridal night. The second night was Kal Ratri—inauspicious night. The third night was the night for "flower-bed" ceremony, our honeymoon night. He received a telegraphic message in the morning and left home at noon. So there was no 'honeymoon' or 'flower-bed' ritual. He returned from the front after three years serving in Africa and in Burma Take it from me if some one posed before me that he was the man to whom I was married, it was not possible for me to distinguish. I did not even remember his face."

She began to laugh.

—"Where is he at present?"

—I don't know exactly But he is in the front fighting against the Chinese.

Surprise overtook me. "Fighting with the Chinese"?

She confirmed. "The vow has been taken for his sake." I felt a reeling sensation in my head Oh! how composedly she was referring to the matter.

After restraining myself with great difficulty I asked — "How long is he in the front?"

—"These eight days."

I heaved a sigh of relief. Bomdila fell more than eight days ago.

She continued in a calm tone — "A month ago his old contract came to an end. We were at Shillong We were shifting ourselves to reach home after the retirement. Suddenly the hostilities started. We received the news of the fall of Twang. My husband argued, 'In former times we fought for the British. Thereafter we served so long in safety and in comfort in our independent country joining cantonment after cantonment and drew our salary. Now our freedom is threatened. The war has commenced and the enemies have entered into our territory. Shall I take the opportunity of retirement and save my soul?' I asked him in reply what he intended to do. He told me that he liked to apply for a new service-contract. I gave him my full support and assurance and told him how my famous—'in-law suffered imprisonment for the sake of the country. What an aroma of glory surrounded the name of my '-in-law! I insisted that he must go, and go without any sense of fear. I assured him that he would certainly return and our country would be victorious. I would take up vow for his sake.

"My husband was exceedingly pleased. He at once made the petition and we waited there for the reply. Ten days back he signed the new contract. On the eighth day he went to the office and soon came back home attired with the bullet-belt, the cross-piece, across his chest and with the revolver and the bayonet fastened in the web belt. He told me that he would start immediately and that within a day or two we would be sent back home by the Department. 'Go home with the kiddies. You understand?'

"I made the affirmative reply and bowed down my head in obeisance.

"While starting to move out he capped in — 'If I don't return —,

"I stopped him and assured, 'You will certainly return. If the worst comes to the worst, the entire responsibility will be mine.'

"I added, 'If it does come to pass I would take my eldest son along with me on the very day I would receive the news and would admit him in the army'.

"My husband was astonished and queried, 'What next?'

"I made the reply. 'Then I would myself join the army. I have learnt the art of rifle-shooting in the club. I will go to the front."

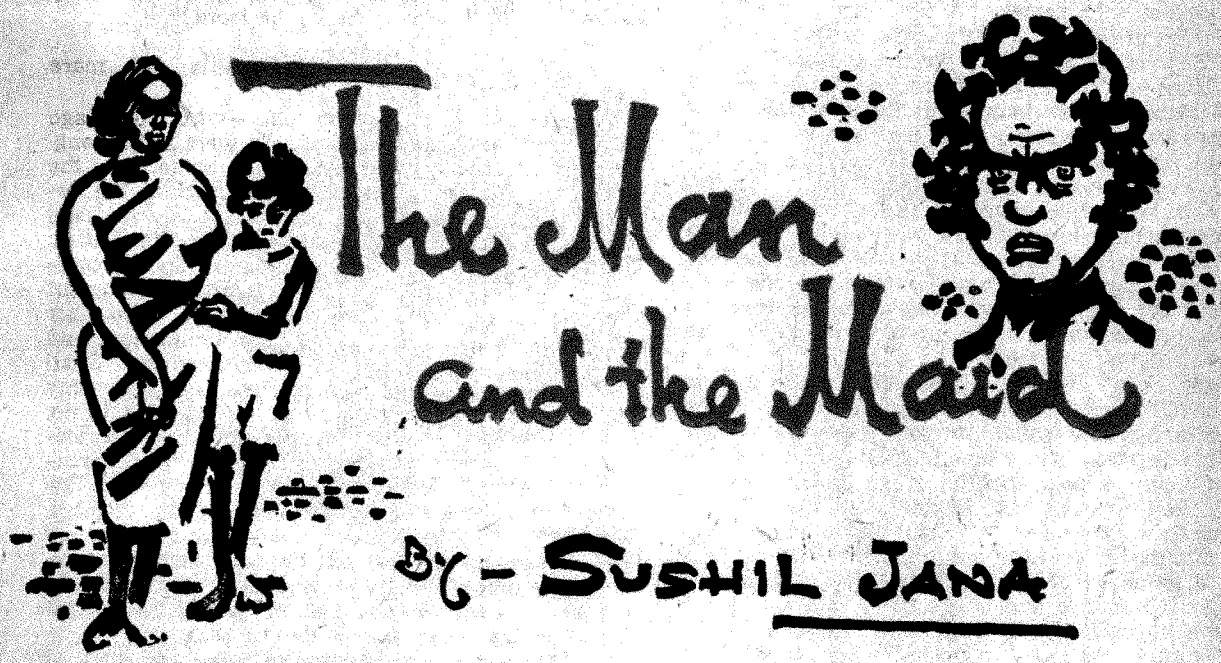
**

I was silenced. I could not realise that tears were rolling down my eyes.

Silently Jagatdhatri rose from the chair, made her bow and getting down from the verandah quietly she melted herself in the full tide of the matchless beauty of the moonshine of the night I knew that her present mood lacked the quality of permanence and it would again undergo a change. Still a snatch of Tagore's melody evoked a murmur in my mind:

"When today, out of Bengal's heart,
oh! Mother dear
Hast thou risen up in splendour,
free and clear."

(Translated by Satyendra Mohan Mookerjee)



THERE are about twelve of them —men, women and children. They eat their cold rice in the shade of a roadside tree, pick up their bundles and baskets, pots and pans and resume their journey eastwards.

"Where do you go ?" asks Hotlagar, as he drives his bullock-cart alongside.

"To Kharagpur," comes the reply.

"Kharagpur, that hell of a place !" Hotlagar flies into a passion, furiously lashing the bullocks. The very name of Kharagpur drives him mad these days. Whole bands of these Santals pour into that cursed marketplace, where they lose their caste, and sell their honour. "Let them go to the dogs ! Surely the Devil's after them !", Mutters Hotlagar to himself, but then asks again : "And where do you come from ?"

"From Pathardanga". There's a ring of weary sadness in the voice.

Pathardanga! Pathardanga ! ah ! that countryside where the earth is red !—farther to the west.

Wherever it be, it is the homeland of Santals and Hotlagar has a strange affection for his homeland. And now out of that homeland—the ancient abode of their fathers, away from the fields they once made out of rugged earth, away from their own clan, they are heading towards a land of strangers. Hotlagar seethes with anger at the thought. He prods the sides of his bullocks with his feet. "So you have left your old home, but why ?" he asks.

"Why ? You ask, why ?" The man looks surprised. He is a strongly built, broad-shouldered person, past middle age, and has nothing but a narrow strip of cloth hanging down from the waist just enough to hide his nakedness. Indignant, he looks Hotlagar in the face, and says,

"Where on earth do you come from, eh?" He rages like an angry tom-cat, "Do you know that our womenfolk have been outraged, our huts have been burnt down and three of our young-men shot dead ? The man stares at him for a moment and says again, "But it is we who cleared the forests, broke the stones, made the fields and tilled them and now at last this Singhji—the brute of the landlord—appears and declares 'the fields do not belong to you, be off !' He would not have us enter the jungles or even gather the fallen leaves!"

"So that's that ! that's that !" mutters Hotlagar.

Smarting under the lash the bullocks break into a run. Hotlagar makes a curious guttural sound. His cart leaves the band of Santals far behind.

"So that's that !" Hotlagar's temper is badly ruffled.

Batch after batch the Santals have been thus leaving their homeland ! Hotlagar has watched them going and chafed as he watched. They all go to Kharagpur to the Railway workshops, the colony. They go even farther to the mines. The women have their babies tied to their broad backs. The men have on their shoulders a plain bamboo pole from either end of which hang all their worldly possessions : tattered quilts, mats made of palm leaves, and even the earthen cooking pots ; the women have some clothes insufficient though they be ; the men go stark naked except for the strips of dirty cloth, six or seven inches in breadth, barely enough to hide their nakedness. Batches of them move eastward along this red, gravel road, that meanders out of the hill-forests of Chhotanagpur, incidentally touching the Railway lines here and there and some even crossing the Railway stations. The Santals do not entertain at these stations; they walk all the way to Kharagpur. If entrain they must, they do so at Kharagpur. From there they are hurled who knows where ; a few find their way into the local 'Coolie lines' ; there they rot,—and die. As Hotlagar puts it, they lose their caste.

Hotlagar cannot bear the sight. He watches them going and gets angry. As for himself he can-

not leave his place. Months have rolled into years. He only chafes at intervals.

He drives his cart to the right—to the Railway Station. One can see from far the huddled railway sheds roofed red with tiles and a few tea-stalls roofed yellow with thatch. A few men going about doing their duties raise a little noise in that desolate place. Beyond, it is empty space—a vast barren tract. Here and there, granite rocks stick out of the copper-coloured earth looking like waves. Hotlagar stops his cart in the shade of a tree across the culvert, not far from the station. Under the culvert, there flows a brook in a broad sand-bed ; it pushes its way through the gavel of the parched plains. Hotlager unyokes his bullocks and tethers them to the matted twigs of the banyan tree. He goes to the stream, takes his bath and returns to his cart. He brings out a water-bowl, a plate and an iron pot for cooking rice and a little quantity of pulse. He has now to cook his meal.

Lying about him are ready ovens made by the hands of old wayfarers nobody can say when. Some of them are whole, others broken. Gaping—under the roadside trees, these burnt, sooty holes tell the tales of many a past cooking. The Santals forced out of their hearths and homes must have made them when they passed this way. Hotlagar selects one and puts his cooking pot upon it. But he fails to get a flame, strive as he may. He gathers dry leaves and branches and stuffs them into the hole ; he blows himself dry in the throat. Only curls of smoke rising from the oven hurt his eyes which redden and water. Columns of smoke fill the air around ; yet there is no sign of fire.

Just then a girl appears on the scene and takes her stand behind Hotlagar. She has a boy, about thirteen years old, with her He has a hungry look. They were resting under some other tree. The smoke of the oven has drawn them here. They seat themselves in the shade. They are silent. Hotlagar goes on blowing on the fire.

Hotlagar turns his face

The woman breaks the silence at last and says, "No, that isn't the way."

Hotlagar turns his face and sees her. His eyes are arrested in a gaze at the girl to whose square-cut face a pair of sunken cheeks have lent a beauty at once rugged and melancholy. She is hardly above twenty. Her face is weary and hairs lack lustre. She is one of his own people, a Santal like himself. However, she is more generously clad than a woman of her tribe, not just up to the knee. Her hair too is carelessly tied up in a loose knot, not carefully done into a neat knot in the Santali mode. There is something about her which is not like a Santal. Her face betraying a weary resignation. But Hotlagar sizes her up rightly as one of his tribe. He can pick out one from a crowd. Hotlagar points to the oven and says, "Can't make a fire! How very annoying!"

"Won't you let me have a try ?"

Hotlagar is pleased. He stands aside.

She draws all the leaves and branches out of the oven and rearranges them with a deft hand and says to Hotlagar, "Fetch me a few dry leaves please."

Hotlagar fetches all the dry leaves that he can gather under the tree. She takes only a few, puts them into the oven and blows into it. In a moment, the leaves burst into a flame.

Hotlagar is positively delighted ; he laughs with glee, "After all, it's a woman's job. Isn't it ?"

The woman returns to the boy and sits beside him.

Hotlagar asks her, 'Where are you going ?'

'To the west—a very far-away place'.

She isn't going eastward ! Ah—not to that cursed Kharagpur ! Hotlagar is glad to know.

"And where do you come from ?"

"From Kharagpur."

It's good that a woman of his tribe has left that hell of a place, indeed, it's very good. Hotlagar is immensely pleased, but he asks all the same, "But why have you left the place ?"

"They drove us out of the workshop. The military was called in. They killed my father and closed down the workshop. It's a long story."

Hotlagar is pleased to know it. Isn't it Kharagpur—the market-place where they lose their caste ? Such things are bound to happen there.

"What's your name ?"

"Kamala".

Hotlagar likes her. A sympathetic soul she is. He now raises his eyes towards the boy and asks, "Who is that boy ?"

"My brother".

The water in the pot is boiling. Kamala has her eyes set on it. She says, "We have come all the way from Kharagpur on foot. My brother has had nothing to eat for two whole days. Would you boil some more rice for the boy ? No, not for myself."

So ! Hotlagar now knows why she came forward to help him. Why, isn't she from the workshop—town ? Very clever ! Hotlagar looks at her with suspicion. "Got rice with you ?" he asks.

She nods No, she has no rice with her.

"Then ? Have you money ?"

Not even that : Kamala nods again.

"Then ?"

Kamala looks helplessly at him and says apologetically, "It's only for my brother."

"I've got just this much rice extra." Hotlagar shows her the extra quantity of rice. He grumbles /

"Have you got a wife" ?

but pours out the rice into the pot. "You have been starving for two days. You will eat a lot. This isn't enough for you, eh ?"

He lights a home-made cigaretts and sits tight. "Have you got any other relatives ?"—he asks.

"None."

"How is it, then, that you are returning to the old place ? Where would you put up ?"

"There are the people of my tribe there."

"The fire has gone out again !" Hotlagar rises.

"Don't worry please. Let me see to it, "Kamala hastens to the oven.

Kamala rekindles the fire. She settles herself by the oven.

Hotlagar has come to like her, but not wholly. Hasn't she been to places and seen things ? Isn't she cute ? How tactfully she has just now managed to get a share of his food. She is quite nice, of course, as a woman of his tribe should be. Yet, he has a haunch about her. After all, she is from the market-town, where they lose their caste.

They talk. As they talk, they begin to feel at home with each other. Hotlagar leans against the trunk of the tree and smokes his home-made cigarette. Kamala stretches out her legs and attends to the cooking. She begins to take an interest in the man.

"The cart and the bullocks—are they yours ?"

"Whose else do you think ?" Hotlagar scrutinises her face. Does she doubt it ?

"A nice pair of bullocks ! Do they draw the plough too ?"

"They do," Hotlagar feels important and adds, "Two acres of land too."

"So you are a chief !" There is a note of admiration in the woman's voice.

"Oh no," says Hotlagar. He is glad to have made an impression on her. He smiles to himself, Hasn't he struck her dumb !

"Have you got a wife ?"

"No, I shall take one after the harvest."

"I see !"

They are silent for a while. Hotlagar smokes on ; Kamala feeds the fire. The rice is boiling. Kamala's brother has his hungry eyes set on it and is watering in the mouth.

"You are a happy man—a settled man!" says Kamala abruptly with sigh.

Hotlagar makes no reply. Kamala falls silent again. After a while, she begins to tell her own story. The words come rather fitfully. She speaks of a lock-out, of his father being killed by a bullet. She speaks of unemployment, of dishonour. Her unkempt hair, the gravity of her sad and tired face, the broken sentences—all these lend to her face a rugged beauty. There is a far-away look in her eyes. She mutters, "If only my brother were grown-up !"

"So, what ?"

"We might have found some job. We might have worked. We might have hoped." Kamala continues after a pause, "Couldn't exchange honour for a job. So I had to return to my own people."

Hotlagar is feeling soft. Poor lonely girl! "Where do your people live ?"

"Pathardanga."

"Pathardanga, did you say ?"

Ah, it's the very place, from where groups of Santals, men and women, are trekking eastwards. It is the very place where women have been outraged, houses looted and burnt and people killed. And this Kamala is going there! Hotlagar feels puzzled but says nothing. He doesn't know what to say. But he must speak out ! At last he bursts, "Don't go there !"

"Why ?"

Hotlagar tells her the story of Pathardanga.

"What's to be done then ?" Kamala stares at him with a querying look.

Hotlagar is silent.

The rice is cooked. The sun has inclined to the west. Hotlagar spreads Sal-leaves on the bare earth.

"Just a handful for my brother, please." says Kamala.

"Why don't you dish out the rice ? Let all three of us share."

Not so very long ago, it was the same man who grumbled that as the two had eaten nothing for two days, they would eat a lot. So, if the food must be shared, let Hotlagar himself serve it. Kamala is not going to do it. She stands aloof, a bit hesitant and abashed.

Finally Hotlagar gets up and shares out the rice. They talk like old friends, as they eat. Hotlagar feels happy.

Kamala asks him, "Who cooks for you ?"

"I myself do the cooking."

"No mother ?—No sister ?—Have you none to do it for you ?"

"None".

"That's rather annoying. You have your land, your house, the cart and the bullocks—but no woman ? Find some hardy girl to marry, Chief."

"Hum !"

They fall silent for a while. They are absorbed in thought again.

"But what am I to do ?" asks Kamala. She

looks up earnestly at Hotlagar for a solution. But Hotlagar is silent; he has no solution to offer.

The meal over, Hotlagar lies drowsy under the tree. He wakes up suddenly. It is a long time since Kamala went to wash the pots at the stream. There is no trace of the boy either. May be, they have slunk away with the utensils. He springs up, moves a few steps towards the culvert, looks down and stops short. Kamala is washing herself at the stream. Leaving her cloth ashore she has gone down nude to the stream. Like a bird she is sprinkling water over her naked body. The muscles of her youthful body are dancing to every movement of her hands. Hotlagar returns to his place and lays himself down. No, the girl has not run away. He closes his eyes, relieved, thinking of the girl full of the flowering youth.

Kamala comes back with the cooking pot and the bowl, and places them neatly on the cart.

Hotlagar does not open his eyes. The sun rays shooting through the leaves are on his face. Kamala looks at him. Ah! The man is sleeping! Hotlagar's dhotie (wearing cloth) is spread out to dry in the sun, with its ends fastened to the matted twigs of the tree. Kamala begins to unfasten them. Hotlagar feels uneasy and looks stealthily at her. Is she going to wear the cloth? Or, perhaps, to run away with it? No. Kamala spreads it out again at a different angle so as to screen his face from the sun.

Kamala takes her seat under the tree. She sits still with her eyes set on the distant horizon. No port for her in the boundless emptiness!

With his eyes shut, Hotlagar expects the girl to ask him again, "Where are we to go? What are we to do?"

No, she does not do so. Hotlagar gets up and collects and counts his things. No, nothing is missing.

Like a wild buffalo, he rages... "You lied to me!"

But Kamala brings him his cloth, folds it neatly and says, "You forgot your cloth!"

"Ah! I did!"

So, the girl is really good, not of the designing sort, though from that cursed town.

The sun is now leaning on the horizon. It's time the train should come. Hotlagar yokes the bullocks in a leisurely manner, casts a last glance around to see if anything has been left through mistake. He feels so uneasy in his mind, when the girl suddenly speaks out, "Back we go to Kharagpur, or to some colliery, come what may."

The brother nestless close to the sister again.

Hotlagar fixes his gaze on them for a minute and says, "God give you a good job." Then he falls silent. What more has he to give her but good wishes? Hotlagar makes a curious sound with his tongue and the bullocks begin to move. Hotlagar turns his face to bid them goodbye.

"Now, I must be gone. It's time for the train."

Hotlagar drives his cart towards the station. After a while, he looks back again. There goes Kamala with her brother—back to the east, back to that cursed Kharagpur again. They move slowly, wearily.

Hotlagar absently holds the lash ready in his hand but has not the mind to use it. He is in a pensive mood. The bullocks are drawing the cart at a slow pace. Hotlagar looks hard up the Railway lines. Smoke is visible far, far away.

Lalaji is expected to come by this train,—his master.

He went to the town to make purchases and is sure to come back tipsy. He is a big dealer in clothes and yarns. The business has given him a big landed property and has settled him in usury. From the town he comes dead drunk and gives himself upto revelry in the cart. From amongst the gipsy women inhabiting the broken hutments near the station he picks up one of the daring sort and comes all the way in his cart carousing. He does not forget occasionally to pour out a little wine into the cupped palms of Hotlagar, saying, "Come, sonnie, you too have a share!"

On all such occasions, he waxes generous every time and makes a valuable renewal of a gift to him of the same two acres of land for tilling and building a hut on, the same cart and the pair of bullocks. He gives his solemn word to procure Hotlagar a wife too. And what if at times the childless Lalaji makes the solemn promise of adopting Hotlagar as his son, adding: "Well, when the heart opens out, what worth are silver and gold, sonnie?"

It is this same man for whom Hotlagar seems to lie in wait today. At last the train comes. The evening sky has by then grown dark. Lalaji tipsy as usual staggers on to the cart with Punni, a gipsy girl, with him. He says to Hotlagar in a drunken voice, "Go ahead, sonnie!"

"I ain't going with you. Take back your cart. I go my own way!" blurts out Hotlagar.

At long last Hotlagar has revolted.

"Come sonnie! Are you angry? What's up?" Lalaji seeks to mollify him.

"You are a liar! What about your promise of land, bullocks and a wife?"

"Ah-ha! Calm yourself. Everything shall be given you as promised. When the heart opens out" —Lalaji thrusts a whole bottle of wine into his hand, saying, "Now, have a drink, sonnie!"

Hotlagar goes frenzied and throws away the bottle. He says, "You lie! You lied to my father

(Continued on Page 216)

The Angel-Child

By CHRISTEL DAS

LITTLE Suzan was what is generally termed a "darling child." She looked exactly like the Little Lord Fountleroy, complete with long golden curls and big blue eyes. When she cried—and she usually managed to do so when she thought it necessary—they would turn the colour of "violets covered with morning-dew", to quote Mrs. Smith, her mother. One look from those eyes, full of tears and innocence, with an extra tear hanging in long fluttering lashes, was enough to melt an iceberg, especially when accompanied by a slight quivering of her tiny pink mouth. Suzan never howled like other children, she just stood there like a persecuted saint, tears streaming down her face, sweet and beautiful and angelic. And she looked even more adorable when she smiled, with two dainty dimples appearing in each rosy cheek!

Suzan's natural charms were greatly enhanced by her mother's choice of frocks. She wore nothing but frills and laces, velvet and silk, always in white, pink or light blue. And she lived up to it! There was never a better mannered child than Suzy. She was a perfect little lady of ten! She would curtsey to old ladies and gentlemen and say her "thank you"s and "please"s so sweetly, that she captured everybody's heart—that is the hearts of nice old ladies and gentlemen. Other children were not so easily won over. The former called her pet names like "Goldilocks" or "Angel-Face" and gave her candies and hair-ribbons, the latter were less flattering. They had other names for her: "Cat!!", "Tattle Tell!", "Spoil Sport!"—to name but a few.

The class-teacher had been taken in at first by the big violet eyes and the quivering lips and many times she had punished the wrong child for talking in class, spilling ink on someone's books or throwing little paperballs about. But now she simply muttered "Spoiled Brat!" under her breath, whilst throwing one of Mrs Smith's frequent complaint-letters into the waste-paper-basket. For Suzan's mother was firmly convinced that her child was an Angel-Child and that all others were just jealous of her sweetness and beauty. "They are not fit to teach such a sweet and sensitive child! How her tender mind must suffer, having to mix with those rude and unfeeling brutes!" she would storm, showering the Angel with kisses and taking her out for a treat "to make up for it."

The least enthusiastic about Suzy was her cousin Peter, aged eleven. At that age boys have not much use for little girls anyway, especially when they are forever well-behaved! But Peter's case was exceptionally severe—"Angel Child? My foot! A pain in the neck, that's what she is! To have her for a blood-relation is a disgrace!" He would have been more outspoken, had his mother not given him one of her famous stern looks. Though secretely she had to agree with her son, ever since Suzan's visit one year ago.

Mr. Smith suffered from chronic "nervous disorder of the stomach" and that was not very surprising either, for to be a salesman in a big warehouse with mainly female customers and to be married to Mr Smith would have proved too much for the strongest man! Mr Smith was a mild little man and his wife was one of those buxom, horse-faced women hailing from a family of domineering females, so she thought it best to deliver her husband personally at the sea-side health resort, where he was supposed to take a long rest from business and married life. Suzan was to stay with Aunt Polly, Peter's mother. Actually all three of them stayed for seven days. It took Mrs. Smith that long to find out if her darling would be happy there!

Aunt Polly was absolutely charmed by little Suzan. And when Peter started complaining that

The angel stealthily crept behind him and gave him a good push . . .

she spoiled his books and disturbed his studies and that it had really been *her* fault when he had spilled his milk over Mrs. Smith's silk frock because she had kicked him under the table—well, his mother just did not believe him. "Such a darling little angel? You should be ashamed of yourself, blaming a helpless little girl for your own misdeeds! I shall not give you any more pocket-money until you have apologized to your cousin!" This of course Peter would not do and Mrs. Smith called him "that wicked little boy", when referring to him. Strangely though Suzan's father gave him half a crown one evening, laughing a little nervously and asking him not to tell his aunt!

Next day they left for the health resort. Mrs. Smith tearfully took leave from her Angel-Child and told her several times to beware of "that wicked little boy"—loud enough for Peter and his mother to hear. She finally tore herself away and then things happened fast!

Peter was busy filling his pen when the Angel stealthily crept behind him and gave him a good push! The inkpot fell down of course, spilling the ink on the newly upholstered armchair and ending up in a nice little black pool on the carpet, Mrs. Miller's pride—. Now Peter's mother was very house-proud and he did like her things neat and tidy. Seven days of Mrs. Smith's company had left her slightly irritable. Besides that, the final remarks about "that wicked little boy" were still ringing in her ears when she entered the living-room. She took the situation in with one glance and advanced towards the poor boy like Nemesis, the Greek goddess of retributive justice. In vain did he proclaim his innocence—one look at the Angel Child, so helpless and sweet with big violet eyes full of tears, long fluttering lashes and quivering cherry lips—he had no chance! He just managed to dodge behind the table when his mother tried to grab him. Down crashed the cut-glass bowl, a treasured family possession! Seeing the remains shattered all over the floor, together with the inkpot, did nothing to improve Mrs. Miller's temper and had Peter not done some fast leg-work he would have got the whacking of his life! Unfortunately he slipped on the highly polished floor, taking with him grandmother's photograph when he tried to steady himself on the little side-table by the door. The glass broke, the fancy lace coverlet tore and Peter cut his knee badly.

It must be admitted that Suzan greatly aided Peter's fall by putting her dainty little foot in his way when he was trying to make a dash for the door. Had Mrs. Miller looked at little Suzy now—she would have been very surprised indeed! There was nothing angelic about the child anymore, the "dew-covered violets" had a certain gleam and the pathetic quiver of the sweet rosy lips had definitely given way to a satisfied smirk. Salome could not have looked much different when the head of John the Baptist was presented to her on a platter! But alas!—Mrs. Miller was busy picking up the various fragments and she looked so angry that Peter thought it better not to ask for sympathy but to disappear as fast as his aching knee permitted.

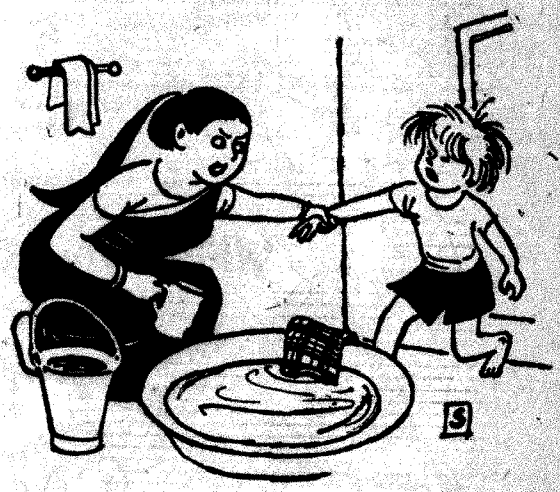
That day Peter did not turn up for lunch. Mrs. Miller found a note in his room, pinned on his pillow. It read: "I am leaving for good! Don't try to make me come back as I shan't! Anyway not as long as that female is in the house. I am going away where there is justice and fair play!!!" His mother felt slightly uneasy. Could it be that he had been right after all in blaming Suzan? But one look at the little girl, sitting at the table and smiling sweetly up to her re-assured her. Soon Grandmother rang up to inform them that Peter had arrived safely, so Mrs. Miller decided to put the whole incident out of her mind for the time being.

In the afternoon little Fred who lived next door came over for tea. Strange, thought Mrs. Miller, he did not seem to like Suzy very much. However, he was polite enough so she did not worry about it unduly. She was just busy handing the cake around when she suddenly received a violent kick against the shin! She cried out with pain and very nearly upset the tea-pot. She shot an angry glance at Fred, but the boy was in the act of raising the tea-cup to his lips and since he had not spilled any it could have been Suzan only! The Angel sat there, too stunned to move, flaming red and guilt written all over her face. Suddenly Mrs. Miller understood everything! The incident with the spilled milk over the silk frock came back to her mind. Obviously this had been supposed to be a repetition of it and the kick had been aimed at Fred to make him the victim. Slowly Aunt Polly got up and very slowly she went round the table towards Suzy. She grabbed her arm firmly and piloted her out of the room. There the Angel Child got

(Continued on Page 210)

She grabbed her arm firmly . . .

Young Mothers' QUESTIONS



By PEG

1. Why do some children dislike taking the daily bath?

THERE may be several reasons. Some children dislike it either because the mother or ayah — especially the latter who may be careless — pours water that is too hot. Their skin is more sensitive than that of adults, so they may find a certain temperature unbearable, whereas an adult may not find it to be so.

Or in the children's little brains a strange idea may have entered—that very hot water poured on them would kill them, as boiling water kills pests like bed-bugs. This idea appears silly to grown-ups, but social workers in Children's Clinics have found out how the working of children's minds in such a direction is responsible for their antipathy to bathing in hot water. Gently talking to them about this matter can bring good results. No scolding, please!

Other causes which have been found responsible for this attitude are: the bathroom may be badly ventilated, and it may become too stuffy as the process of bathing continues. Or on the other hand, it may have a window or ventilator through which a draught comes to make the children shiver uncomfortably on cold days.

Some children may dread the soap going into their eyes. Or they may resent over-vigorous scrubbing. These objections can be annihilated by allowing them to bathe and dry themselves under adult supervision. Children like to do things rather than to sit steadily on a stool when their mother or ayah bathes them.

There may be other psychological reasons. They may dislike bathing as it interferes with their play or their inclination to eat or sleep at that time.

2. Why does one's daughter dream repeatedly of snakes?

Fright may weigh on a girl's mind as she may have come recently to live in a quiet, woody place—supposed to be infested by snakes—as a boarder in a school or due to the sudden transfer of her father. This dream is more likely to repeat itself if during waking hours she is not permitted to express her fears.

The best way to make her get rid of the fear is to explain to her what precautions have been taken to prevent reptiles from entering the building. Secondly, it should be explained to her that snakes are not always dangerous or poisonous. Most of them never attack unless they are provoked, and only a small percentage of them are poisonous! Once the wrong notion of all snakes being deadly is driven from her conscious mind, the subconscious will stop picturing them before her mind's eye when she is asleep.

Or the snake in the dream may symbolise a sly, apparently quiet person who is at the same time as deadly as the cobra. A dreaded tongue may also take the form of a serpent in her dreams. A honey-tongued woman who loves to carry tales and misrepresent people may take that form, especially if the girl is not allowed to expose her (woman) during waking hours. As soon as an understanding, loving adult explains the symbolisation to the girl, the dream will not repeat itself.

3. Does your neighbour annoy you by haggling with the hawkers when your baby is asleep?

Yes, she may be the haggling type! But there is no need to quarrel with her in an attempt to improve her. Nor should you be such a martyr as to leave her at liberty to disturb your baby.

The best way to set her right is to refuse to appreciate her skill in bargaining with the poor men. I say "poor" because in most cases such women dare not pit their wits against a strong party. They have an inverted inferiority complex that tempts them to show off their capacity only when they are sure of a triumph against a weak party.

Suggest to her, jokingly, that she might reap a greater advantage by trying her bargaining skill on her husband's boss or her tip-top mercers or jewellers. A subtle remark, preferably made in the presence of somebody whom she wants to impress with her amiable qualities, will bring her to her senses.

4. Is your son in the habit of asking too many questions?

If the questions he asks are likely to increase his knowledge and understanding, he should be encouraged with the correct answers. He may not understand intricate details, but he is sure to understand at least a part of the information you give him. Never ridicule him by saying that he has not the brains to understand such matters. Give him the elementary information, and then tell him gently that you will explain the matter in greater details in the future.

If you are not sure of the answer to his question, you may tell him plainly that you will consult

either a book or somebody who is likely to know the answer. It is better to make him wait for the correct answer rather than to give him a wrong answer and bluff him. If he is bluffed and finds out the truth later, he may lose his confidence in you.

On the other hand, if you encourage him to refer to a dictionary or encyclopaedia or a librarian, he is likely to learn to educate himself. This is better than spoon-feeding him.

The more intelligent he is, the more eager will he be for information. So encourage him to ask questions. Of course, this does not mean that he should be encouraged to ask inquisitive or rude questions, when he goes to his friends, neighbours or

relatives. With a little bit of effort he can be made to differentiate between sheer inquisitiveness and genuine search for information.

5. What will help your daughter to have a clear complexion?

My grandmother used to say that a clear complexion can be preserved by a cream made of bullock's bile and ostrich egg beaten up with fresh milk! But since this preparation is as much beyond the reach of most city-dwellers, as are costly cosmetics, the following is recommended to be used even when there are pimples on the cheeks:—

Let her splash the face with luke warm water. Then apply the paste of gram flour mixed with fresh unboiled milk. The milk may be substituted by water if the skin be very oily.

Finally, she should splash cold water on the face. That will stimulate the skin and indirectly help her to keep the skin free of pimples.

Healthy exercise in the open air, as well as, proper rest are also essential for a clear complexion. Avoiding over-spiced diet, and adding juicy fruits and leafy uncooked vegetables like lettuce, radish leaves, celery and parsley, can produce marked results. Boiled vegetables are recommended, but fried greasy stuff is to be avoided. Milk, butter, eggs, carrots, cabbage, drumsticks, green peas, spinach, tomatoes and ripe fruits like mangoes and papaya which contain Vitamin A are valuable. But if fruits and vegetables are too costly, sprouted pulses can be substituted.

Constipation is to be avoided. Pimples are generally due to impaired digestion. So anything that helps digestion clears the skin. Drinking six to eight glasses of plain water daily helps one in this respect and indirectly improves the skin.

THE ANGEL-CHILD

(Continued from Page 208)

the first and best spanking she ever had! She then made her stand in a corner and Fred enjoyed his tea enormously, eating Suzy's share as well. Ten minutes later the shock wore off and the reaction set in. Suzan howled and screamed, not so much out of shame as anger.

After tea Mrs. Miller sent Fred home and Suzan to her room while she herself set out to Grandma's house. There Peter and his mother had a long talk together which cannot be repeated here because Peter was actually sitting on Mummy's lap, being smothered with kisses and lapping up sweet pet-names — a fact which no self-respecting boy of ten likes to be made public!

In the evening Mrs. Smith arrived. She had not been able to stay separated from her darling! What passed between those two ladies better remains unknown as well, but at half past ten Mrs. Smith collected her Angel Child and proceeded towards home, not without consoling "the poor mal-treated baby" first and darting venomous looks at Peter and his mother.

Well, that was the end of the Angel Child! Her father dared to put his foot down when he returned from his cure and Mrs. Smith very nearly had a nervous breakdown after Suzy had left for a good boarding school. The headmistress there stood no nonsense and it may be hoped that The Angel Child will turn out to be quite nice and normal after all, being out of her mother's reach!

ORCHID

(Continued from Page 201)

gave her a long unwinking look. A stream of moist wonder glittered in his eyes.

"You didn't tell me so long."

"I thought it useless."

"I would have gained if you did."

"Gained, do you mean?"

"Yes, I would then know that you don't think me crazy."

"I do not, believe me."

A slice of green turf was all that separated P. Basu and Karuna. A shadow fell on the patch.

"You are here, what is the matter?" asked Gunakar.

The language of the query made her laugh. The soft petals of orchid trembled again as she smiled.

"What brings you here?" she asked.

"Have you forgotten?"

"I don't need it."

"You dont need the money?" A rude surprise hung tremulously between the stiffened brows.

"No", said Karuna.

Gunakar's head languished to a bend. But his sympathetic heart made an effort to perk up. He muttered,

"How do you mean to carry on?"

"We will make it go somehow. Perhaps that job of growing pumpkin and potatoes."

And, amazing all, P. Basu snapped in,

"O yes, some job must be found."

"Then I am going", said Gunakar.

"Thank you."

"You are really a magnificent orchid. What's its name, *Calanthes Karunaina*, isn't it?"

Yes please". Karuna laughed

(Translated by Santosh Sengupta)

REMINISCENCES OF THE CHITTAGONG REVOLT

By SACHIN DUTT

T was the fateful day of 30th August, 1931, a little before sundown. The veil of darkness was spreading over the Railway grounds. The football final was just over in the maidan, popularly known as "Nizam Paltan." The President of the Winning Town Club Khan Bahadur Asanulla, a redoubtable Inspector of Police, was visibly jubilant. The trophies were distributed. Prominent District officials and non-officials including a few Europeans were present near the President's dais. There was an armed police cordon since the political situation was grave, and there was suspicion and terror in view of the Chittagong Armoury Raid and consequent troubles. Those present, however, focussed their attention on the trophy and the winners. The Khan Bahadur was receiving lusty felicitations. Just about the moment, from the thick of the crowd a pistol shot rang out. It was deadly and fatal! The Inspector dropped dead, hit by the bullet. The moment of joy turned into a scene of tragedy. Its suddenness was benumbing. All ran in confusion. The police at once closed upon the assailant, — the boy who was fast running across the field and was all along firing behind the remaining bullets. Those were extremely terrific moments !

A boy of 14, Haripada Bhattacharyya was caught red-handed, it was stated, with two revolvers. He was put to inhuman torture, right from the moment of capture through dragging upto the lock-up. Maximum pressure was put upon him to extort any information, but to no effect. In his teens, he was a death-defying boy of unmatched determination. The police could realise, however, that Haripada was none other than one of the many young rebel recruits of the then absconding leaders of the Armoury Raid—Surya Sen and Nirmal Sen. The first raid case was then under hearing before a Special Tribunal. It was learnt that the under-trial prisoners inside Chittagong jail had been overjoyed at the incident ending with the life of a 'most unwanted person' in their eyes and condemned for severe tortures upon the revolutionaries. The Inspector was then the Special Officer in the District Intelligence Branch.

DRAMATIC DEVELOPMENTS

Dramatic developments followed. The Police Inspector's murder almost immediately gave a signal, or easy handle to the police to launch an attack on the townspeople, particularly on the Hindu residents. The authorities of those days somehow formed an impression that the "terrorist movement" was mainly Hindu sponsored. Stray assaults commenced on the pedestrians in the nightfall, looting of a few shops and burning of some residential quarters (of Hindus) during the night in the outskirts of the town took place.

Overnight, the Police and other top officials, aided by the non-official Europeans hit upon an organised plan of what appeared to be an 'open reprisal' on Chittagong's Hindu population. Firstly, there was a complete roundup of the political suspects in the town. They were all detained in the town police station (Kotwali) lock-up and put to severe beatings with the evident purpose of eliciting any information regarding the raid case, absconding leaders etc.

Citizens passed a sleepless night. Next morning, the whole town awoke to a scene of muzzled awe and rumours of all kinds. All city shops and business premises remained closed. In the trail of the dead police officer's body being taken to the burial ground in a large procession commenced indiscriminate looting and burning of Hindu shops and houses. In the very heart of the town, at Anderkilla, shops were set fire to, while the police sergeants supplied petrol to the miscreants. The whole town was in the grip of unbriddled loot and arson. It was a reign of terror and oppression upon a section of the population. Sufferers and eye-witnesses who survive till today may recall the incidents with shocking sighs.

ATTACK ON EDITOR

Evidently to muzzle the press, a party of police and non-official Europeans had, in the previous midnight (night of Inspector's murder) swooped on Chittagong's Bengali daily "Panchajannya" office, attacked the Assistant Editor Hiren Chowdhury (in absence of the Editor Ambika Ch. Das) causing bleeding injuries on his head, and broke down the flat machine, with sledge hammers and other weapons, leading to the closure of the paper.

It may be mentioned here that a couple of days earlier, an Anglo-Indian Calcutta paper wrote a short leader charging this Chittagong daily with active sympathy for the "terrorists" and subversive movement. Revolutionary outrages were taking place elsewhere too in Bengal. The local Europeans had been, as it were, waiting for an opportunity to satisfy their grudge against this paper. And the opportunity came at last for them to teach at least one paper near at hand and its editor, a lesson.

While the town was going through such grim ordeal, it was by sheer luck, as it appeared at that time, that the Divisional Commissioner W. H. Nelson returned from Rangamati the same evening from his tour in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Promptly, he had a stock of the situation and took action. At his instance, the Section 144 Cr P.C. and curfew order from dusk to dawn were promulgated and thus the open loot, assault, and arson were to some extent brought under control.

The scene of organised horror was then shifted to the country-side. Armed Police and Gurkha troops headed by the Additional Superintendent of

Police carried Haripada, the murderer of the Inspector, hand-cuffed and bound by a rope and under merciless torture, all the way to the villages where for three days a reign of terror prevailed. They moved in a mad orgy of indescribable violence raiding all the houses of the under-trial young men of the Armoury Raid Case, as also of the 'wanted' persons and the suspects. All the inmates of these premises and families were put to brutal pillage; cash, jewellery and every costly movable thing they could lay their hands on, was looted; whatever else fell in their front was broken, smashed and ransacked, and lastly, some of the residential houses were not only burned down but even the earthen plinths were dug out and desecrated with the dirtiest performances.

The homesteads of Haripada Bhattacharjee at Howla village and of those others, two at Saroatali (including that of the late Prasanna Kumar Sen, well-known leader of Congress and also a pleader, a son of whose was a prominent political suspect) were literally razed to the ground. Even today, after a lapse of some thirty-two years, I shudder to recall the terrific shock at what we saw.

Not only these. The police and military forces were let loose upon the open high schools in the area and the boys, even teachers, were bitterly attacked and assaulted. Barbarity could hardly have a parallel! One would rarely come across such indiscriminate raping of the entire countryside.

COLLECTIVE FINE

Meanwhile, a few prominent citizens met in their anxiety discussing what could be the ways of protection of the poor and innocent people against this organised and officially sponsored atrocity. Life and property was not at all safe. Collective fines to the tune of fifteen lakh rupees had meanwhile been imposed in different areas on grounds of their alleged harbouring of the raid case absconders. Loss of property in the riots and loots amounted to several lakhs. It was decided, at last, to inform Deshapriya J. M. Sen Gupta, the then Mayor of Calcutta and B.P.C.C. chief, requesting his immediate arrival at Chittagong.

Accordingly, Mr. Mahim Chandra Das, Chittagong Congress leader and Kaviraj Jatin Rakshit left for Calcutta carrying a first hand report of the happenings. They met Sen Gupta and Subhas Babu and told them all. At Sen Gupta's instance, a public meeting of the citizens of Calcutta was held strongly condemning the Chittagong outrage, as also the authorities for failure to control the situation. A Chittagong Enquiry Committee was formed with Sen Gupta as its Chairman.

Jatindra Mohan expressed his readiness to come immediately to Chittagong. The news almost unnerved Chittagong's officialdom. Next day, the Commissioner informed. Tripura Charan Chaudhury, the local leader, that immediate withdrawal of the police and military from the villages had been ordered and restoration of peace was assured. The officials proposed postponement of Sen Gupta's visit. But it was too late. Jatindra Mohan was on his way along with colleagues. They included Deshapran B. N. Sasmal, Prof. Nripendra Chandra Bandyopadhyaya, Dr. J. M. Das Gupta, Maulana Akram Khan (now in Pakistan) with whom a non-official Chittagong Disturbances Enquiry Committee had been formed in Calcutta.

Sen Gupta and party were to arrive at Chittagong in a day or two. The first notable episode was interesting. As the mail train from Calcutta with Jatindra Mohan and party arrived at Pahartali, Chittagong, the Sub-Divisional Magistrate met Sen Gupta in his compartment and communicated to him a request to detrain there and meet the District Magistrate who was waiting near the station. Sen Gupta was coming with a painful heart. He was not prepared for such a situation. Out came forthwith the Bengal leader's sharp reply, "Well, how do you expect me to meet the Magistrate here unprepared and before meeting my own people. You may, however, ask the Magistrate to prepare and give evidence at my enquiry committee. Thank you." Evidently, the redoubtable S.D.O. went back to his master. The District Magistrate must have been disillusioned that Sen Gupta was a difficult man, the leader who in the very soil of Chittagong about a decade back had provided many a sleepless night and nerve-break to European and British officials during the B.O.C. and A. B. Railway strikes heroically conducted by him.

Within a short time, the train steamed in at Chittagong station with Deshapriya Jatindra Mohan and party heralding a moment of relief for the sufferers and foreboding almost a 'Judgment Day' for the powers that ruled.

Soon after his arrival, Sen Gupta glanced through the detailed stories of the Chittagong incidents and Police atrocities in Chittagong town and in the villages since 30th August, the day of Asanullah murder. He heard the accounts also from the prominent citizens who met him. He formed his own first hand conclusion. He gave me a press interview in which he declared his considered view to the effect that: "THE CHITTAGONG INCIDENTS WERE NOT COMMUNAL RIOTS, AS GIVEN OUT IN THE OFFICIAL ACCOUNTS AND TO THE GOVERNMENT, BUT PURE AND SIMPLE OUTRAGES PERPETRATED BY OFFICIALS AND ON THEIR INCITEMENT AND INDIFFERENCE, AND ACTIVELY AIDED BY NON-OFFICIAL EUROPEANS." This was the purport. He added that he was going to expose the worst ever terrorism committed on the innocent people which he and his colleagues from Calcutta would presently enquire into.

NIGHTMARE HAUNTING

The Collector was then staying in a part of the Commissioner's bungalow, for security reasons. In those days, officials, particularly Europeans were going extremely panicky being in fear of any attack. "Revolution" was in the air and 'terrorists' at large. These were haunting them like nightmares. Every European official or non-official of high rank (like officers in European mercantile firms of which there were many in Chittagong) used to carry loaded pistols on his person and often kept the weapon right on the office table near at hand for use at any emergency. They would see or grant interviews to strictly selected persons, very familiar, mostly on previous appointment.

Commissioner Nelson, wiser and more sober by nature, to our knowing, held a different view of the Chittagong happenings which cast a shadow not only all over the district, but over the country and considerably brought down British prestige.

The town enquiry over, Sen Gupta and Prof. Nripen Banerji (so far as I remember now) proceeded to the affected villages, 10 to 15 miles in the interior. It was the rainy season. The village paths were all mud and slush; some places were even under knee-deep water. The dearly beloved "idol of the people" went on walking with his colleagues defying all the difficulties, even at places wading through mud and water. He refused use of the palanquin that was kept ready for him and Nripen

Babu. Motor vehicles were not in use in those days on rural roads, particularly in that weather. He moved from door to door visiting every suffering family, spoke to as many of the men and women as possible, and every victim of police-cum-military vandalism.

Nripen Babu, sentimental by nature was rising very often to the height of his excitement. In one of such moments, Prof. Banerji declared: There is a Nemesis in history for every sin!

Quietly and determinedly, Sen Gupta was looking through the atrocities and sufferings writ large on the face of the vast multitude. He was all along unusually grave and grim. The common people saw Jatindra Mohan so near them and were overwhelmed with his sympathy for them. He consoled them and assured that redress would not be late in coming. The very foundation of the British Raj would be shaken very soon.

Sen Gupta and party passed a couple of days in the villages. He was very much touched and stirred in the depths of his soul. He was telling those near him that this outrage was probably God-ordained. It proved to the hilt how the British Authorities themselves were creating and fanning the communal virus between the Hindus and the Muslims. But the part played by the European citizens was most despicable in Chittagong. Sen Gupta recalled Late Lala Lajpat Rai's historic utterance, "These outrages would prove to be the last nails to the coffin of the British Raj." Lalaji said so when he received injuries by Police lathi-charge while leading an anti-Simon procession at Lahore a few years back.

Prior to his departure for Calcutta, Sen Gupta met the Commissioner and told him about his thorough enquiry into the incidents. He requested Nelson to do justice as a right thinking Britisher. Sen Gupta's words had perhaps carried weight with the Commissioner as was seen subsequently.

CHALLENGE TO GOVERNMENT

Immediately on return to Calcutta, Deshapriya at a large public meeting in the Town Hall, Calcutta, threw a most emphatic "challenge" to the Government of Bengal, to disprove the conclusion of his enquiry committee that held the District Magistrate and police mainly responsible for the reign of terror in Chittagong. With his thundering voice, at the highest pitch, Sen Gupta declared, he would not rest till the Chittagong wrongs were redeemed. He demanded redress and compensation to all the sufferers. After all, the British regime must be ended, he demanded.

In a few weeks' time, the non-official Chittagong Enquiry Committee's report was published ("Advance" press). The Indian press and public opinion were very much agitated over the details and findings that shocked the world! But the Government kept *mum* over Sen Gupta's challenge as also on the report of the enquiry committee led by him.

Meanwhile, an Official Enquiry was held into the Chittagong incidents by Divisional Commissioner Nelson and the I. G. of Police, Bengal. They recorded statements of officials and non-officials, the latter including eye-witnesses and sufferers most of whom had given evidence before the non-official enquiry. The trend of both the enquiries appeared to have been almost identical.

The whole country was keenly awaiting to know the reaction of the Government after the official enquiry was over as also the results thereof. The Government continued to maintain absolute silence. The official enquiry report had never seen the light of the day. Anyway, it was anticipated that the Government was moving in its own way. Some drastic steps seemed to be in the offing. They gave obvious indication of the Government policy.

S. P. SHOOTS HIMSELF

Some months passed. One morning the city of Calcutta, and for that matter, the whole country, read the news that Chittagong's Additional S.P., B. J. Shooter, I.P., was no more! He killed himself. The body was reported to have been found in a pool of blood in the United Service Club, Calcutta (presently converted into the Geological Survey of India Office). His revolver was found lying beside the body, it was also stated. It might be recalled that Shooter had led the reign of terror in Chittagong town and villages, referred to above, and was the 'strong man' of Chittagong Police.

In a few days' time, it was seen further that the Collector of Chittagong, A. H. Kemm, I.C.S., was leaving the district with bag and baggage. He left for his native land via Akyab and Rangoon; and why he did not pass through Calcutta as usual, was best known to himself. It was rumoured that Kemm was asked to retire from service. All the rest of it followed!

Kemm's exit from Chittagong and the tragic end of the young Police Chief, Shooter cast a spell over the sober section of the European community as could be sensed generally.

It was further found that some police officers of different ranks in Chittagong were either suspended or transferred from Chittagong. The overall morale of the services seemed to a large extent to have been restored.

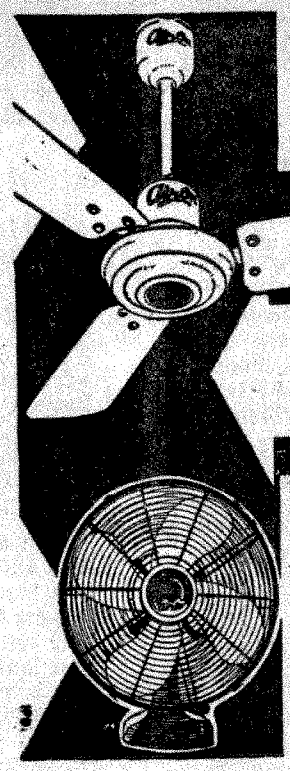
So many things were happening. Nothing was officially known. It was later learnt that Government took a balanced view of the findings of both the official and non-official enquiries, and out of inescapable conclusions, took some actions by way of passing censure on those mainly responsible for the Chittagong outrages; some were asked to retire or resign; and departmental actions were taken in certain cases.

Meanwhile, Chittagong events were having country-wide repercussions openly and beneath the surface. Jatindra Nath Rakshit (Kaviraj), one of the most active youth figures of the time, was said to be having contacts with the Chittagong Armoury Raid's supreme commander Surya Sen, then absconding. Rakshit met the Congress leaders and Working Committee leaders and apprised them of the situation.

J. M. Sen Gupta was also preparing for his London visit. He had not been keeping good health. In addition to the rigours of jail life he had to undertake the onerous responsibilities of the triple leadership of the Bengal Congress, and the Legislature Swarajya Party as also the Corporation of Calcutta after Deshabandhu Chittaranjan's passing away. The Chittagong worries added a further strain. Because of so many difficulties, Sen Gupta declined the offer of the Presidentship of the Indian National Congress which, according to his wish,

(Continued on Page 216)

Satish Kaviraj's
MAHABHRINGARAJ
HAIR OIL
HIGH CLASS
AYURVEDIC
HAIR OIL
Examined & Scented by
Dr. JNAN CH. GHOSH
EX-VICE-CHANCELLOR,
CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY.
ARYYA AUSHADHALAYA (DACCA) CAL-19



Double Ball Bearing
Double Saving with
AirOn FANS

- Robust Construction • Pleasing appearance • Perfect workmanship
- Low current Consumption
- High Breeze

SPECIAL FANS FOR COLD STORAGE

PANDAY INDUSTRIES PRIVATE LTD.
336, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Road, Cal-47. Phone : 46-8369
Registered with D. G. S. & D.

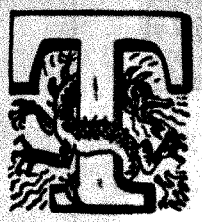
D.N.SINGHA & CO.
IRON FOUNDERS & MECHANICAL ENGINEERS
Dealers in
HARDWARE & SANITARY GOODS • GOVT. & RAILWAY CONTRACTORS
Exporters & Importers.

Hd. Office & Factory-I
64, Sitanath Bose Lane, Salkia,
Howrah. Phone : 66-2348 &
66-3577(INDIA)Gram : 'DIANSHINCO'
Factory-II
12, Gopal Ghosh Lane, Salkia, Howrah.
Phone : 66-2715 & 66-3293
Printing & Publicity Dept.
21, Sitanath Bose Lane, Salkia,
Howrah. Phone : 66-2348 (INDIA)

Export & Import Dept. & Plumbing & Sanitary Showroom.
39/1, College Street, Cal-12.
Phone : 34-4757 (INDIA)
Gram : 'RAINWATER'
Hardware Dept. & Showroom.
161, Netaji Subhas Road. Cal-7
Phone : 33-5826 (INDIA)
Plumbing & Sanitary Dept. & Showroom.
144K, Shama Prosad Mukherjee Road,
Cal-26. Phone : 46-4653

WHEN THE GODS COME

By PADMALAYA DAS



THE drums called from a distance . . . . restless, insistent, they drew me, eager to watch the evening worship of the Mother Goddess. The sound brought us in a wide arc from the brightly-illuminated station area through tree-darkened depths across a winding road to the pavilion. Colourfully dressed women and children sat on steel chairs, the menfolk stood. We stopped at the edge, I stood on tip-toe, and peered over shoulders.

There she was—the Mother—in all her glorious splendour:

"Luminous like the moon is her face,
And a sight of it charms away many a woe.
Her hair hangs like Sivji's serpents,
Her eyes are the envy of the lotus and gazelle,"

sang Guru Govind Singh.

The huge drum which had boomed its message across the distance was deafening at such proximity. Two smaller ones punctuated the pauses, and two trousered boys in vests (it was hot in that tarpaulin-covered enclosure) beat frenziedly, yet rhythmically, on big brass gongs. Another young man in vest and *dhoti* danced to the maddening rhythm, waving a large clay incense-burner in each hand. The fragrant smoke whirled, circled, plunged, rose in swift spirals, tracing the movements of the seemingly possessed dancer.

The flurrying, eddying smoke wove a flimsy veil of fragrance before the "Giver of All Bliss." Faster and faster he went. Fortissimo. The music rose to dizzy heights . . . . . and stopped. "Mother!" a cry rang out in the sudden stillness, and he flung himself at her feet.

It was tremendous, that adoration of the Mother. It shook one to the depths. Sir William Jones was so impressed by her beauty and mystical significance that he composed a fervent hymn to the goddess:

"O Durga, thou hast deign'd to shield
Man's feeble virtue with celestial might,
Gliding from yon jasper field.
And, on a lion borne, hast brav'd the sight;
For when the demon Vice thy realms defied,
And arm'd with death each arched horn,
Thy golden lance, O goddess mountain-born,
Touched but the pest — he roared and died."

On the fringe, where light dissolved into darkness, a blind beggar sat, his bowl before him, his little helper curled asleep by his side. A smile played on his parted lips, and he looked rapt, as he gazed with unseeing eyes towards the source of light and joy. And peace stole in, parting the curtain of clamour.

* * * *

From time immemorial the Mother Goddess has been worshipped in Orissa, but not in the form of clay images during Dusserah. On Vijaya Dasami day, people of different castes venerate their professional implements and weapons, and householders and students, their books and writing materials, invoking Durga's blessings for success and prosperity.

The introduction of clay images of the goddess in Cuttack probably goes back to 200 years. It could not have been very much earlier, as the oldest reference to the modern Bengali form of Durga Mahishamardini (attended by Lakshmi, Saraswati, Karttikeya and Ganesha) is found in the *Chandimangala* of the 16th century.

Initiated by a few Bengali zamindars of the area, over the years it has become very much a part of the city's autumn festival. But with a striking departure—only about half the images are of Durga. In 1960, for instance, 51 were of the goddess and 43 of Siva while 11 tableaux depicted different myths and legends.

* * * *

Take a ragged row of endless rickshaws and raucously impatient automobiles, mix in a mass of milling pedestrians, beat in the boom of drums, the clash of gongs, the wail of pipes, sprinkle with sparkling illuminations, pour in the cacophony of magnified music, season with a gay holiday spirit—and you have Cuttack in carnival at Dusserah time.

The entire populace seems out in festive attire, on foot or wheels to see the sights. Vintage models have been dusted, coaxed and pushed into the medley. (Often to stop exasperatingly right before a pandal, earning sizzling epithets from drivers held up in the rear). It requires Himalayan patience and jawan-like fortitude for the man at the wheel to do the rounds by car, and innumerable policemen to keep traffic on the move, however sluggishly, in the one-way traffic areas. You would have scarcely taken in the entrancing spectacle at some pandal before the law poked in its head and yelled above the ceaseless roar to "MOVE ON PLEASE!" And then again you miss the best ones which seem inevitably to be found in the narrowest gullies, like Budhi Thakurani, where, if a car managed to squeeze in, pedestrians will be well-nigh plastered against the walls.

So a cycle-rickshaw is the answer. The driver knows it too and rates go rocketing. But Dusserah is for everyone, you'll agree (at least after the count-down commences and is clinched at half). Nothing like night-time, you will be told. And after you've returned unscathed, "How many did you see?" they will ask you, and, "The best?" Notes will be compared with gusto, and arguments for and against will cleave the air. But statistics apart, I've seen many a magnificent specimen of plastic art. And one cannot help thinking of the chiselled creations of the master craftsmen of Konarak whose descendants have now come down to moulding malleable clay—and yet with what artistry!

Unhampered by tradition, imagination takes wings and the tableaux vary in theme and treatment. For instance, in one of the many of Siva or

Mahadeva, the consort of Durga is depicted riding his bull in terror-striking stance in the act of destroying a wicked-looking demon, who is incongruously astride a zebra of all things! Naturally, the poor animal from Africa plunged with tail erect, in frozen panic. A delightful departure, palpably motivated by a certain recalcitrant participant of the saw-dust ring parade (the city had sustained the show for a month).

There was an adaptation of the Konarak wheel with Siva and Parvati as the central motif; the famous panel of elephants figured in another; and baby Krishna killed Kaliya, the terrible serpent, in a natural setting over a tank with lotuses (authentic) and neon-lights. There were other mythological groups, all in clay, and glittering with paint, tinsel, satin and nylon too.

At one place, almost invariably, models of top-notch political leaders from the state-level to the 2Ks are displayed (shades of Madame Tussaud's!), besides representations of some of the burning topics of the day. Elsewhere social evils like the dowry system were skilfully dealt with.

There were puppet shows as well, showing women performing ordinary domestic chores, and grandma dandling the baby. I saw a small girl in a passing car solemnly saluting one of these—obviously she had been told they were going out to see the gods.

During the day. Happy crowds of city and village folk. Vendors had their way. A little balloon-seller took time off to lick his ice-cream cone. Paper toys. Clay toys. Pea-nuts. *Baar majaa*. A man with a harmonium and plastic voice, selling songs—5 nP. or 10 nP. per booklet—politics or romance—take your choice. Cars demanded right of way, carrying loads their designers had never dreamed of. Pedi-cab drivers panted with sometimes a family of six or seven crammed in one vehicle—mamma and papa on the seat with the younger two squirming on their laps and the older ones at their feet gazing wide-eyed at everything. Cool drinks. Flutes. Excitement. Joy.

Not satisfied with fleeting glimpses. I sat down one morning to gaze my fill at the Chaudhury Bazaar pandal. It has a unique feature. Since some years now, instead of the usual *medha* (mandorla) of tinsel, paper and *sola*, it has one made entirely of Cuttack's famous silver filigree with an intricate design of flowers, leaves, peacocks and butterflies. Against that elegant background was a superb life-size image of the goddess, flanked by small exquisite images of Lakshmi and Saraswati on one side and a chubby Ganesha and handsome Karttikeya on the other in resplendent raiment. All the ornaments and some of the accoutrements (including the demon's) were made of silver filigree. The Mother's benign look and serene smile radiated an aura of boundless affection and compassion.

* * * *

Far away against autumn's limpid blue an eagle wheeled. On the river bank dragon-flies flitted.

The corpulent carpenter said, "Why didn't you come to see our *debi*?" (Carpenter Street has one every year.) I mumbled something and watched. He carefully folded the pink Benarasi silk saree and placed it in the basket piled with the velvet and tinsel jewellery. In the distance drums spoke. More images were being brought for immersion. He put the nylon hair on top.

A little boy laughed and capered, holding aloft the dripping head of Karttikeya. Someone chased him half-heartedly. He fled grinning with his booty. A small girl lingered for a last look, holding her father's hand. Gently he said, "Come child, Dusserah is over."

MAN AND THE MAID

(Continued from Page 206)

and you have been lying to me these thirty-two years."

Punni giggles over his words, presses close to Lalaji, and says "Ah-ha! Lalaji how you amuse!"

At a wink from Lalaji, Punni staggers towards Hotlagar with open arms. She is drunk. She is about to throw her arms around Hotlagar, when Hotlagar knocks her down to the lap of Lalaji. She screams in the darkness.

Lalaji too is frightened and looks up at Hotlagar. The fellow seems to have gone mad! Like a wild buffalo, he rages—this docile youngman of two and thirty years, who has waited and waited patiently all his life. "You lied to me, you lied," repeats Hotlagar.

Lalaji takes fright and hides himself behind Punni. The wild buffalo is advancing towards him.

But suddenly Hotlagar turns round and moves away, raging. He has changed his mind. Now, he will go his own way—straight eastward!

Sure! she has not gone far—the girl who needs a support, a companion, a man to fill up the void of her lonely life.

REMINISCENCES OF CHITTAGONG REVOLT

(Continued from Page 213)

was given to his most esteemed friend Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel (1931).

Sen Gupta embarked on a visit to the U.K. mainly for the purpose of recouping health. But, the smouldering fire of the Chittagong happenings was yet burning within him. While in London, he availed himself of the opportunity of addressing the Members of the British Parliament on the Indian situation, and in that context, on the very soil of India's Imperial Masters, Sengupta strongly exposed the Britishers' game in Chittagong outrages and reiterated the same challenge to the British Government.

But, the imperialist's power grip was ever ready to silence the leaders of the freedom movement. On return to India Jatindramohan was placed under arrest and removed to Ranchi where, under long detention, he passed away (July, 1933). He was only 53. The great leader lost vitality hour by hour, yet dreamt of his motherland's liberation and died with his mission unfulfilled. When Deshapriya's sacred ashes were carried to Chittagong for interment in the ground of Jatramohan Sen Hall—in the sacred soil of his birthplace—thousands stood by in silent tears and paid homage to their dearest leader (July 30, 1933).

It is worth recalling how the then Collector A. S. Hands, I.C.S. granted special permission for the procession in memory of Sen Gupta's ashes in the prevailing restrictions under Sec. 144 at Chittagong, on the present writer's personal request over the telephone. It is also no less noteworthy that both Hands and the Police Superintendent Cleary, I.P., waited at the foot of the Court Hill as the procession was passing and took off their hats. This was like a true Englishman who knows to honour a hero ("A. B. Patrika" report, August 2, 1933).

NINE MONTHS in a South Indian Prison

By BIRENDRA CHANDRA SEN

IT happened in the year 1914 when we least expected it, just about a month before the first great war broke out. The politicals in Port Blair were causing headache to the then Government of India. One prisoner had died in the hospital and another committed suicide. There were constant strikes and hunger strike. In spite of all the precautions the local authorities could take, news leaked out constantly. The Indian press took up the matter in right earnest, there was great excitement in the central legislature. A general concern for the welfare of the politicals was manifest all over the land, and even the British Parliament moved. The Central Government had to depute two of its topmost officials—Sir Pardey Sukis, the Director-General of the Indian Medical Services, and Sir Reginald Craddock, the then Home Secretary of Government of India—for on-the-spot enquiry. To smooth matters most of the prisoners were sent out, but in a few months' time the entire group of young men struck work on the ground that forced labour was degrading to manhood and were sentenced to short terms of confinement in the Cellular jail. One of these boys elected to remain in jail on the expiry of his term. The others, too, were not to remain outside long—within a few months they were all thrust back to prison on the allegation that they were planning to escape. It was at this stage that the Central Government decided to send them back and to disperse them all over India.

The first one to be sent back to India was Ullaskar Dutt, the architect of the first high explosive bomb. He had lost his head and was, evidently, sent back for better accommodation and treatment. The next batch consisting of seven or eight prisoners including the writer was called upon to pack one fine morning without any previous notice whatsoever just as the Maharaja, the only steamship plying between India and Port Blair, was on the point of weighing another. From our study of the movements of the ship we could only say that we were heading for the port of Madras and no more.

In this ship all the eight of us were put in one of the holds meant for prisoners. The hold was just above the water level. A drain ran all through along the entire length of the inner wall carrying filth from every corner. It was always full of water which was removed twice daily when a sweeper came to clean the hold. We were taken up twice-a-day for airing and for attending calls of nature. At other times we had to manage as best as we could in this very drain. Whenever the ship listed heavily this foul water splashed on the floor and even sometimes drenched us. It was, again, with this filthy water that the floor was 'cleaned'!

For our diet during the voyage we got "chira" or flattened rice, sugar, tamarind, and fried grams. This princely fare reminded us of the Rajput warriors' motto in the most glorious period of their history—"kabhi ghee ghana, kabhi muthibhar chana! Kabhi woh bhi mana". That is "A hearty meal sometimes with plenty of ghee, sometimes a handful of grams only, and sometimes even that is denied." Doubtless it was this readiness to face any eventuality that made them the dauntless warriors that knew no defeat. And if we can call up again this unflinching determination we need have nothing to fear from the combined machination of Pakistan and China.

But to return to our narrative, this modest and humble fare was all right in ordinary circumstances, but when one fell ill, and that with acute diarrhoea, it was difficult. The writer had the ill-luck to fall a victim to its attack. In this dire need one of his fellow politicals came to his rescue. "Don't mind", he assured, "take chira-washing and that will stop this in no time". He put my ration in plenty of water, washed it thoroughly, and let me drink the washings with plenty of sugar. This checked the diarrhoea by the time we reached in the Madras harbour although it left me a bit shaken and feverish.

PRISONERS' BATH

It was the month of June. It seemed terribly hot. We were taken to the shore in a boat and thence in a Police Van to the Madras Penitentiary. It was near about three o'clock by the time we reached there. Those who wanted it were given the prisoner's bath. It was already meal time, and we enjoyed our humble fare after the few days of privations during the voyage although we were not accustomed to it. The meal over we were taken to our cells.

It was yet more than an hour to sunset. The setting sun shone straight on the cells. The heat was oppressive to the extreme. Presently relief came I was asked to pack and was taken out. Though I did not know whither I was going, the relief from the oppressive heat was something much desired. At the gate I was handed over to an armed escort con-

sisting of a European sergeant and a few armed Indian police.

From the jail gate we went straight to the railway station. Subject to the restrictions necessarily applying to a prisoner this sergeant gave me all the facilities he could. He shared with me all the way the books and magazines he carried. He certainly spent substantially more for my fare than sanctioned by the jail code and some of it must have come from his personal supplies. At night he spread out his blanket on the bunk for rest. We had, by this time, reached the bare hilly tracts of the Deccan plateau where the nights are as chilly as the days are hot, and while I rested comfortably wrapped in the blanket, its owner made the best of the chilly night dozing at the window.

Our destination turned out to be Bellary which place we reached on the morning of the third day. I was taken straight to the jail and was placed in one of the segregation cells outside the compound where I had to stay for a few days to make sure that I carried no infection.

Presently the head warder appeared with a blanket, earthen pots and clothing. The earthen pots I refused to accept on the ground that once used they became "jutha" and could not be used by another man. Apart from this, earthen pots constantly used by one man should not be given to another on ground of health. The same is the case with blankets and clothing and these should not be re-issued without washing and disinfection. The jailor was informed, I explained him my difficulty. Then came the super. I must explain here that this refusal was a very serious offence under the Indian Jail Code and might lead even to flogging. But the super was very considerate and I got everything new. He also allowed me a rice diet which I could not claim as a matter of right.

Bellary is one of the four districts ceded by the Nizam and is situated in the Deccan plateau which is one of the driest regions of India consisting of bleak bare hills with intensely hot days and comparatively cool nights. Supplies of water, both for irrigation and consumption, were obtained mainly from two sources: (1) huge reservoirs storing rain water, and (2) deep wells. The town, a fairly big one, seemed to be built round a very big reservoir not less than half-a-mile across each way. There was no sign of any natural vegetation anywhere. On the further side of the jail there stood on a hill-top a fortress built of stone. This was built, as I learnt later, by the famous south-Indian chief, Tipoo Sultan, who defied the British and was at one time a terror and a problem to them and a power to reckon with. The jail gardens were irrigated from a deep well, water from which was drawn by what appeared to be a huge bucket made of leather suspended by a stout rope passing over a pulley. This was worked by manual labour and the water was carried to the gardens by surface drains. The water for the consumption of prisoners was obtained from another well inside the jail, and the consumption was strictly controlled.

The Bellary jail was a Central jail, not as big as the central jails of Bengal, but a medium-sized one with accommodation for about 700 prisoners. The structures were of stone blocks all through and, if I remember aright, there was only one two-storied building, the office building with the jailor's quarters. The staff was exceptionally good. The Super, an Anglo-Indian, never tired of dilating upon the excellence of London, and was named 'St. Samul' by his loving relations; the jailor, also an Anglo-Indian who had taken an Indian wife, was a good soul; the head warder, a native of the soil who spoke English fluently, was very considerate and respectable; and as for the rest of the staff, I have nothing but praise for them.

The main industries of this jail were wool-spinning, blanket weaving and production of vegetables for internal consumption. It was, I believe, this jail that supplied the bulk of the blanket requirements of the South-Indian jails. For the benefit of the present generation it may be stated that the Presidency of Madras, as then constituted, extended along the entire east coast from Ganjam in the north to Cape Comorin in the south and thence northward along the western coast to the borders of south Canara minus the major states of Mysore, Cochin, and Travancore, the French and the Portugese possessions in the coastal areas and the Chief Commissionership of Coorg, plus the entire central area south of the errstwhile Nizam State. The biggest province of British India, it contained all the four main elements of the Dravidian race—the Tamil, Telegu, Malayalam, and Canarese. The Bellary jail was an epitome of the entire province, the Malayalese and the Telegus predominating. But in those days half-a-century ago, there was nothing of the jealousy that developed in the wake of the progressive transfer of power.

DISINFECTED FINGERS

At the end of the period of segregation I was admitted into the jail after passing through the routine formalities. In place of the steel wire ring carrying a wooden tablet bearing my number and class that I wore in the neck in the Bengal and the Port Blair jails I got a metallic piece carrying these particulars hung from my neck by a cotton string. As I entered the jail the first thing that attracted my attention was the scrupulous care with which cleanliness and tidiness was maintained everywhere. The cookshed, particularly, was the model of cleanliness. Every opening was covered by thinmeshed wire-netting allowing free passage to air while it kept out insects. A few convicts sat outside the swing-door carrying small sticks with leather flaps at one end and killed any stray fly that ventured near. The block I was taken to was a big one consisting of long rows of single cells on either side with a nice building at the further end that housed T. B. patients. Along the road leading to the T.B. Ward was a pucca drain that carried water for our use. A new innovation was the provision of two big earthen pots carrying a strong solution of permanganate of potash in which everyone had to dip his hands as he proceeded to take his place in the file for his meals. This was, perhaps, to guard against any possible infection through infected fingers. Meals were served thrice daily. For breakfast we had one measure of 'conjee' every morning and for our mid-day and evening meals, a brick of boiled rice or 'jowari' and dal with vegetables added to it.

During my stay at Bellary plague broke out in the city. Special measures were taken to guard the prison from infection. On a recent occasion some 10 years back an out-break of bubonic plague was brought quickly under control in Calcutta by inoculation and other measures. I do not remember to have been inoculated at Bellary though inoculation against plague was discovered more than a decade earlier. But I understood, every article was sterilised before it entered the jail.

The cell I was put in was about 12' x 8'. My material possessions, in addition to my jail kits, were two humble earthen pots for food and drink and an additional one with a bamboo handle attached for attending calls of nature after the locking up. This last one every prisoner had to place outside his cell every morning. These were, then collected

by the jail sweepers, cleansed and dried, and left in front of the cells. As the prisoners returned to their cells in the evening they had to carry these pots in. This, again, I was exempted from doing, a consideration not shown in every jail.

My first task was wool-spinning in a typical old-pattern charka. The task, eight ounces a day was done by meal-time. On coming to know that I had done some book binding in Port Blair the Super put me to that work. The implements were few and simple—needles, thread, a hammer, a knife, a pair of scissors, wooden knife and folders.

The Super allowed me books from his personal stock. Some of the books received for binding or repairs also provided good reading. "The Orbs of Heaven", Grahams's "Book of Knowledge" (1912), and a volume on Metaphysics were some of the Books I had here, but the two books that I prized most were Hunter's "Imperial Gazetter," Madras (1908), and Watt's "Economic Products of India" (1908)—two master-pieces that ought to be re-edited and brought up-to-date.

MEN I REMEMBER

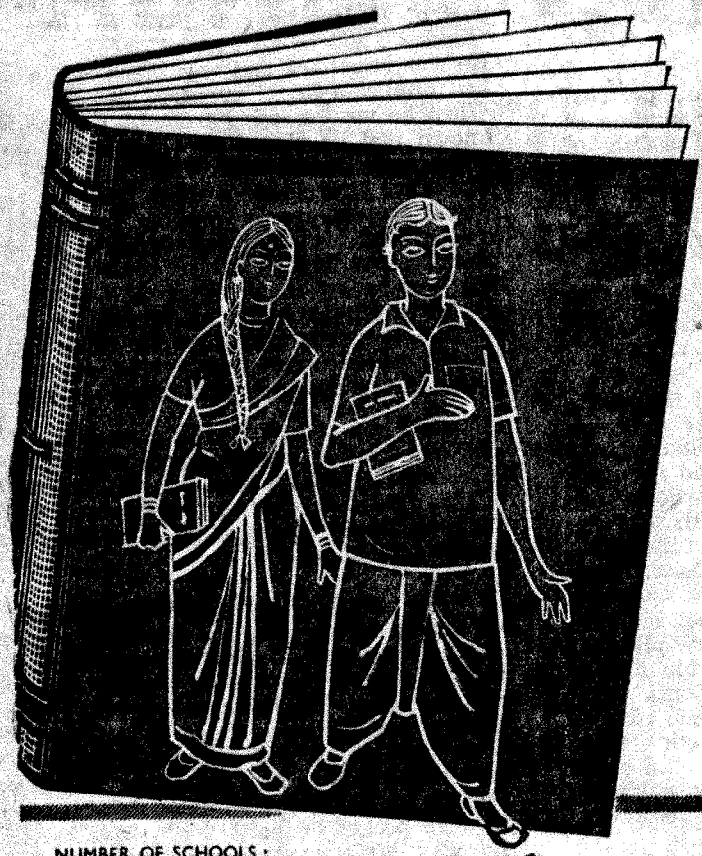
Bengal seems to have an affinity with the south, down to Ceylon. The people were friendly, genial and accommodating. Many of them could speak Hindi and some English. Those who could not also communicated their thoughts by gesticulations and gestures. A T.B. patient was bold enough to visit me. On one occasion he invited me to coffee and offered me biscuits and other rare delicacies. One G. Venkama from Vizag visited me occasionally. He owned a printing press with a book-binding establishment attached at Vizag, and was allowed to work with me. On my release I wrote him a letter. As the simple address of "G. Venkama" reached him he must have been a man of some consequence. He replied by return of post saying that his business was lost and enquiring if I could give him any financial assistance little knowing, evidently, that I belonged to a class whose earthly resources and belongings were meagre and uncertain.

The most interesting person I met here and whose acquaintance I valued above all, was Sri Nilkanta Aiyar from Tanjore. Of about my own age he was a patriot of the first order and belonged to a group of young journalists who preached the Gospel of Freedom. They ran three weeklies that vehemently attacked each other and anyone who read one of them had to read the other for this mere fun of it. The Government of the day found them out soon and the machinery of the Law and Order started moving. One of the group, the Tamil poet Subrahmanya Bharati in whose honour a commemoration stamp was issued on 11.1.62, escaped to Pondicherry and was a close associate of Sri Aurobindo. He had studied the Vedas with Sri Aurobindo and it was his recital of the Riks that interested Kapaly Shastri who, later, compiled a Bhashya of the first Ashtaks of the Rigvedas in the light of Sri Aurobindo's interpretation and named it "Siddhanjana Bhashya" of the Rigveda. Nilkantham was apprehended and got one year's simple under section 124A. Another of his associates was Surendra Nath Arya. Hailing also from the south he had met Swami Vivekananda during his south-Indian tour and discussed with him his doubts and difficulties. The words of the Swamiji—"Surrender not" had so greatly influenced him that he adopted the name of 'Surendranath' in consonance with these words. The surname—Arya—was added later when he joined the Arya Samaj of Swami Dayananda.

Nilkantham was devoted to Sri Aurobindo and wrote under the pen-name of "Kamala-nayakee" to indicate this devotion. I got from him a general view of the political developments in the south. He managed to get papers from outside and it is from him that I got the news of the outbreak of the first World War and its progress, of the shelling of the port of Madras by the fugitive German cruiser "Emden", and of all current events of importance. He was impatient and was planning his escape and had duplicate keys prepared at the jail smithy. When he was missing from his cells it became known that he visited me frequently and I was questioned. Denying the visits was out of question. The other information I could give was that he discussed current events with me, that lately he spoke much about his home and appeared to be home-sick. He got newspapers of course but I could not say how he got them nor could I satisfy the Super on many other matters he wanted to know. And while I was thus under fire the jailor and the chief warder stood speechless, grimly apprehensive lest I should say anything that involved them.

As I was left at that it is possible the police did not think it worthwhile to trouble me further. His arrest within 24 hours on his way to the south might also have given a semblance of truth to my statements and lessoned the gravity of his action in the eyes of Law.

The period of my stay in the Bellary jail was coming to an end. For the day of my release was drawing near and I might have to be sent back for the purpose to the Alipore Central Jail whence I was convicted. The day came at last. I was asked to pack up and the day seemed to be brighter than any other day. At the jail gate I was made over to the escort who was to take me over to Bengal. The Super gave the escort an extra five-rupee note from his own pocket so that I might have better treat on the way. We started on our journey at last and my nine-months' stay in the jail came to an end, but the joy of going back to join my surviving parents and relations was marred in no small measure by the thought of the friend I was leaving behind and whom I have not been able to trace so far.



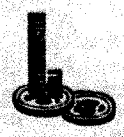
EXPANDING EDUCATION IS THE SECRET OF NATIONAL STRENGTH

Consistent with the major objectives of West Bengal's planned efforts, progress in education has been accepted as a major social responsibility in all the three Plans. The results have been reflected in the rapid strides which the State has taken in the fields of basic, secondary, collegiate, medical and technical education.

NUMBER OF SCHOOLS :
(General Education)
1947-48 = 15,853
1961-62 = 35,208

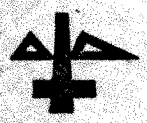
LITERACY (PER CENT) :
1951 = 24.54
1961 = 29.3

STUDENTS IN SCHOOLS :
1947-48 = 15,66,611
1961-62 = 39,52,349



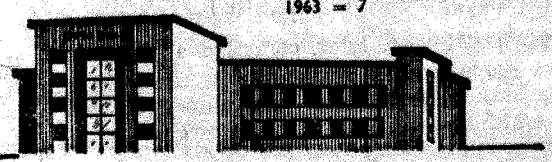
EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION
1947-48 = Rs. 5.59 CRORES
1960-61 = Rs. 34.08 "

NO. OF TECHNICAL INSTITUTIONS :
1947-48 = 13
1961-62 = 48



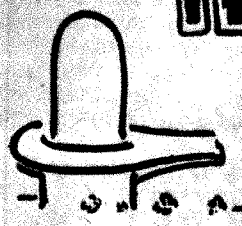
STUDENTS IN TECHNICAL INSTITUTIONS :
1947-48 = 1,135
1961-62 = 6,325

NO. OF UNIVERSITIES :
1947 = 2
1963 = 7



PRO/WBG-14

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL



THE SHIVA-LINGA
a new interpretation

By BHABANI PRASAD NIYOGI

ASK a scholar of west, and he will tell you glibly that the Siva-Linga as worshipped in India is the phallic symbol deified by many ancient races and religions. Strangely, the phallic interpretation is accepted by a majority in India including even the most devout worshipper of Siva. The Sanskrit word "linga" which is popularly used as a synonym of phallus or its feminine counterpart, also promotes this interpretation.

According to a story in Padmapurana, the god Siva and his spouse Durga once offended Bhrigu the sage and some others by refusing to see them when the couple were enjoying each other's company. Enraged, the sage cursed them, and Siva and Durga were converted to the phallus and its feminine counterpart respectively. From then on offerings to Siva were considered as unholy, and Brahmins who stuck to the worship of Siva were looked upon as fallen. Worshippers of Siva rubbed their bodies with ashes and were declared outcastes. That is why Dilip the king described the Siva-Linga as the horrible and shameful shape to which Hara Gouri were transformed—the shape that was despised by all. The Siva-Linga as worshipped today is supposed to be the phallus and female genital part referred to in this story.

Now let us listen to another Purana. The *Linga-purana* says that the Gouri-Patta of the Siva-Linga emblem which is interpreted as the genital part of Gouri, is Gouri herself, and the egg-shaped stone piece, the phallic symbol of popular belief, is Hara himself. All the gods and *Asuras* worshipped the Hara-Gouri emblem with reverence. In the 37th chapter of the *Lingapurana* it is said that Brahma and other gods, mighty monarchs, men of all sorts and sages, worshipped the Siva-Linga. Rama, who was Vishnu incarnate, worshipped the Siva-Linga after killing Ravana. By worshipping the Linga one is absolved of the sin of killing a hundred Brahmins.

That Purana says that the worship of Siva-Linga alone can give one Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha and the Siddhis. It is said that Narayana himself had declared that by worshipping the Siva-Linga the devotee worships every conceivable entity fit to be worshipped.

The shape of the Bana-Linga, the standard Linga worshipped in every household is that of a duck's egg, which does not suggest the phallus, or does so vaguely at best. In some passages, the egg-shaped emblem is represented as Siva himself and in other passages it is said to represent Brahma at the bottom, Hari in the middle, and Hara at the top. This is quite in keeping with the theory that Brahma, Hari and Hara are identical. Also, according to orthodox view, Gouripatta or the Bedika is Gouri herself.

Now here is another Purana. The Skanda-purana says: He who spends his time from day to day without worshipping the Siva-Linga becomes a fallen man. The worship of Siva-Linga on one side balances all sorts of gifts, bratas, visits to holy places, austerities, and sacrifices on the other. The devotees should give up all sorts of ineffective religious practices and stick to the worship of Siva-Linga alone.

This estimate of the worship of the Siva-Linga is the orthodox estimate still prevalent in Bengal. A pious Hindu, whether a Brahmin or a non-Brahmin, man or woman, considers his daily religious practices finished, and well finished, if he daily performs the worship of Siva-Linga in the Hara-Gouri emblem. It falsifies the claim of the Padmapurana that Brahmins ceased to worship Siva and Durga after they were converted to the phallic shapes by the curse of Bhrigu.

I have brought in the evidences of the Skanda-purana and the Lingapurana just to neutralise that of the Padmapurana in support of the phallus theory. The question still remains: What does the Linga stand for?

ETYMOLOGY

The meaning of phallus which attaches to the Sanskrit word Linga is traceable to usage. Etymologically the word Linga originally meant, and still means, sign.' It is derived from the root *Linga* which is 'to paint' or 'to write a mark', from which

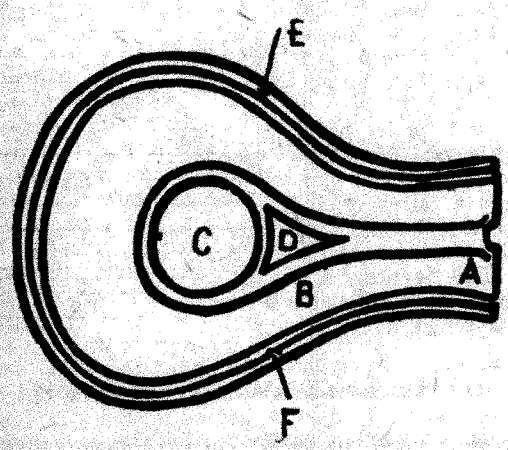
---

This article has been posthumously taken from an enormous heap of unpublished manuscripts left by the author who worked himself to death researching on the antiquity of Bengal. BHABANI PRASAD NIYOGI (1871-1949) who made a brilliant start with a Calcutta University triple honours, appearing from the Presidency College, had to cut short his scholarly career by accepting a Deputy Magistrate's post under the British Government of India. But he did not cease from his pursuit of letters, and the assiduity and spirit of probe which he brought to bear upon his midnight studies, was truly representative of the "old school". He hailed from a well-known family of scholars of Mymensingh district, now in East Pakistan and was respected by many in his time.

comes the sense 'sign' or 'emblem'. Subsequently it was also used to mean a sign of a male or a female. An analogy might help—in English, the word 'piano' means the musical instrument of the name. But 'piano', originally an Italian word, means 'soft', as in 'soft notes, soft sound' etc. The instrument which could be played both soft and loud, was called 'pianoforte,,' and it is shortened to 'piano.' So if we forget that 'piano' means 'soft' and assert that it only means a particular type of musical instrument, we only betray half-learning. I hope it is now clear that Siva-Linga may also mean "the emblem of Siva," which is not necessarily his phallus.

Let us consider the structure of the Bana-Linga in greater detail, as specified in the relevant texts. The emblem has three parts: the upper, called the *Linga*, the middle which surrounds the *Linga* called the *bedika*, or Gouripatta, and the lower, the *Pitha* or pedestal. The part of the *Bedika* that is elongated is called the *Pinaka*, the pointed end of the *Pinaka* is called the *Nala* or *Somasutra*.

The Linga part of the emblem is carved out of a stone piece more or less the shape of an egg, which is placed in a hemispherical cavity scooped in another piece. (The egg-shaped piece is detachable, but in the emblem used for household worship the *Linga* and *Bedika* are in one piece, either stone or clay.) The egg-shaped stone is the *Linga* and the one with the cavity is the *Bedika* or the *Gouripatta* (Gouripatta—that which is surrounded by Gouri). "পক্কজম্বুফলাকারং কুক্কুটাণ্ড সমাকৃতি".....the shape of a ripe 'jaam' fruit or an egg—is what the Linga should be. Bedika or Gouripatta is a flat piece of metal or stone with a hemispherical cavity near about the centre, a drain going almost right round it, and another drain entering the cavity from the tapering end, making a triangular formation just before it enters the cavity (see diagram.)



We have seen that the main grounds on which the theory of Linga being the phallus is made to stand can be neutralised with counter-grounds. Similarly the Gouripatta should not necessarily be supposed to represent the genital part of Gouri. It may be a symbol of the many-branched Gouri river entering into Hara Sagar forming a delta, a geographical phenomenon symbolised in the curious legend of the birth of Kartikeya or Skanda, in *Skanda-purana*.

The legend has it that somehow the river Kutila (alias Saraswati), the daughter of the mountains, became the mother and Agni became the father of Skanda or Kartikeya, who is generally known as Parbatinandana, i.e. son of Parbati, the daughter of the Himalaya mountains. Kutila abandoned the child in a reed forest and six Krittikas wanted to suckle him simultaneously. This is why the boy developed six mouths to please them all. (Sharanana is another name of Kartikeya). Subsequently Hara admitted that Skanda was his son by Gouri, as well as the son of Agni and Kutila. The reed forest which sheltered the boy was his foster father and the Krittikas the foster mother.

Reading through the symbolism of this legend it is possible to recognise the topography of a certain part of the country mentioned in the Puranas. It may be put thus: Hara the deity symbolises Hara Sagara, the sea that was at the foot of the Himalayas and extended from the Indus to the Lohit river (Brahmaputra). Or to put it the other way round Hara Sagara was supposed to represent the deity Hara.

Similarly, Gouri or Durga, the spouse of Hara is the symbol of the many branched Gouri River (Dashabhuja, the Many Armed Mother, is another name of goddess Durga).

Agni Sagar was a part of Hara Sagar and the branches of the Gouri river called Kutila Saraswati or Krittika fell into Agni Sagar and might have jointly formed a delta with six heads, which is supposed to be represented by Kartikeya the Six Mouthed.

The suggestion that the above topography is symbolised in the curious legend of the same child having two actual mothers and two actual fathers, and of a child developing six mouths may not be a mere wild guess.

In the figure, the channel A with the bifurcation B may be identified with Gouri river and its branch Kutila Saraswati respectively, and the central cavity C with Hara Sagar and Agni Sagar combined. The triangular formation about D may be identified with the delta symbolised by Kartikeya, although the six heads due to the six Krittikas branching from Kutila Saraswati have not been represented in the Bedika.

Relics of the geographical phenomenon of Gouri entering Hara Sagar and forming a delta are also discernible in the map of modern Bengal. Some rivers retain in their names a corruption of the word Gouri, and their courses which must have changed a good deal in course of the centuries still suggest the layout of the drains cut along the outline of Gouripatta (E and F) as well as the central channel (A).

It is significant that the river Atreyi in Rajsahi district is also called the Gur which may be a corruption of Gouri. It may be identified with the central channel of the Gouri River. The Krittika branch is suggested by the Kartikpur Dara river in Malda district. The lower course of the Tista in Mymensingh district is called Gure Ali, and a town on its bank is called Gouripur. From this the Tista channels may be imagined to be the branch of Gouri that deviated to the south-east direction. The syllable 'Gur' is retained also in the name of Siliguri (along with other place names in North Bengal), and the Nagor branch of Mahananda river which washes the feet of the town Siliguri, and flows south-west suggests the origin Nava Gouri.

The vast sheet of water called the Chalan Bil in Rajsahi district is well known to Bengalis. A river having its source in the Chalan Bil is called the Harasagar Nadi. Does it point to the probability of Chalan Bil being a remnant of Hara Sagar? Similarly a 'bil' near it is called Agundaha and suggests Agnisagar. The positions of these waters in the map of Bengal in relation to the rivers mentioned tally with that of the cavity in the Gouripatta

(Continued on Page 224)

Unforgettable Women

MADE TO MEASURE

By TAPAN SEN

WHAT do you remember a woman for? Beauty, charm, grace, intelligence, responsiveness or just a pattern of life that is fascinating and so is not to be lost? More than that almost every woman features on one or two occasions which are particularly memorable, and having been instrumental to these moments such a woman may well take on a shade of immortality. These occasions pop up and remain lodged in memory although the rest of the life which lived through these moments of glory has nothing in it to hold attention. May be it was an evening stroll out in the garden when whips of rain made a showdown and flicked spoil at her bright dress, but unrestrained she insisted on horseplay and wheeling round and round you, shielding under cupped hands —a shield that really was no good. Or is it that one day when you were deep set to study, she came in breezily, swept your attention the moment she arrived, and after bantering this way or that she entreated you into a programme of her own. Now rain comes when she is no more and in a flash, a mist of rain brings her back to your mind as ever before. Similarly, when she is past and alone you sit in the study, there can be times when you are looking straight to her vision. This sort of occasions are quite commonplace and if being a participant in such occasions is a criterion of an unforgettable woman, well too many women appear as being unforgettable .

GRACE AND BEAUTY

We are, therefore, to look in for more definitive stamps, the marks of which can at once render a woman imperishable. One such mark is the mark of beauty. Beauty is good to the looking and this is as long as one looks at it. What is more it catches immediate attention and if only you got your sights, you perceive what a delight a beautiful face brings in. But beauty lends itself to pass through phases of change. So that a face which in young age had been very handsome and demanding, as it grows into middle years takes a tone of sweetness and at last, lined by wisdom and experience, makes a face of appealing serenity. History presents a mass of evidence to prove that towards being an extraordinary woman it pays to possess a good face. It enhances effect as soon as possible and puts a gloss over other points of superiority that are also there but could have died unseen had the face been just ordinary. A good face is like a well-composed advertisement, ready and aching for attention and most of the time getting it. The result is other things being equal, the choice is invariably in favour of the more attractive. Now here, now there all over the world, they seem to say sardonically, 'I told you she is not just another woman. She has a beautiful face', as if that in itself asserts her having true virtues. But if prettiness is what makes a woman high or cuts her for better things, history has also on record a bunch of women having been consumed and wasted in flames of passion which their beauty created.

So it is not just prettiness or charm that may also be rusticly referred to as sex-appeal. Had it been so harem girls or dancing maidens would have reached heights of glory and been a part of living memory. But squarely, they never could stay and as they rode crests of fluctuating fashion they were abandoned as soon as they could be replaced or new criterions of fashion arose. Whatever it may be, it is seen that women who got presentable faces in addition to their virtues were and still are regarded with attention worth more than the hump of virtues they were or are loaded with.

The appeal of a lovely face or for that matter figure is not only for the sentimental but also for the rational-minded. While the sentimental are overwhelmed by grace and admit it to be so, the rational minded keep their reasons ready to justify their preference. For instance, they may say that a good face is a mirror reflecting inner things that are as good. Nevertheless such a reason may not on occasions be any good at all. So why a false reason or a vain way to give the world to understand things? Let us face it. Without any other consideration in view, a beautiful face or figure is joy enshrined, a joy for everybody to see.

INTELLIGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT

Is it intelligence then? In a good way it is. It is probably established by now that prettiness of mind is another name for intelligence. Promptness and trim of mind shoot anybody to the centre of appreciation. However, we appreciate intelligence or rather a hint of intelligence so naturally that it is too obvious and seems to slip out of conventional consideration. This is the reason why the part of intelligence has come to be recognised and examined on its own merit from not so long ago. Even in our country which unfortunately is one where emancipation of women by western standards, at any rate, is yet to be complete, women are expected more and more to grow faculties of education and career-making, if possible. So much so that even women who are being diverted in marriages to housekeep and rear families only are preferred when basically cultivated and awakened. If the twentieth century is fantastic for scientific advance, it is not less so in

the field of culture, etiquette and literature. Today a woman or a man, a girl or a boy, she or he may not enter the world without a sort of aesthetic flourish and here there is a rigid minimum beyond which no one can go. Perhaps the centuries ahead will require us to be of a more and more, subtle order if there are more of us to live in this world and when you are jampacked with people on all sides, you got to drown your grumbles and put on a polish against their invading your privacy, the polish of sympathy and accommodation, the polish of culture.

When intelligence is meant, it is not intelligence pure and simple but intelligence dotted with a discretion of vocabulary and laced with a sense of responsiveness. Mind must be more than discerning things correctly, it must also absorb and encourage others' ideas. A lady to whom many voices wish to go out and nod hello is a girl who understands and what is more can take away the monotony of speaking replacing it by a verve of communication. So that a person in her contact can do or say many things he ever wished to do or say but never could bring himself to.

TONING AND CONTROL

All the same, womanly woman who is recollected and admired as such is a creature of deep reserve. She is not a screen version of life pushing her femininity at the slightest opportunity but is preserving it being jealous of it. A man in love with a woman wants this femininity securely tucked away from him for his not being pampered by it but all the same, the very warmth of it becomes his source of inspiration.

He that loves a rosy cheek
Or a coral lip admires,
Or from star-like eyes doth seek
Fuel to maintain his fires;
As old time makes these decay,
So his flames must waste away.
But a smooth and steadfast mind,
Gentle thoughts, and calm desires,
Hearts with equal love combined,
Kindle never — dying fires:—
Where these are not, I despise
Lovely cheeks or lips or eyes.
—T. Carew

RESPONSIVENESS

What happens in this work-a-day world? Everybody is set on his own track which is a part of a rat race that gives no respite or pause for sympathy and fresh encouragement. When a man and a woman are in love, they are sidestepping the race and doing something else. Here a woman is one thing if she is casual and wise of the time and energy she gives to this engagement. But if she throbs the boy with dreams of a common future and recites how green will be their valley she puts irresistible charm to these minutes of togetherness. At one stroke she becomes unforgettable.

Music, when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory—
Odours, when sweet violets sicken,
Live within the sense they quicken
. . . . . And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,
Love itself shall slumber on
—P. B. Shelley

An unforgettable woman has other dimensions too. She is essentially one that loves to be in the middle of one's events and circumstances, sharing one's joy and pang with others as well as others' with one's. She is not exclusive and as far as it goes, she gives the appearance of feeling interested in every affair around her. Unlike most of men she knows how life is got to be utilised and naturally she is not an on looker on life but rushes in on life caring and taking note of everything immediate or mediate; things happen to her, she happens to them. In this world if the striking force is Man's then the power to consolidate, mitigate and humanise the force may be Woman's. In short, a woman hoping to get fastened on memory must be active on life.

GOODNESS

Not that Man and Woman must take total jobs, worries and rigours in halves but that operation should be mainly on Man's shoulder as peace and stability a Woman's purpose to live. Although a large portion of women is extraordinary for quarrel and intrigue, there are also those who are easily the most tranquil and levelheaded. It is not moments of rupture but periods of adjustment. So one reason why one or other woman is or is supposed to be hemming domestic affairs is not so much that she is able to do little else but that she must be available to quell disturbances and work a system of order at home. Hence it is seen that a legendary woman must be good too. She is to be remembered above all for her being a woman and as such having all those traits that make grandma a portrait of ceaseless affection, *ma* a gift of love and sweetheart a hint of romance. Is not the Elizabethan age with its values a nice thing then?

Yet the poet who flung those lines 'I did but see her passing by, And yet I have her till I die,' might have been accentuated by none more or none else than a mood of moment. It is not so much to possess germs of beauty but the power to develop beauty in the middle of all events. You see it well and even virtue is a beauty.

THE SHIVA-LINGA

(Continued from Page 222)

in relation to the channels A, B, E and F (Channel A for Atreyi, channels E and F for Tista and Mahananda respectively.)

So if we imagine that Hara Sagar and the Gouri river with its branches as mentioned in the legends are represented in the Banalinga emblem on the basis of the comparison of the diagrams and resemblance of names, we may take the emblem of Siva-Linga to be the symbol of the motherland of the people who worshipped it, and discard the phallus theory.

It is significant that the rule with the Gouripatta is that the tapering end with the three drains convergent should always point towards north when worshipped. The Banalinga of household worship, or the clay linga, always has the tapering end of the Gouripatta towards north. In household worship also the worshipper has to sit facing north. The Gouri river enters Bengal from the north, and its branches also flow more or less from north to south.

It is more logical to believe that these men loved their motherland, saw the divine mother in the motherland and the motherland in the divine mother, and deified a delta because it was the offspring of the divine river which was one with the Divine Mother. Any obscene representation of their Divine Parents was far from their conscious thought.

THE WARRIOR DANCE of SIKKIM

By SATYAVIR

EVERY year in August or September, depending upon when the auspicious date recurs in the Tibetan Almanac—the 15th day of the 7th Tibetan month—is sent forth from the palace in Gangtok, an invitation to attend 'The celebration of the worship of the Snowy Range of the Kinchinjunga' or the 'Warrior Dance'. The day is declared a holiday and you soon find yourself joining the stream of jeeps and pedestrians wending their way to the palace gate, where for once the red-coated sentry lets everyone in. So fantastic is the scene that greets your eyes inside, that if it were not for obvious differences, you could easily believe yourself back in the Middle Ages.

The lawns between the palace monastery, a colourful and beautiful building and the prayer-pavilion is cordoned off, to serve as a stage, with the sky as a roof. In the pavilion are seated the red mitred Lama musicians with trumpets, cymbals and weird drums, ready for action. To their left under a Tibetan canopy sits the gold-clad Maharaja, surrounded by his family, invitees, and officials of the court. Opposite him is the friendly crowd composed of men, women and children, Sikkimese, Tibetans, Indians and Nepalese, jogging each other merrily, multifaced and multicoloured against a backdrop of the eternal mountains hidden partially by thick, black clouds with the palace in the foreground.

From behind the curtained entrance of the Gompa, comes out the Master of Ceremonies clad in the Royal colours carrying a staff adorned with scarves and proceeds to the centre of the stage, where he takes his stand under a flagstaff bearing the Royal Standard and the Prayer Flag in the five auspicious colours.

From the sides are led in ponies, black and white, the mounts of the Kinchinjunga, Mahakala and Thengla, caparisoned and bedecked to the hilt. Incidentally, these ponies are never ridden or saddled, and live in the palace stables. They are brought in during the dance. Whenever their masters appear on the scene, if they tremble or show signs of friskiness, it is an augury of good and makes everyone happy. The musicians busy themselves and there is a crescendo of sound ;*trumpets blare, cymbals clash, and drums drone, the curtains part once more and out emerge the warrior-dancers, colourfully booted, clad in rich tunics, with heavy head-gears and wielding swords and shields (which they manipulate with great dexterity throughout the dance) and forming a circle around the Master of Ceremonies begin their dance. A few solemn paces, swords and shields held aloft, a breath-taking jump and whirl, and a stance—these are the basic steps of the dance with a number of other variations. They go in , and out comes a black masked soloist—Mahakala—who after dancing round and round takes his seat in the pavilion. Another masked figure who participates is the Kinchinjunga. Two masked clowns also come on the arena and amuse the crowd by imitating the dancers.

THUNDERBOLT STEP

The warrior dance is peculiar to Sikkim and is not to be found in other Northern Buddhist countries. It was composed by the third consecrated ruler of Sikkim, Chagdor Namgyal (1686-1717). This festival dance is performed in celebration of the worship of the spirit of the 'Kang-chen-mdzod-Lnga' or 'Kinchinjunga', meaning 'the five treasure Houses of Snow'. This deity, regarded as the war deity of Sikkim, represented as riding a white mount, with a red body and carrying a red spear, belongs to the

.RAJ JYOTISHI

World Famous Astro Palmist and Tantrik RAJ JYOTISHI Mahopadhyaya Pandit Dr. HARISH CH. SHASTRI, Examiner Govt. Board of Astrological Studies.

HOUSE OF ASTROLOGY
45A, S. P. Mukherjee Rd., Calcutta-26
(East of Hazra Park) Phone: 47-4693

This all-powerful yogi of international fame can tell the past, present and the future accurately. The sure effect of his Kavachas and Santisastyayana, which he makes in course of his religious duties ensures brilliant success, because he gained a special spiritual and Tantrik power by deep meditation. Thousands have honoured him with unsolicited testimonials.

SHANTI KAVACHA:—To gain mental peace, happiness in family, ensure success in examination and in promotion Rs. 5/- Special Rs. 20/-.

BAGALA KAVACHA:—For over coming enemies, and for winning complicated law-suits, to secure services & to prosper in business—Rs. 12. Special Rs. 45 only.

Read — JEWEL OF PALMISTRY (in English — Rs. 7/-) and **SAMUDRIK RATNA** (Bengali—Revised & Enlarged 2nd Edition—Rs. 6/-). Written by Panditji to remove the long felt want of up-to-date books on Palm-reading.

CARL ZEISS

The great name in optics

MEDICO-OPTICAL INSTRUMENTS

for modern hospitals

ZEISS LIGHT COAGULATOR for Retinal Detatchment Surgery.

ZEISS FUNDUS CAMERA for Ophthalmologists.

ZEISS SLIT LAMP APPARATUS for Eye Examination and Surgery.

ZEISS EYE OPERATION MICROSCOPE

ZEISS OTOSCOPE for Ear, Nose, Throat Surgery.

ZEISS COLPOSCOPE for Gynaecologists.

ZEISS DIPLOSCOPE for special Microsurgery.

ZEISS FLUORESCENCE MICROSCOPE for clinical examinations in haematology and parasitology.

ZEISS FLAME PHOTOMETER PF5

ZEISS PHOTO - ELECTRIC PHOTOMETER

Made by Carl Zeiss in West Germany.

Sole Agents :

ADAIR, DUTT & CO. (INDIA) PVT. LTD,

Calcutta : New Delhi : Bombay : Madras : Secunderabad

Use Railway Media

Try bow and arrow still you miss the duck
Try Railway media and have all the luck

Any Enquiry for your Advertisements, enquire : **COMMERCIAL PUBLICITY OFFICER**

SOUTH EASTERN RAILWAY

11, GARDEN REACH ROAD, CALCUTTA-43 • PHONE: 45-5769, 45-5349, 45-2390
GRAM: CPUOSER

C/PUO/3/63.

Madhabi Mukherjee, leading lady of Satyajit Ray's latest Bengali film offering "Mahanagar."

INDIA'S HERITAGE & THE CINEMA

By RITWIK GHATAK

RECENTLY a friend of mine has come from Athens.

He saw there the film 'Electra', the latest film by Michael Cacoyannis based upon the Aeschylus tragedy. He was full of remembrances. He could not forget the film. I learned from his enthusiastic report the surprisingly virile details of Heroic Greece.

Our conversation strayed to other films like Jules Dassin's "Phaedra" and Cocteau's treatment of Orpheus legend and similar films.

Then he suddenly stooped forward and in an eager voice asked why we, the new film-makers, do not take up such legends and myths from ancient Indian classics and folk-lores as our subject matters in films.

I weakly tried to point out that some eminent film makers of new trend in our country have announced some such projects sometime or other. There was some talk of foreign collaboration in some projects, in fact. I had to admit in a shame-faced manner that of course those projects never saw the light of day. My friend from Greece was really cross with me because he saw only the horrid hashes that go in the name of mythological film in our country.

I raked up in defence that much-flogged horse, the budget of a Bengali film. My friend brushed me aside, mentioning the production costs of my and some of my colleague's films.

After he departed I really started brooding. I have seen some of our mythological films which are steady money-earners in our countryside. I could not reject my departed friend's contentions nor

(Continued on next page)

DIRECTOR'S GOAL

(Continued from page 231)

cooperation from the artistes and intense competitive challenge from other quarters are extremely intricate. They need all the ingenuity, intelligence and patience of the director to properly understand them in all their implications, and stand up to them adequately.

It is a pity that the director generally finds it difficult to make the producer evaluate his labour in the context of the anticipated cost of his production. Whereas the proneness to pay a fabulous sum to a star seems to make the producer shine in his cheeks in conscious self-importance the director's place in the scheme of things tends to be relegated to the background. His labour and remuneration therefore, are taken for accepted facts. The star and the correlated factors seem to overshadow everything — even the director who will work as the pivot of the game of star worship.

NOT ALL BLACK

I shall not, however, try to paint it all black. There are a good many producers who understand the importance of the director and gives him the freest possible hand in the making of a picture. The story, the artistes, the technical crew, the music director and even the publicity campaign are necessarily approved by the director Such freedom and importance are rare but they are known of. In a case of such freedom the success of the picture concerned should be assured. It sometimes is. Sometimes it is not. But that is another matter. No human director can guarantee the box-office success of a picture.

I am sometimes asked what I can or cannot do to halt the onrush of difficulties consequent upon the star-system. In other words, I am asked to devise ways of cutting down the staggering cost of production of today. This is almost asking me to do the impossible for as a director I am a mere cog in the production machine. The star-system is rooted far deeper than is commonly imagined. Specially, its involvement with public liking makes it all the more difficult to be dispensed with. The star-system is not peculiar to West Bengal. It is the eternal craze everywhere. So the system has got to be left to itself. I tend to think that the remedy against rising cost does not lie only in finding out new talents. The new talent of today is sure to flower into the star of tomorrow with his or her demand for inflated remuneration. Apart from this, there is another deep-lying cause which has got to be reckoned with. The film industry is an industry of opulence. It has of needs got to wear the look of richness and glamour. You cannot stint and go into a programme of austerity in films. The richer and the more magnificent they look the bigger and more irresistible is the appeal. There is no getting away from this truth. You can try to avoid misspending but you cannot make your picture, apart from ornamenting it with popular players, put on a widowed appearance.

I would like to conclude by wishing that the films of tomorrow be worthier and more expressive of the lives and thoughts of our people. If a coordinated production industry can make this task easy, we all will have done our bits worthily. And director or carpenter, to be worthy is the goal he must strive for.

INDIA'S HERITAGE AND THE CINEMA

Continued From Previous Page

could I defend myself from his accusations. Those films are really abominable—not only as films but also as tributes to our glorious gods and heroes.

When one comes to think of it, it is really a paradox that the nation which has the most varied, the most profound, the most significant heritage of Puranas and Mahakabyas, has never seriously cared in matters of film, to take help of this glorious material.

Of course there is an economic aspect to it. But when one comes down to it is it really insurmountable? A "mythological" film presumably costs more. But at the same time, it is the staple product of our industry and, as such, provides a maximum amount of guarantee of a steady return. One or two films of this kind, I remember,—though in no way superior to others excepting the use of famous actors who are normally not employed in such film and better production mounting—have fared very well even in the big cities.

I think we have never really bothered to care for such subjects. Because if one goes deep into it, the prospect becomes breath-taking.

If we take up any well known exploit of a "Bhima" or "Arjuna",—the nuances that can be brought into play may impregnate the old theme with absolutely new significances. As the stories and fates of such heroes are known to the public to the last detail, — interest always centres round in such films to the interpretation and the execution part of it.

What a freedom is given to the artist! He has not to carry the load of story point, suspense intrigue and such matters in the normal senses of the terms. He can re-interpret freely (as Madhusudan did in 'Meghnad Badh Kabya') these age old legends and put in messages for today through these archetypal figures. He can comment on present day life by allegory and by juxta position of thoughts, customs and usages. He can even provide us with answers to the ills that haunt us today. He can sublimate our very recent sufferings.

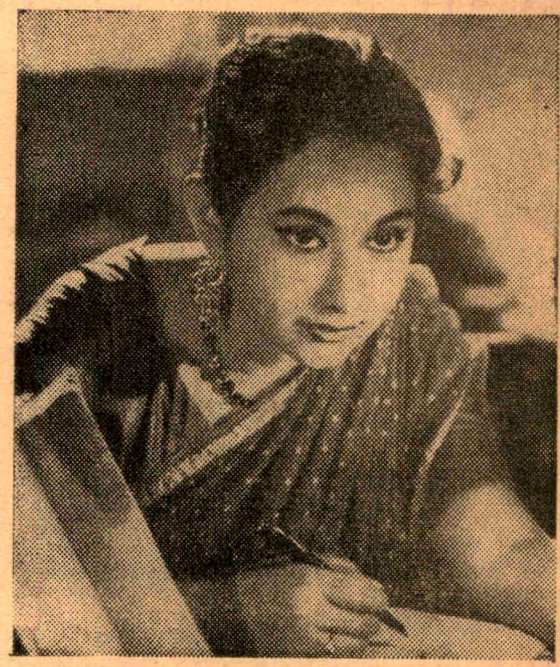
On the level of production point there may be no many challenges. One can delve deep into the history of the Heroic Age of India. The invading Aryans, their expansion eastwards, their slow but inevitable change from Nomadic to settled, farmer's mode of life, their handicrafts, chariotry, weaponry, mode of warfare, marriage customs, — in fact the entire culture complex that is Heroic India, — can throw up exciting indications of plastic materials.

The philosophy of India, which was at a state of constant flux at the time, evolving towards the rigid code of much later age, — is also an extremely exciting material for finding that mystique which is of paramount importance today.

I do not know whether anybody will undertake such a project in near future in our country. But if somebody did, it would have been an undertaking worth applauding.

For ADULTS-REALLY

By KABITA SARKAR



Sandhya Roy, a Bengali screen favourite.

IT was an inevitable corollary of censorship that children and adolescents — in short, minds susceptible to dubious influences— should be excluded for their own good from certain types of films. Obviously the degree of sensitivity of each child is not the same and the restriction to those over eighteen, while appearing a trifle arbitrary, has this in its favour, that it makes a generally acceptable barrier. The themes reserved for adults generally involve those of sex and horror (inclusive of extreme cruelty), and there is perhaps some justification for this for so long as the claim of unbridled sex and hair-raising horror in film is genuine.

Regrettably more and more films having an "A" tagged on to them are, in actual fact, reasonably innocuous and can often be seem by children without adverse results. The general audience has come to consider an "A" certificate as symbolic of the sensational — and often without even bothering to investigate further, the parenthetical "A" after the title is an added allurement to see the film. The fact that experience has proved that this is just as often a snare and a delusion hardly counts. The Censor in a way gives the distributors and the exhibitors free publicity — often of an undesirable and generally of a misleading nature. If one were to examine the film content of the Indian cinema, apart from the general trend towards vulgarity and dubious taste in the general conception, there is seldom anything more devastating to the general morale. Conversely, there is rarely anything in it to appeal to a specific "adult" audience in the sense that it is essentially too mature in conception to be understood by a juvenile audience. Occasionally there might be a film calculated to provoke the audience to concerted action against a social or economic ill — but this is rare enough. Generally it is expressed in a romantic guise, so that the adolescent members of the audience accept the film on the level of general entertainment and happily overlook the implicit moral, which in any case consists of lengthy tirades. These films are in any case created for adult impact and universally shown.

The system in other countries is worth consideration. In most places there is an understandable avoidance of any reference, however oblique which might offend religious susceptibilities. In some places there is also a taboo against minorities being shown in a bad light. (This however, is not so consistently maintained and fluctuates with current political prejudice). In France, as compared with the Anglo-Saxon approach, sex, as a subject in the film, is relatively uninhibited, but censorship in matters political is very strong, nor is the problem film, which essentially is compelled to show the less savoury side of the French economic and social scene, much favoured. Carne's *Les Tricheurs* with its exposition of heady recklessness and abandon among youth was a relative rarity — heavily criticised at the time. Hollywood on the other hand, whatever its artistic shortcomings, has never been given adequate credit for its hard-hitting social themes which intrinsically display the negative facet of the much-vaunted super-hero. And in the showing of these aspects of national life — unless the element of violence is too great, as happened with THE WILD ONES there are seldom any exceptions made to the members of the audience.

"INTELLECTUALISM"

These are really adult films for they demand intelligent appraisal and consideration and cannot be dismissed with the casualness of the escapist film. In the Indian cinema however there are very few

films made specifically to produce this intelligent reaction or a thought-provoking aftermath. The accent is consistently on the entertainment element, and relatively rarely on any higher level of appeal. The constant confusion of "intelligent" with "intellectual" is a deliberately perpetrated myth and any director who aims at a higher level of intelligence, is automatically suspect of "intellectualism" — and his films are tacitly avoided by those very adults who would benefit immeasurably, and in turn be able to benefit these films.

One of the very few Indian directors whose films are consciously not calculated to pander to the lowest common denominator of the human intelligence, without however being unduly high-brow, is Satyajit Ray. Thematically anyone, even a child, might derive some pleasure from seeing *"Pather Panchali."* There is finesse and no concession to the cruder instincts of the audience — and if, at times, a passage seems too restrained for them, it is not obscure to those whose way of life it seeks to define, nor for the more sensitive members of the foreign audience. And for those who miss the emphasis of the obvious, it is because they seek to judge these films in terms of the conventional Indian cinema—which this is not. In the West again, Ray's films are the rare Indian ones received with enthusiasm. Not a little of this is due to the fact that he is one of the few film makers who treats the audience as if it is mentally of age.

It has been cynically suggested that the obvious if small widening of the scope of the cinema, mentioned earlier, and the maturity of conception in a relatively few films of the cinema as a whole, is an inevitable attendant factor of the general evolution of the cinema. Perhaps this is partly so — but that hardly justifies a tacit acceptance of it. The original bias of the cinema has, in most countries, remained intrinsically unchanged, but again, in many specific spheres, there is a perceptible revaluation in the light of current needs, and a greater mental sophistication not to mention changed circumstances. Some directors have made a constant and consistent effort in film after film to achieve a degree of maturity, to break away from the eternal boy-meets-girl merry-go-round. Often they have been unsuccessful at the box-office and after an initial venture have been forced back into the rut. Many of the serious-minded directors have reluctantly, but practically, come to the conclusion that for every unusual film they *"wish"* to make, they *"must"* also make a pot-boiler to balance their accounts.

TYCOONS WONDERED

Yet all of the finest films, artistically speaking, have not necessarily been museum relics and box-office ciphers outside the specialised cinemas, and some, like *Marty* have even been unexpected box-office successes. Relatively recently there has been the freak case of a film like *"La Grande Illusion"*, which was made in 1937, and was by-passed then. When the film was re-issued again in 1958, it ran to packed houses and was the year's resounding box-office success! This strange phenomenon has set the tycoon wondering. Even if films are made with a long-term recouping of resources in view, it is hardly likely that many individuals can afford to take risk. They might not be alive to reap their belated profits. But that fortunately has not deterred inspired film makers or those with a conscience from making a small section of films, which, by their very nature should deservedly be labelled "For Adults Only" — instead of those efforts in dubious taste which merely induce the wrong people to see the wrong film!

It would be an interesting experiment to encourage a trend of films which are more genuinely worthy of serious consideration. In a cinema the size of ours, surely there is ample room for all kinds of films which would not considerably affect any of the more popular types of cinema. Even if the standard boy-meets-girl routine goes on, it could hardly affect the cinema at all adversely if some films were made with a deliberate appeal to the conscious thinking of the intelligent audience. If a few films which were calculated to appeal to adults mainly were occasionally produced, perhaps that might justify the "adults only" stricture for a larger number of films. For, as long as vulgarity is the sole criterion of adult requisites — the stricture is hardly justified. Then again, this very definition of vulgarity is insidious. For a film like "Hiroshima", "Mon Amour" surely transcends the barriers of conventional and hardly justifies the ban even for film-society showing?

Nor will this constant preoccupation with misplaced "A" certificates create a desire in adolescents for a better type of film. If only they can be exposed at some time to a *"really"* adult film as also a film that is reserved for adults solely on its merits of dubious taste, will they have a yardstick, will they be able to distinguish between the two, instead of confusing the vulgar with the "adult", and thus create a potential audience for a better type of film in the future.

The "adult" film is to-day still too strongly identified with the vulgar or sensational element, rather than intrinsic maturity — and this attitude bodes no good for its future development. In the meantime a relatively mature public has no other recourse but to rely on a small minority of films which are intended for their delectation and are perhaps the only guarantee the cinema has of eventually graduating to an acceptably mature art form.

POOL YOUR FILM RISKS

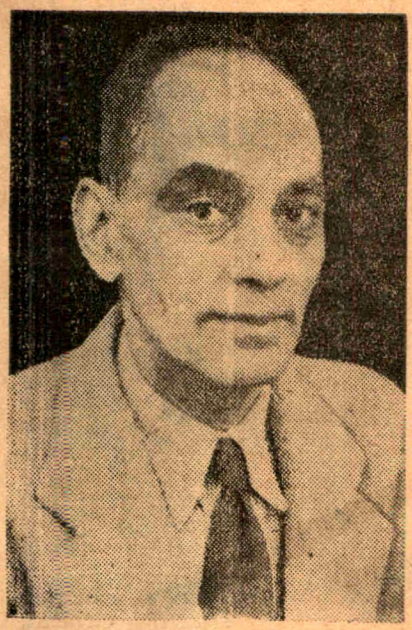
(Continued from page 230)

present bottleneck. An important step in respect of expanding the market for Bengali films is the current setting up of a film Society in Britain which hopes to show quality Bengali films in Britain where Bengali-speaking people from India and Pakistan are numerous. Some such arrangement which seems to be the twin concern of the industry and the State Government, is necessary in Burma also where the Bengali-speaking population is yet considerable.

But before everything else, Bengali films must rehabilitate themselves on a rational basis, leaving aside gambling or merely speculative propensities. Only then can things improve.

FELLOW-FEELING

The film industry is a great art-industry employing thousands of men and women and entertaining the leisure period of lakhs of people. The future of the Bengali film industry which was two decades back a very thriving one can still be saved from ruination if the different sectors of the industry have more of fellow-feeling and if they can readjust their intra-relations in the light of the prevailing sad plight. As yet no mood of readjusting misunderstandings has emerged. The industry today needs a lot of self-help and mutual advice on the part of the different sectors to retrieve its lost good name and recover its economic health. External help, if not compulsion, is also necessary. The Sen Committee's recommendations may be expected to serve as this external instrument of guidance and help. A statutory Film Council to control the industry in all its aspects is another agency which may be thought of in this connection.



The SCIENTIFIC ART OF SELF-DEFENCE

By P. L. ROY,

THIS grand sport (Boxing) is controlled throughout the world of amateur boxing by "The Association Internationale de Boxe Amateur" and by their wonderfully complied and comprehensive set of rules. The "Paramount Regulation" of this august body reads as follows:

The plea of "Force Majeur" may never be invoked.

Could there be a thing grander?

The period 1962-63 once again gave birth to one of those periodic outbursts against boxing, led in the main by persons who have not boxed as amateurs.

Such anti-boxing "spasms" have occurred thrice in my life of three score and ten years but boxing still continues. In Bengal more strongly than ever I hold no "candle" or for that matter any other professional sport.

I consider that sport is massacred when it is "served up" to whet the appetite of a public all out "on betting" and the evil and illegal consequences following in its trail and to get their money's worth and at whatever the cost.

Amateur boxing is a grand clean manly sport and its followers and participants are a clean living, manly set of young men more courageous than those who practise other games and who must be fitter bodily and quicker mentally and more self-reliant than participants in any other sport.

Answer this question: Which requires more courage and skill? (a) to run 100 metres against others; (b) to play football as one of eleven men against eleven others where you can dodge the issue by passing to someone else; or (c) to box three rounds against a single individual.

Yet boys and young men go into the amateur boxing ring day after day and finish the best of friends at the end of three fiercely and fairly fought rounds.

How often is a boxer turned out of the ring for foul boxing? Perhaps once in 2,000 contests. Is this the same in footfall? A boxer always keeps within the rules or out he goes disgraced and a loser.

In Bengal dubbed one of the "non-martial" races of India there are hundreds of schoolboys, keen on and constantly practising this grand sport. The number is only limited because there is not enough money to provide boxing gloves and food for boys who participate in this grand sport.

Boxing teachers and its participants know how to bear pain and not to fear,—yes, even death. Could there be a finer grounding for soldiers? There is, however, a "must" and that is the necessity of correct coaching from the start. In order to prepare a young boy or a man to box it is essential that he starts learning under an experienced coach as otherwise, as in all games, no high standard can be reached.

The following qualifications are essential in a good coach:

(1) He must have considerable personal experience in actual class contests. (He need not necessarily be a champion).

(2) He must have received correct coaching himself or else he cannot coach his trainees properly, because boxing is a scientific game and not an animal sport involving wild whirling of arms and fists.

Cool, calm, calculated delivery of correct blows, accompanied by correct and correlated footwork, is the basis of good boxing.

(3) He must instil into his pupils
- (a) ring manners,
- (b) control of temper,
- (c) courtesy to an opponent before, during and after a contest.

(4) He must be a "psychologist". He must study his pupil thoroughly, scan the latter's ability,

(Continued on page 240)

Quality enamel products

BENGAL ENAMEL
WORKS LTD.
60/2 DHARAMTALA STREET, CALCUTTA-13

SOLE SELLING AGENTS:
CERAMIC SALES CORPORATION LTD.
24 CHITTARANJAN AVENUE, CALCUTTA-12

BEF-2a2-63

B. D. CHATTERJEE

TELLS THE STORY OF FOOTBALL

By SPORTSCRIBE

THIS article is not a history of football. It is at best rambling thoughts put together to let boys and youngsters catch a glimpse of some great footballers I have met, as well as to refresh my memory. I called on Mr. B. D. Chatterjee who is an expert and a mentor and whose name, to quote Rupert Brooke, a great War Poet, sports lovers "will write golden for ever." It was autumn, "season of mists and mellow fruitfulness," and the glow of the setting sun perhaps reminded him of the far fields of battle where he and his comrades took on crack footballers drawn from the British Army as well as Europeans. The "episodes" took place decades ago. Yet the passing time has not blunted Mr. Chatterjee's memory. The past came crowding into his head and he answered me, "with malice towards none and charity for all."

Q. Mr. Chatterjee, could you tell me something about the origin of football?

Ans. You have got to hark your mind back to the time when Normans and Saxons used the head of a soldier killed in battle as a football and played after the battle was over. England is the cradle of football. The Chinese also claim that China gave birth to it.

Q. Do you subscribe to the view that we, Indians, were strangers to football?

Ans. Short of turning the Mahabharat upside down one cannot say this. While playing football Durjodhan's ball fell into a well and his preceptor Dronacharya took it out with the help of a lance. All this happened in the dim past. As a matter of fact football found its feet in the 19th century England when Englishmen made rules and regulations to put the game on a proper footing. At first a club fielded a team consisting of six players and the club against which it played, played for full two days. After 2 days the spectators took part in it and they played together. But the rules were amended and each side consisted of 11 players. Two-backs a side came into vogue in 1888. One Mr. Wilson introduced the Shin-guard and the goal-net. The referee controlled the game with a flag. But it was far from satisfactory. It was in 1892 that whistle took the place of flag.

Q. It is very interesting. In fact it has all the interest of a drama. Now, Mr. Chatterjee, tell me how the Bengalees took to football. Will you?

Ans. On their way to the river Hooghly a Bengalee woman and her son were passing by the C.F.C. ground. It was a stroke of luck that a football rolled up to the feet of the boy who kicked it back to the ground. The story spread like wildfire. The Bengalee boys and young men were keen on playing football. But they had to exercise their patience till a professor of the Presidency College, Calcutta, made determined efforts to teach the Bengalees how to play football. Much spade work was done by a military team. British of course. Football clubs were formed in North Calcutta. Sovabazar and Town Clubs are the pioneers. Soon other clubs were formed. Kumartuli, Sporting Union and Mohan Bagan deserve special mention.

Q. Could you point to a period of time which is the turning point in the history of Indian Football?

Ans. 1911 of course. Mohan Bagan fought as few have fought and won the I.F.A. Shield. The victory put a halo round their head The passage of time has not dimmed the vividness of the memory. One sees the "glory-garland" round their head in one's mind's eye.

Q. Has any noteworthy change come over football?

Ans. We live in a fast changing world. New systems have taken the place of old ones and Brazil has wrought a profound change which I had not dreamt of. The pattern of the game as well the size of football has changed. Our old star players used to play for 50 minutes and played with a 13 oz football and played with bare feet. They played

exceptionally well and played very fast on a dry ground. The sky overcast with cloud damped the fire and they cut a sorry figure on a wet ground. To them and to us also football turned out to be a fight for international honour. To them and to us nothing was warmer in life than to fight without rancour and to lose without bitterness. We were on fire to enhance our country's good name abroad. We did remarkably well in Java in 1924.

Q. Do tell me something of some of the "giants" you came into close contact with. Will you?

Ans. P. K. Biswas of National Club, and Sudhir Chatterjee of Mohan Bagan. They were cool and calculating. They made up their minds pretty quickly. They had tremendous guts. Sudhir Chatterjee was the only Bengalee who played with his boots on. He was a very good tackler. Gosto Pal of Mohan Bagan is a hero of more battles than one can count. He was seldom put out or flurried. His "strength is the strength of ten because 'his' heart is pure." It was a pleasure to play under him. He was my captain. His judgment was seldom at fault. He pulled me up when I played rough. He could head the ball very well. He leant on the ground to ward off an attack. He was the veritable Chinese wall and crack forwards felt as though they were knocking their heads against a stone wall. "Positional play", almost lost sight of today, was his. Yes, he forms an unforgettable chapter in my life. I remember Knight of the C.F.C. He came nowhere near to him and would often centre from the extreme left, almost the last flag-staff, almost at the last minute which did beat the best goal-keeper hollow. Samad of Tajhat was a wizard who could toy with the ball. It stuck to his feet just as iron sticks to magnet. He could make a fool of his opponents if he wanted to, and walk straight into the goal-net to show the stuff he was made of. Samad, is a name to conjure with in the football world. U. Kumar of Mohan Bagan occupied the centre of the stage. It was very difficult to keep track of his movement. He used to send the ball in, through one's legs, through a very, very narrow passage to the nearest forward to kick or to flick the ball into the net. He so trimmed his through-passes as to beat Bennett or Colvine, Duncan or Magnoni completely. He seldom or never headed a ball. He was so self-less. He was cool and never cut up rough with any one. He played the game. He and Robi Ganguli formed a formidable pair, much like Dhyanchand and Rupsingh.

Robi Ganguli is a refreshing, a first class footballer with tremendous speed, wonderful ball-control, balance and brains. He is a shortish Bengalee with splendid legs and broad feet and cheerful demeanour. He would have done credit to any country in the world. I kept on feeding him. So did Kumar. Kumar timed and measured his inimitable through passes to him. He ran fast, perhaps faster than other forwards in the world, and pulled up at the penalty area. By the time those who were trying to catch up with him overtook him he turned round and kicked the ball over his shoulders which gave the goal-keeper a lot of trouble. He would often kick the ball straight into the goal and the ball flashed past the goalkeeper. He ran with his body at an acute angle, that is almost at 50 degree from the ground. He dodged and dribbled and did weave his trunk and made Bennett and Magnoni lose their temper and balance and seized the opportunity to score a goal. He was a good header and scored more goals than Kumar.

Q. Is it a fact that Chuni Goswami of Mohan Bagan, idol of our youngsters, caught your eye quite early?

Ans. As far back as 1947 I watched him playing for a local side in a comparatively obscure place,—Deshapriya Park, Ballygunge. There I discovered the talent lying latent in him.

Q. So many boys and youngmen play football. Why can't we field a purely Bengalee side?

Ans. Geniuses like pearls lie scattered, they lie about unattended to. A footballer is born and not made. So we should go to schools, watch boys play football in parks and on playing field. This we should do to spot talent. We should catch them young and train them. I think talent abounds in our country.

Q. Earlier on you referred to changes. What are the changes?

Ans. In our time we played 2-back and 3-half-back games. The two wings were guarded by the two half-backs. The centre-half had to guard the two-insides and the centreforward. So one man had to keep an eye on three. But these days in 3-back games, the two wings are guarded by the backs. Insides are guarded by the half-backs and the centreforward is guarded by the stopper-back. Here no player has a passage free. Take the system adopted by Brazil in 1954. Work it out this way, 4, 2, 4: Four backs, two half-backs and four forwards. Offside rules have been amended from time to time. The weight of the ball is 17 Oz now.

Q. Just a word about sporting spirit and I shall have done with you. What is the chief point of merit in Mohan Bagan?

Ans. Mohan Bagan took and take defeat with a good grace. We never lodged a protest after defeat.

Q. Mr. Chatterjee, so far you have not spoken about your struggles and triumphs. May I refresh my memory by recounting one or two incidents of your life on the playing field?

Ans. I am afraid that would be something of a task. You could tell your friends that I am a great lover of football.

SCIENTIFIC ART OF SELF-DEFENCE

(Continued from page 237)

physical build and mental reflexes and bring up accordingly.

(5) He must coach at a carefully measured pace and on no account must a pupil be rushed into a contest till he is ready for the same.

(6) He must be able to teach individually and collectively, make out training charts.

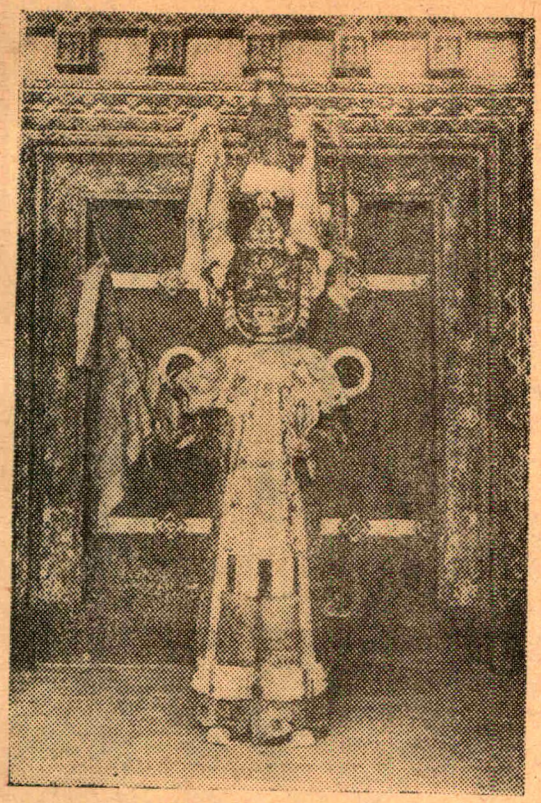
(7) He must be a semi-doctor and know "first aid".

(8) He must never show off his own skill at the expense of his pupil's by hitting him (pupil) about and punishing him.

(9) He must be a strict disciplinarian. He must on the other hand see that his pupils do not get "bored" with a duplicate routine day after day. He must coach his pupil hard but he should also know how to make his training interesting.

(10) He must be able to inspire his pupils with confidence.

I close this article with the hope that I will pass on this art to as many boxing teachers as I can while I am still able to train coaches and carry on the good work and not waste the vast and world-wide experience I have had in coaching young boxers.



Kinchinjunga.

class of deities known as Yakshas. It is to propitiate this deity and invoke his patronage in fostering the martial spirit of Sikkim that there is all this display of war-like pomp, and panoply. In order to prevent the festival from degenerating into mere demon worship, the Lamas cleverly brought in the idea of invoking Maha-kala—the King of all the Devas, Rakshas, Daityas, Danavas and the Gandharvas, etc., 'to command the spirit of the Kinchinjunga, to guard the Faith and the State and to bring peace, prosperity and security to the people'. Spirit worship of trees, mountains, rivers etc., is a natural development in the Himalayan region where life is hard and lonely, for while nature is at her most magnificent here, she is also 'red in tooth and claw'. It was the great Indian sage Padma Sambhava (8th century A.D.) who hit upon the happy idea of inculcating into the Buddhist framework, the local forms of Shamanism or Spirit of Worship, thus firmly consolidating the spread of his faith in these remote, mountain kingdoms. As a matter of fact, a particular 'step' in the warrior dance is called the Vajra Pada or Thunderbolt Step in honour of the Guru.

The preparations for the dance are elaborate. On the fourth day of the sixth month of the Tibetan Almanac, 'PHELTSAN', multicoloured wool, is woven by expert carpet makers in a day, at the palace monastery, and made up into sealed parcels, together with cash, prayer flags etc., and despatched by the 10th of the seventh month through special messengers to the following destinations: four to the four sacred caves of the East (Byphuk—Hidden caves), the West (Dichen Phuk—cave of Great Happiness), the North (Lharinyang Phuk—cave of the essence of Heavenliness), and the South (Khado Sang Phuk—hidden cave of the Dakkinis). Another parcel used to be sent to Chumbi—which was at one time the enclave of Sikkim—in Yatung (Tibet) where His Highness had a summer palace but this year it was sent somewhere else in Sikkim. Another parcel is sent to Chekray Khasmahal Busti in West Sikkim, and another to Kalijhora in West Bengal where land has been alloted to the Ruler of Sikkim for the worship of Mahakala since the inception in Kalijhora of this dance-festival. The worship of Mahakala is performed by a Pujari who is given the Lepcha uniform and an allowance, and who wears a peacock feather on his hat.

HIGH SKILL

The parcels to the four sacred caves are delivered at the Pemiongtse monastery in West Sikkim, whence the Lamas are sent to the caves to perform the necessary rites. It is believed that the weather in Sikkim which is incessantly wet, clears for the better as soon as the "Pheltsan" is despatched !

In the Palace Gompa, before the dancers emerge, an elaborate worship is gone through, with offerings of fruit and butter placed in front of the effigies of Mahakala and Kinchinjunga installed on either side of the altar. The image of Mahakal is decorated with flowers and a garland of the inflated intestines of a goat, the carcass of which complete with head and four legs is put in front of it.

The dance, looked upon as a sort of combat training for young Sikkimese aristocrats, demands high skill in the use of the sword, stamina, co-ordination, physical fitness and concentration, and above all a spirit of religious fervour. The dancers had to observe abstinence and still do, during the period of rehearsal. Another feature of the dance is the appearance of heralds who chant proclamations. For example the herald of the war deity comes out and proclaims as follows—'Oh Thou Fulfiller of Guru Padma Sambhava's command.....The Supreme Guardian of this noble Rice country (Sikkim is known as the Hidden Valley of Rice).... O Lord of all spiritual beings known by the name of the peak of m-dzod-Lnmga or Kinchinjunga ! Thou art the war deity, etc.' The Herald of Mahakala proclaims 'Victorious over all, arrows are turned towards the enemy (meaning the forces of evil)—consume the dead.... I will cut the red string of life and offer it in wor-

(Continued on page 243)

Number of masks worn by Lama dancers.

Beauty on a Budget!

Yes, you can have a beautiful wardrobe without spending extravagantly. Khatau voiles bring lovely saris within the reach of every girl. There are gay, light voiles for perfect morning wear. Fashionable prints for smart afternoons. Deep-toned saris with gold over-printing for glamorous evenings.

any time...
any place...
any occasion...

YOU LOOK YOUR BEST IN

"LOOK FOR KHATAU MILLS' SELVEDGE MARKS ON EACH METRE"

Khatau
VOILES

THE KHATAU MAKANJI SPG. & WVG. CO. LTD.
Head Office : Laxmi Building, Ballard estate, Bombay-1.
Mills : Haines Road, Byculla, Bombay 27.
Whole Sale Clothshop : Govind Chowk, Mulji Jetha Market, Bombay 2.

Retail show rooms : 18L Park Street, Entrance Middleton Row, Calcutta-16.
149, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Calcutta-7.

Vow for Victory—produce more save more.

SISTA'S-KMS 328

POOL YOUR FILM RISKS AND GAINS —OR PERISH

Suchitra Sen plays a dual role in 'Uttarfalguni'

By N. K. G.

CONDITIONS in the film industry of Bengal during the last few years have reached such ruinous proportions that the Government of West Bengal had to assure itself that now it was time to intervene. This intervention is yet on paper because it has not yet started. The first step that the West Bengal Government took was to set up a Committee of Inquiry under the chairmanship of Shri K. C. Sen, a retired High Court Judge. The Committee was given quite wide terms of reference. Broadly speaking, they were asked to inquire into the fallen fortunes of the local film industry and recommended steps whereby the industry may recover from its present malady and function for the good of all concerned. The Committee went through an elaborate and long programme of hearing evidence from persons actively connected with the film industry of West Bengal and also from members of the public, if they desired to give evidence. The film press was invited to depose and a number of film journalists also expressed themselves through a questionnaire which the Committee of Inquiry had provided. The questionnaire was composed of many items to answer which would mean writing a complete essay on the subject. It was a well prepared questionnaire.

DR. ROY'S FORMULA

It is now known to all that the Committee after having formulated its own recommendations have submitted them to the Government. The State Cabinet are now reportedly busy considering these recommendations and will soon have to take its own decisions which will be announced to the public in due course, unless of course the announcements have been made by the time this writing appears. While it is unwise to attempt to forecast at this stage what the Cabinet is going to do in the matter of resuscitation of the West Bengal film industry it can be safely remarked that some of the decisions are going to be felt in film circles. It is public knowledge that the State Government has been long exercised by the deplorable financial situation prevailing in the industry, unrest among its lower cadre employees and sundry issues. Producers had had meetings with the late Dr. B. C. Roy to whom they opened out their tale of woes. Dr. Roy was widely known for his sympathies with the manufacturing sector of the film industry and advised them to make films on the co-operative basis. Only on that basis, Dr. Roy told them, Government would consider financial help for them on terms of easy repayment.

Now that the film people are awaiting the Government's decisions on the Report of the K. C. Sen Committee and the implementations of the same, it is time that the industry once more pondered over the ailment which has been troubling it for years. Or will they choose to await the governmental decisions and stop thinking in the intermission? Only the film industry can tell. The journalist, unfortunately, has to do some thinking in the meanwhile.

'ELSEWHERE'

From all he has seen and heard the journalist has not failed to conclude that the problem of the film industry of Bengal is essentially a problem of rationalizing the function of the producers in relation to the two other sectors with which they have to deal viz., distributors and exhibitors. And herein lies the rub, for it is the producers' maladjustment of relations with these two sectors that is the ultimate cause of the deflated look of the film industry today. Capital has shied of late but not patrons who are more eager than ever to get entertained by native films. . . . . The difficulty is elsewhere and it is this "elsewhere" that one has to find out to examine what can be done to cure the ailing film industry.

Broadly considered, the manufacturer of the film in Bengal today suffers from the following drawbacks:—(1) Soaring cost of production which shows no sign of stabilizing even at its highest-ever pitch; (2) Inequitable distribution of the money earned by a picture among the recipients, mainly due to the systems of "hold-over" and "protection" which preclude just income all over the exhibition area; (3) lack of facility for quick release and (4) shrunken market for their products. There may be other factors but most of them stem

from the broad ones listed above. And it is precisely these factors—and others—which producers submitted to the Government for redresses without delay, failing which, they have impressed upon the authorities, most of them have to go out of business in no time. As such these factors have to be examined not only in the light of genuineness but also taking into consideration the points which others have put forward as a counter.

PLAYING WITH FIRE

Soaring cost of production with no prospect of coming down in sight has been, impartially speaking, at the root of the disease which producers are afraid will overwhelm them soon. But, again, impartially speaking, it is producers and nobody else who have merrily been playing with the fire of "more money to the star" which is now scalding their onee eager palms. Instead of halting the surreptitious growth of the more-money-to-the-star racket one openly vied with another to sign up the pretty star or the buxom hero at a cost higher than the one quoted by his brother producer and smiled triumphantly at what he then considered his superior bargaining power. Film artistes were quick to read the sign of the time and went all agog into wresting more and more money from the producer till it has reached a state when at least ten artistes on the higher plank are today prohibitively costly for the producer with the modest budget.

THE MOCKERY

The far-seeing Dr. Roy had seen through the mockery of the whole situation and had accordingly advised producers to make films on co-operative basis, sharing risks and gains equally. But it seems that producers prefer to be effaced individually to working jointly and thereby survive. It is astounding that no serious attempt has yet been made to go into co-operative film production. Perhaps financial assistance of a miraculous nature is being awaited. Let us hope there will yet be awakening on their part and efforts pooled to make survival easier. Of course this co-operative business is also a kind of partnership in which fellow-feeling, patience and trust are essential. Producers will need to have them aplenty if the co-operative system is to be given a trial

SORE POINT

Regarding the second point of complaint, namely, unfair distribution of the money earned by a film, the sore point is the systems of hold-over and protection enforced by the exhibitors. It is said that a film of average merit and of average box-office potentiality cannot earn more than 35 to 40 p.c. of the total earning in the producer's share as a consequence of protection although the contract generally makes it 50-50 between the producer and the exhibitor. This is indeed a problem bristling with many difficulties.

It is a point of law whether on the parallel of the Rent Control Act, the Government can make it obligatory for the exhibitors to charge equitable rent (for the producer's share is in the ultimate analysis rent charged on a weekly basis). But that means debate and contest between two claims. The exhibitor is quick to retort that he cannot do without protection in view of the mounting expenses he has to find. It seems that some sort of compromise between the two claims will not be hard to be effected provided there is genuine desire for a give-and-take solution of both sides. Producers are also unhappy over the payment of rental for Films Division or State Government 'shorts'. But that is a small point, easily adjustable after the bigger quarrel is solved.

As regards the attenuated market which was caused, first, by partition taking away 62 p.c. of the area of undivided Bengal into East Pakistan and secondly, by the ban on Indian films in Pakistan, it is a matter of very serious concern for all persons in the film industry except perhaps the exhibitors who are not directly affected by the loss of market. While nothing can be done to either persuade or compel a foreign country to show our films one can suggest to the Central Government that in any future scheme of Indo-Pakistan trade, arrived at by joint conference between the two countries, Indian films should be rated as top export priority by this side and the other government be asked to accept it. If the Government of India becomes assertive in this respect, Pakistan cannot go on having it all her own way.

INTERNAL MARKET

The internal market can also be expanded. There are at least 30 centres within West Bengal where Bengali language films are not shown. They are mainly industrial areas where thousands of labourers from other States live. But that is no reason why those theatres will not set apart 25 p.c. of their screening time to show indigenous productions. In Calcutta not more than 20 p.c. of the cinema houses screen Bengali films. Considered in its implications such a system is undesirable to the extreme. The result is that at least ten to fifteen Bengali pictures a year do not find a house to be released in. For aught one knows the State Government is highly perturbed over this state of affairs. In that perspective the talk of a compulsory reservation of total screening hours for local products cannot wholly be wishful thinking.

The virtual loss of Assam as an exhibition area after the language riots of 1960 is another grievous factor. As things show themselves. the recovery of this important area is not likely in the near future.

There is thus every likelihood of constructing new show houses all over the State to remove the

(Continued on page 236)

Kanika Majumdar in 'Kanchankanya'

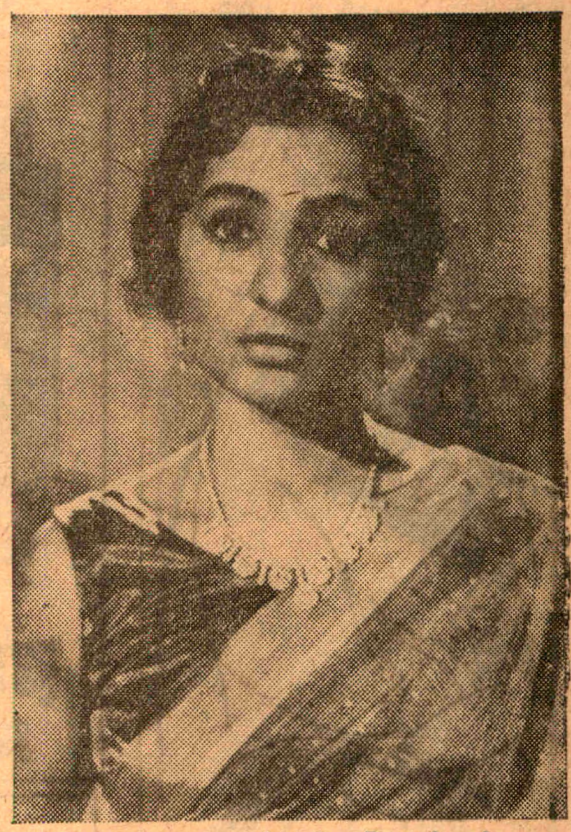
The DIRECTOR'S GOAL

By BIBHUTI LAHA (Agradoot)

THIS is an age of film consciousness. People and even the government of the day seem to have suddenly realized the truth in the saying that films constitute a powerful medium both of instruction and of entertainment. The propagandistic utility of the film has also been well understood which is evident from the systematic shorts the Union and certain State Governments have been making, as well as from the deluge of advertisment shorts shown in every cinema house show these days.

This film consciousness has, uncomfortably for the makers of feature films, led to a much greater volume of criticism indulged in by filmgoers. Naturally, the film producer, the director and the artistes cannot go as easy with their films as they could afford to go a few years ago. They have to constantly remind themselves of the need for satisfying a a very alert and very understanding audience. But out of this greater film consciousness of the people a new fact has come out. It is the comparatively great importance the film director exercises at this moment. Not that he was an insignificant factor in the days that are past. It is only that it is being finally realized all around that next to the theme it is the director who makes or mars a picture.

The last three decades in Bengal's film world saw the simultaneous preponderance of both the institution and the director. In those days the very name of New Theatres or M.P. Productions carried a lot of significance for the filmgoing public. People could be almost sure that they were going to have a generally good show for the money they would spend. But at the same time the name of a Barua or a Devaki Bose or a Nitin Bose would also carry a lot of value. If a picture had a Barua or Bose for a director, there would be avid rush for the tickets. I do not suggest that the director's name is not much of persuasion for the cinema-goer today. The older days were less competitive. Directorial hero-worship was, therefore, more natural in those days. The circumspect moviegoer of today is apt to be more critical than admiring but he does not certainly stint where praise is due. What I was trying to say is that in the past decades the institution and the director meant a lot for each other.



Tanuja's next is her first Bengali role.

They strengthened and enriched mutually. Alas, today there is no New Theatres or any other established and regular production institution. So the director has to go it alone — all on his capacity.

As I was saying, the emphasized film awareness among people and the Government has made the successful director's position quite dignified. The stigma which attached to the director's, or for that matter the film artiste's calling has not entirely evaporated. It stays but is profitably counterbalanced by the greater attention and sometimes by greater financial income due to the awakened consciousness referred to above. The director of today can plan and make a picture with an eye to the President's Gold Medal and State Awards, not to speak of overseas prizes and recognition. In that sense the director of today is far better placed than his compeer of a decade back who practically went without a bouquet except, perhaps, his producer's patronizing pat on the back if his picture proved a gold-digger. But looking at the other side of the coin it must be admitted that his task of pleasing the audiences has become infinitely more difficult because of the overcritical attitude of the audience today who simply seem to refuse to be pleased. The vastly complex and divided audience mind is a very hard nut indeed to crack as the director who makes a picture today is wont to discover at every step of his career.

And does he find only this "divided and complex audience mind" his only adversary? Certainly not. The problems posed by ever-mounting cost, less

(Continued on page 234)

She is happy and composed

A good housewife as she is, she made her plans well in advance and opened a Savings Bank account last year.

The savings provided the means to meet her Puja requirements. She has now the joy of heart to match the festive occasion.

United Bank of India Ltd.

REGD. OFFICE : 4, CLIVE GHAT STREET, CALCUTTA-1

RELEASING SHORTLY !

starring
ASITBARAN
SHEELA PAL
APARNA DEVI
KETAKI DUTTA
RENUKA ROY
with
UTTAR BANERJI
and
SANCHITA BANERJI
and many others

play back :—
DHANANJOY
MANABENDRA
SATINATH · PANNALAL
PRATIMA · UTPALA
GAYATRI · MADHURI

AURORA'S Devotional Offering

রাধাকৃষ্ণ

Direction · ARDHENDU MUKHERJI
Music · RATHIN GHOSH

for better,

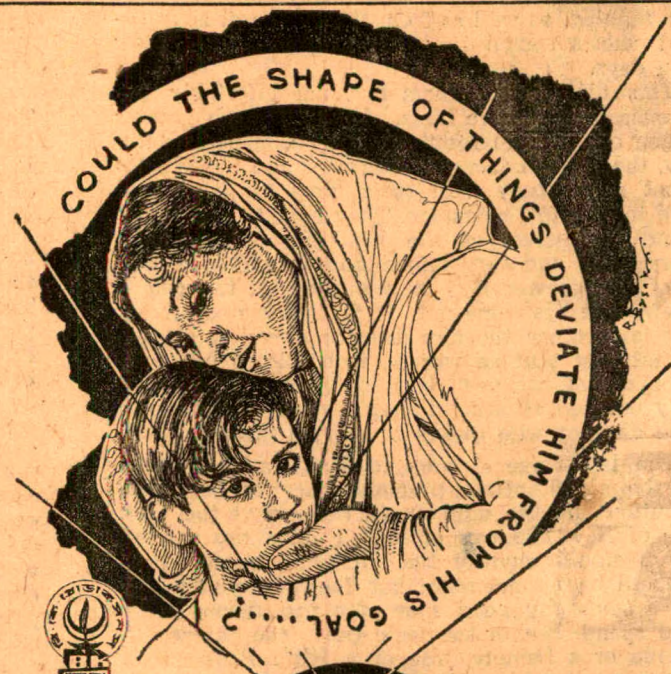
Comfort

"Sankha & Padma"

ESTD VEST 1922

D. N. BOSE'S HOSIERY FACTORY
CALCUTTA

Show Room | Hosiery House | 55-1, COLLEGE STREET, CAL-12



B. K. PRODUCTIONS'

KAAL SROTE

direction-SUSHIL MAJUMDER

music-MANABENDRA MUKHERJEE

SKUPS FILMS RELEASE

HOLIDAY *in* SPREEWALD

By RANAJIT RANJAN CHAUDHURY

ONE summer afternoon last year. I alighted at the Luben main station from the Berlin-Gorlitz express. I was bound for Spreewald for holidaying. My German friends recommended Spreewald to me for recreation. "You would not find anywhere the like of it in the whole of Germany. You would love it", said one of them emphatically. As I came out of the platform handing my ticket over to the ticket collector, I was greeted by my colleague Herr Balow who had come to receive me. A room was reserved for me at a hotel a few minutes walk from the station. It was a sunny warm day. I preferred to walk the distance purposely, because it gave me a chance to see the part of the town of Luben through which we were walking, and also I could, thereby, enjoy a conversation with my companion. The hotel is located in a large park. I liked its quietness.

After placing my travelling kit in my room, I followed Herr Balow. We walked through the park and then crossing a culvert on the rivulet Hain, to which owes the hotel its name, we turned our steps into the town. We were joined by a young man, an acquaintance of Herr Balow, who wanted to have a talk with the "Inder" (Indian). He remained with us about an hour or so. Luben is a small town. I could see that it could not also escape the air-raids in the last world war. However, much of the ruins has been replaced by new flat houses, and other buildings. Like many other towns and cities of Germany, Luben is also church-centric in its growth. It was Sunday. The roads were crowded. I was told that many of them were outsiders, on visit to Spreewald. As the night came down, we stepped into a beautiful restaurant, "Strand cafe", semi-circled by waterways. In the hall, the band played dance music. The dancing floor was crowded by young people mostly. We sat at a corner table and enjoyed the time while taking our supper.

Spreewald is situated in the middle of the eastern part of the German Democratic Republic. The word Spreewald literally means Spree-forest in English. It owes its name to the small river Spree that originates in the mountainous Czech-G.D.R. frontier and meandering through the region of Spreewald, meets the river Havel near Berlin. This area was, in the last century, a vast stretch of swamps overgrown with forests which provided den to bears, pigs, and wolves. Much of the forests has now been hewn down. Gone are the days of wild animals. A network of canals have been dug in different times to drain out the swamps. A number of pumps operate to maintain the desirable level of water. Flood is almost of annual occurrence here. A number of dams have been planned, which when completed will alienate the fear of flood for good from Spreewald. The chief engineer under whose guidance the first dam of this series was fast approaching towards completion near Cottbus city explained the details of the scheme to me.

Spreewald is noted for its polychromatic attractions. In summer the area buzzes with life and activity when a large number of tourists visit this area, particularly at the week-ends. A boating through the reticulum of canals spreading through green forests, grass and crop fields and quiet villages makes the day unforgettable. Boats are available for hire. Young enthusiasts paddle about in boats almost all day long. Large motor-fitted gondolas ply about with loads of tourists. A number of restaurants here and there cater for the holiday-makers.

In Spreewald live the Sorbs, a national minority of Slavish origin. The Government is trying to safeguard the culture and language of these people. I could not, however, distinguish a Sorb from a German from appearance.

THE COMPANIONS

Herr Balow made his motor boat available to me one day for a whole day's outing in Spreewald. We boarded the boat near the village Alt Zauche, where the institute I work in has a research sub-station. Herr Balow heads the staff there. Our party consisted of four—Frau Lehmann, Goldshanke, Herr Balow and myself. Herr Balow is a rather tall, medium-built youngman on the wrong side of thirty, a bachelor still because he has not yet found his right match in Germany, as he humorously puts it! He is a silent type of man. His expressionless face seldom betrays his feelings. I do not know if it is due to practice during the days of his active service in the air force during the last war. His hobby appeared to me to be smoking quality cigars and that in chains. In the seven days of my stay at Spreewald, I developed a liking for this silent German in whom I discovered a good heart.

Frau Lehmann was a laboratory assistant at Herr Balow's at that time. She is a frail young lady, whose age I shall not attempt to infer as a lady's age is not to be inferred! Her hair was styled short as that of a boy. This appeared to be in vogue now-a-days. The short-haired young ladies claim that it is practical and advantageous. The German young men also do not seem to like the girls less for short hair! So who am I to differ? Frau Lehmann wore spectacles with extraordinary thick lenses, which made her eyes rather obscure. She spoke with an intonation of Thuringia.

Goldshanke belonged to Alt Zauche. He was employed at the research sub-station. He was in his early twenties, a shy type of young man. He took the rudder of our boat. He did this work skilfully.

It was ten in the morning when we started. A mild breeze was blowing giving rise to myriads of

PRO/18M—5

AMRITA

A BENGALI WEEKLY

Presenting Life and Light of Bengal

Nursed by a literary heritage — rich and virile — the bengali reading public accords a warm welcome to this weekly.

Edited by Shri TUSHAR KANTI GHOSH,

AMRITA has already become a favourite in every home and a coveted medium to all advertisers.

•

AMRITA PUBLISHERS PRIVATE LTD.

Head Office: 11-D, Ananda Chatterjee Lane, Calcutta-3.

Telephone: 55-5231.

silvery ripples on the surface of the water. The sun was pleasant and warm. The meadows on either side of the water course looked extraordinarily fresh and green. Our boat swam through the forests and fields. It was wonderful through the forests. The trees wore lushy green foliage. The sun rays infiltrated through the breaks in the foliage canopy, creating a magic effect of light and shade. The speed of the boat, breeze flowing past, and chirping of the birds occasionally reaching the ears filled the mind with gladsome feelings.

On canal flanks, there grew beans, cucumbers, tomatoes, horse-radish, pumpkins and, of course, potatoes. My companions said to me that the vegetables of Spreewald have reputation for taste and as such are in great demand in big cities. Farms in Spreewald are small with very little advance in mechanisation unlike other parts of the country where the farms are often as large as thousand acres or more and very highly mechanised.

PATIENT ANGLER

We were stopped at times by the self-service sluice gates which Herr Balow operated to open our way. A boat or two passed by us now and then manned by youths, a young man with a beautiful young thing perhaps. At one corner in silent patience sat an angler. We wished him 'Petriheil' in German i.e. may St. Peter (the patron saint of the anglers in Germany) grant him good luck, as we passed by. We made our way through the villages Eiche, Polenzschanke, Burg, Leipe, Lehde and others. The cottages stood on the sides of the canals. Front of the houses were generally colourfully painted. There were flower gardens in front of many houses. A couple of children were building houses with moist sand. An elderly lady was busy at her domestic routine. A group of ducks just out of water were vigorously flapping their wings to shake off water. A cock crew somewhere. A dog barked at us. The canal gave off a peculiar odour. The engine groaned on. At noon, we tied our boat in front of a village inn "Waldschloszchen" (forest fortress) under a willow which bent its twigs with the grace of a "prima ballerina." On the lawn of the building were also sitting arrangements but we chose to sit inside. There were not many guests there that day. For lunch, we got boiled potatoes, cabbage head with mashed meat inside cooked in gravy, and a fruit dish. We took lemonade to drink. A German does not drink water with meal. Otherwise also, he shudders at the thought of drinking water! He prefers a drink beer instead.

After lunch, we visited a vegetable farm run on collective basis. The chief brought me a large globe and asked me to show the part of India I came from. His son took us around the farm. He was in Sweden for his floricultural studies, where, he said, he had seen some Indians. He put a number of questions on Indian agriculture, economy and politics. I tried to satisfy him as best as I could.

Again we were on our way through the beautiful land. The sun gradually inclined to the west. On the way, we saw the villagers returning home after their day's work, in boats. An old lady plied a boat. She wore a much plaited black gown reaching to her feet. On her head was tied a kerchief. An almost overloaded boat with coals, vegetables, bread, beer and other provisions slowly glided by. It may be mentioned here that Spreewald has only a few roads. These canals provide the chief means of transport.

As evening came, we stopped for a while at canalside restaurant for coffee. The rooms were full. The cigarette smoke had dimmed the electric bulbs. My companions took milkless, sugarless coffee in the German fashion. As I was not till that time accustomed to black coffee, I took coffee with milk and sugar.

The evening sky and the landscape bathed in the pink of the setting sun. The sky, fields and forests all were silent and still as if in a painting by a master. A feeling of profound delight had descended upon me. I had no sordid thoughts. Such moments are rare in life. My eyes, by chance, fell on the bank. There stood below a little birch tree a tiny deer gazing at us with its beautiful broad eyes. I saw this picture for a moment. Next moment, it darted into the darkness of the forest. I did not like to look at my watch. I did not like any touch of reality. I wished to go on like this eternally if I could. I was as if in dream, while wide awake. I do not know how long I had so sat. I was awakened as the boat suddenly came to stop with a jerk and heard Herr Balow's voice, *"Bitte, aussteigen Sie"* (Please, get down). It was our starting point—Alt Zauche. Frau Lehmann whispered it was a wonderful day. Herr Balow too later admitted that it was really a nice excursion. Goldschanke was glad that I was delighted.

WARRIOR DANCE OF SIKKIM

(Continued from page 227)

ship. Those who meet death at my hands will not suffer damnation. I am the blood drinking and destroying being, Glory be to Mahakala, the indomitable Hero'.....etc. ..... etc, And last comes the herald of the sword.

The dance festival has a social aspect as well because it is an occasion for communal merry-making and helps both rich and poor to get away from the monotony of daily existence. Sweetmeat stalls are set up in the grounds, all turn up in their holiday best and everyone has a good time. Pomp and pageantry combine with informal gaiety to form a pleasing experience. It is to be hoped that the festival will be kept up by the younger generation, who in keeping with the advent of democracy are being trained in these dances at the Tashi Namgyal Academy for boys, irrespective of whether they are aristocrats or commoners.

The dance is really symbolic of the Triumph of Good over Evil. To the uninitiated it may appear monotonous as it is inclined to be repetitive and stylised. But viewed as a reflection of Sikkimese life —for isn't all art an expression of life?—it leaves a vivid impression on the mind, of a proud, courageous and colourful people, with a strong individualistic faith of their own.

World Famous

ASTROLOGER & PALMIST

JYOTISH SAMRAT PANDIT RAMESH CHANDRA BHATTACHARYA, JYOTISHARNAB M.R.A.S. (London) of International fame. President of the world renowned **All-India Astrological and Astronomical Society** Panditji's wonderful predictions Palm and Horoscope reading and Tantrik rites are unrivalled in India. He has won unique fame not only in India but throughout the world. viz **(England America, Africa, Australia, China, Japan, Singapore Java etc.)** Despaired persons are advised to test the powers of panditji

WONDERFUL TALISMANS

DHANADA KAVACHA :— For vast wealth, good luck health and fame in life. Rs 7-10. Special Rs. 29-11.
BAGALAMUKHI KAVACHA :— To overcome enemies it is unique. Gets promotion in service and in winning civil or criminal suits and for pleasing higher officials it is unparalleled Rs. 7-10. Special Rs. 34-2.
MOHINI KAVACHA :—Enable arch foes to become friends and friends more friendly Rs. 11-8. Special 34.2
SARASWATI KAVACHA :—Success in examination retentive powers and sharp memory Rs. 9-9 Special 38-9.

DETAILED CATALOGUE WITH TESTIMONIALS FREE.

H.O. :—50-2 (A.B.) Dharamtala St., 'Jyotish Samrat Bhaban' Calcutta-13. Phone : 24-4065 Hours : 5 to 7 P.M. Branch : 105, Grey St., Calcutta-5, Hours : 9 to 11 A.M. Phone : 55 3685.

Ink may come
and ink may go
but ***Sulekha***
remains for ever

I.S. 1221

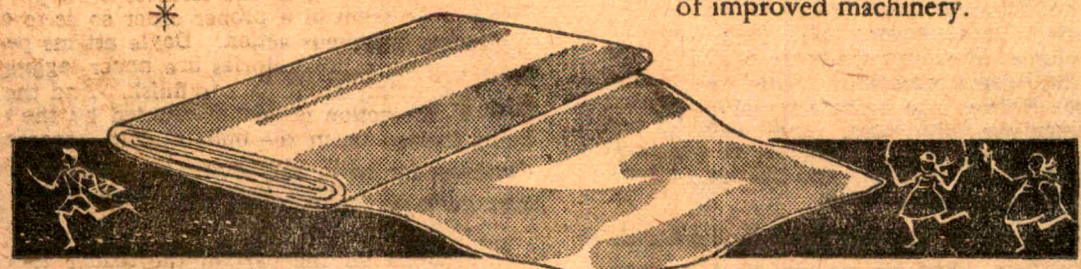
SULEKHA WORKS LTD.

CALCUTTA DELHI BOMBAY MADRAS

PRO/SW—7

Progress in Textile Industry

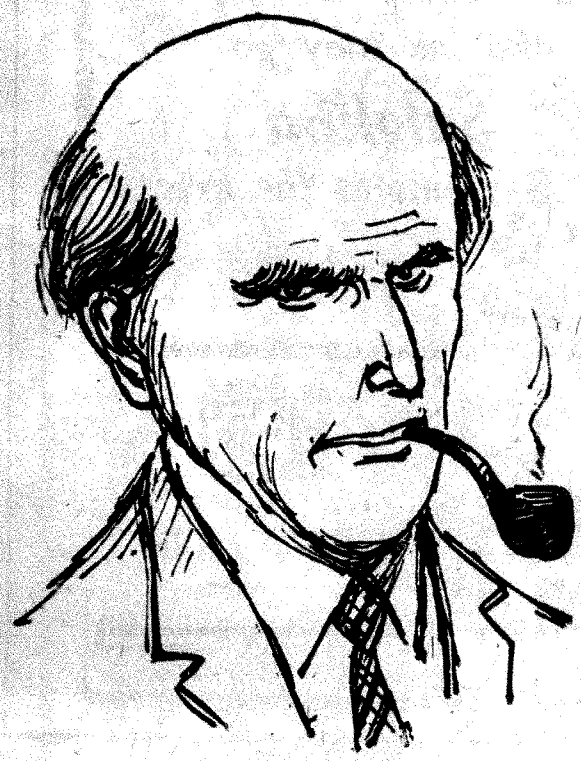
Bengal Luxmi Cotton Mills need no introduction. For over half a century it has occupied a proud place in textile industry of West Bengal. Today, Bangaluxmi has modernised and expanded its productive capacity by the installation of improved machinery.



The Bengal Luxmi Cotton Mills Ltd.

7, Chowringhee Road, Calcutta-13.

KALPANA.B.L.3



SHERLOCK HOLMES—THE CHARACTER AND THE MODELS

By GOURI SHANKAR BANERJEE

MANY are the poets, but there is one Rabindranath Tagore. It has a parallel in the field of prime fiction also. Many are the writers of good detective fiction who are as lovable names to countless readers of the world as their detective heroes. But there is, and can be only one Conan Doyle, and only one Sherlock Holmes.

At the height of his fame, Conan Doyle had actually received letters from people in trouble, with inquiries about Sherlock Holmes, his whereabouts and fees. They wanted Holmes for detection of crimes of which they were victims. These enquiries are tributes unknowingly paid, compared to which volumes of eulogy are mere prattle. Even the other day, many remained under the illusion that Sherlock Holmes was a character of reality and planned interviews with him. They even fancied that they could recognize him at first sight, so alive was the picture of Holmes in their imagination.

But what is more, it was Conan Doyle, and he alone, who raised the genre of crime fiction to the level of literature. And his Holmes stories have a permanent place in English literature. He was the first to show that there were immense possibilities in the medium. Thus when in 1889 his "A Study In Scarlet" was published, he at once won the day and leapt to fame. And since then his pen has poured out stories after stories, all having Sherlock Holmes in the centre as the master detective, which won universal appraisal.

When the first story was published in a Magazine, everybody's attention was attracted to it and demand for more stories became high. So when Doyle ended the brilliant career of Sherlock Holmes in 'Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes', there was a great commotion among readers who demanded immediate revival of the great detective. Doyle had no other way but to revive Holmes and then one after another came out of his pen the sparkling records of crime detection which satisfied the public and gave Doyle both money and fame.

It is really difficult, everybody must admit, to write a good detective story, because the writer has to think out the problem and its solution before he actually puts them in the form of a story. He has to arrange them in a proper order so as to create a sense of continuous action. Doyle attains perfection in this matter. His stories are never lagging; they move smoothly from start to finish. And the reason is that the action is not interrupted by the analysis and explanation in the middle of its progress. The reader is always kept alert, he is always anxious as to the outcome of every particular detail and he cannot make out beforehand what would be the result—who would be detected as the culprit. And this interest on the part of the reader is kept by Doyle with a just degree of mystification. When the end comes, when the mystery is unravelled, the reader enjoys a feeling of surprise mixed with a feeling of pleasure of expectations satisfied. There is thrill, there is interest, there is enough action, expectation and surprise in a Holmes story. As one critic has pointed out, "A Holmes story is never heavy with the scientific approach to a problem or the tedious reconstruction of events that are the stock-in-trade of a modern writer of this type of fiction. The details are never over-looked but they

. . *INSIST ON*

CALCUTTA ELECTRIC LAMP WORKS LIMITED,

3, Mangoe Lane, Calcutta-1.
Phone :—

Office. 23-3351 | Factory. 35-4673

Health is Wealth

PHONE: 22-6580

GOUR MOHAN DASS & CO
239, OLD CHINA BAZAR St., CALCUTTA-1

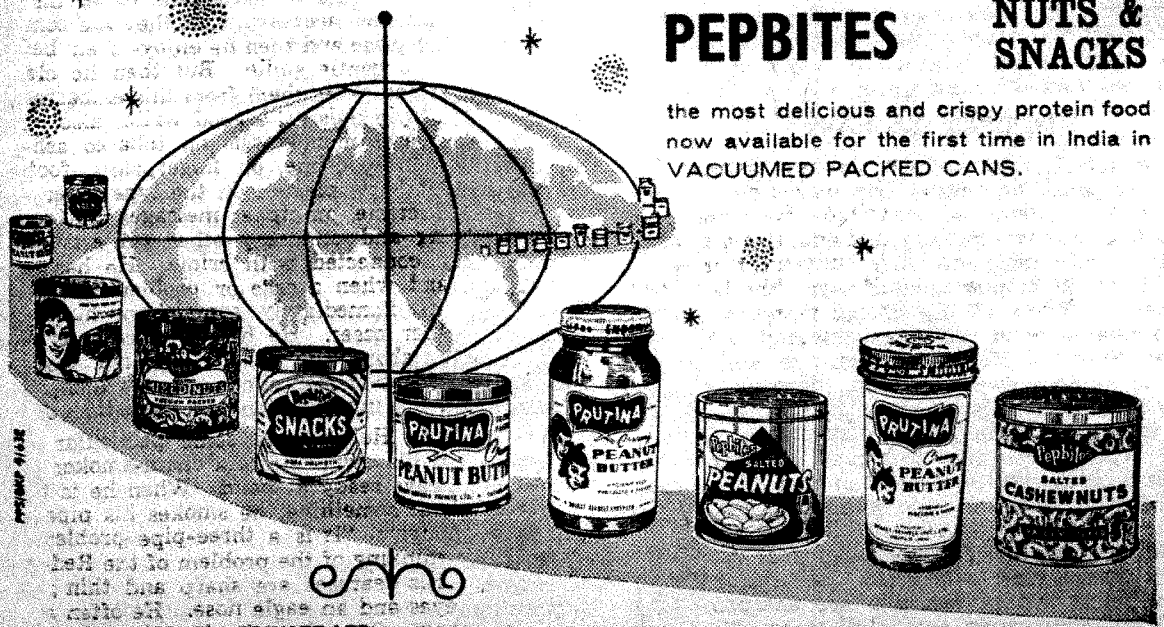
acclaimed by all...

PRUTINA CREAMY PEANUT BUTTER

is hygienically processed, contains 'A & D' vitamins, high percentage of protein and unsaturated fat.

PEPBITES NUTS & SNACKS

the most delicious and crispy protein food now available for the first time in India in VACUUMED PACKED CANS.



BHARAT KERNELS PRIVATE LTD 24-B, BASANT LAL SAHA ROAD CALCUTTA 33

do not obtrude. The reconstruction is never avcided but it is always palpable". Another particular feature of Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories is that there are no unnecessary murders or acts of extreme brutality. There is thrill no doubt, for the absence of it would make the stories dull, but this is not of a crude type. The presence of a refined mind behind them is always felt.

Sherlock Holmes was not, however, completely a product of Doyle's brain although he did not exist in reality as Sherlock Holmes. Doyle created Holmes and Dr. Watson from living models. But he was also influenced to some extent by characters created by some of his predecessors and contemporaries. In the first place when Doyle was a student in the Edinburgh University, some of his professors made a deep impression on him. The most notable of them was Dr. Joseph Bell. Doyle observed the nature and habits of Dr. Bell, made some changes in them and created Sherlock Holmes. Hasketh Pearson gives a fine description of Dr. Bell: "Bell, a thin, wiry, dark man, had sharp, piercing, gray eyes, an eagle nose, and a high and strident voice. Sitting back in his chair with fingers together, he would quickly note the peculiarities of the patients ushered into his room by Doyle, whom he had appointed his out-patient clerk." And then he used to describe the details about the patient—his occupation, his particular habits, etc.

Secondly, in creating Holmes Doyle took help from some more sources besides Dr. Bell. They are as follows: Voltaire's Zading; Dickens's Inspector Burbel; Wilkie Collin's Sergeant Cuff; and Edgar Allan Poe's Dupin. Each of these persons had shortcomings but Doyle left no loophole in his characterisation of Holmes. Poe's influence was somewhat greater because Poe's Dupin had some particular characteristics that appeared in Holmes—as for example, he was a chain-smoker, and his opinion of the official detectives who thought themselves very clever was very low. According to Pearson Dr. Watson was Doyle himself. Doyle had a fine story-telling capacity; he was a man of action and he was a doctor himself. These qualities have been faithfully represented in the character of Dr. Watson.

Before writing his Sherlock Holmes stories Doyle was in a fix as to what should be the name of his hero. At first he thought it should be 'Sherringford', but could not settle whether it would be 'Holmes' or 'Hope'. He thought some other names which he did not like so much. But finally he was satisfied with the name 'Sherlock Holmes'.

MODERN GALAHAD

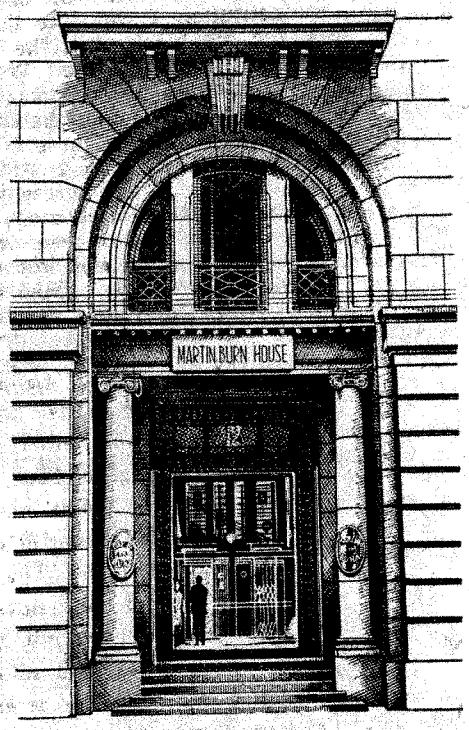
Sherlock Holmes is the greatest detective in world's suspense literature. He leaves not a single loophole in his detection of crime. He could cling tightly to a problem like a hound and, like a bull-dog he was grimly ferocious. His judgement is faultless. He is, as Holmes himself says, "the last court of appeal." When all the official detectives fail to trace a clue, or when none can give any help to the sufferer, Sherlock Holmes is there to solve everything, to explain every problem, however intricate it may be, and to help his client with all his powers. He is impartial in the proper distribution of judgement. When a man goes to him for help, he is sure that his problem will be cleared up and thus he feels a satisfaction which is the greatest prize of the detective. "He is the modern Galahad, . . . a figure of folk-lore with the lineaments of real life." But there is no mystery about him. He is an ordinary human being whose faculties are sharpened and refined by observation and intelligence. The same problem is related before both Holmes and Watson. But Holmes solves it whereas Watson makes neither head nor tail of it. This is because his intelligence is very refined and his power of observation very sharp. This sharpness and refinement Watson lacks. The energy and observation of Holmes are phenomenal and these are combined in a perfect whole. He observes every detail and so his deductions are simplicity itself, though they seem startling to his fellow men. When his conclusion has been formed, he verifies it again and again so as to leave in them no loophole. At that time he knows no rest. He has the strength, cunning, and courage of a master detective. His deductions are so faultless that the culprit has no way open before him through which to escape: he has to surrender without any opposition.

Holmes is not devoid of manly qualities and behind his iron mask there lies a soft heart, though he seldom exposes it. He is a loving friend; he is sympathetic with his clients and in his treatment of the victims, too, he is, in proper cases, moderate. He thinks that if a man who has committed a crime for the first time is sent to prison, he is ruined for ever. But if you forgive him once and let him follow a good path in life, he will do wrong never again in his life. Herein lies his greatness. He does not hanker after fame and money: he solves the cases and the official detectives enjoy the benefit of it; their names are published in newspapers and the public applause goes to them. But Holmes is not sorry for this. He wants to remain unknown and he works only for his own enjoyment. "Like Hamlet, Sherlock Holmes is what every man desires to be: like Don Quixote, he is a Knight-errant who rescues the unfortunate and fights single-handed against the powers of darkness, and like Quixote he has Sancho Panza in the person of Dr. Watson."

In his behaviour, Holmes is a perfect gentleman; he never does despise any of his clients, however poor he might be. In some cases Kings and Queens and ministers and great dignitaries of states have asked for his help; he has showed due respect to each one of them. He is polite and gentle in his behaviour and that is the reason why his clients do not feel the slightest hesitation when they come to him for advice. He is sometimes humorous too and he has a love for mystification. He often describes the particular traits of his clients or of his friend Watson with such accuracy, that they are completely taken by surprise and then he enjoys their bewilderment with a gentle smile. But then he clears up everything and saves them from this embarrassment. He is, as Doyle tells us, a good writer also. He has written several monographs on tobacco ashes and their relation to crime, on fingerprints, foot-prints and uses of Paris plaster, on the typewriter and its relation to crime, on cipher messages and codes, on handwriting and on many other subjects that are intimately connected with crime. He has a good memory and when a case or problem is presented to him, he immediately remembers hundreds of similar other cases. He has in store every bit of information about the whole criminal world and about hundreds of men and women—which are very helpful in his investigation and detection of crime.

Sherlock Holmes has some particular characteristics of his own. He is a chain-smoker and his pipe is always ready at hand. When he is thinking deeply about something, he smokes his pipe, and is lost in thought. "It is a three-pipe problem", says he, when thinking of the problem of the Red-Headed League. His features are sharp and thin; he has piercing eyes and an eagle nose. He often sits back on his chair. Sometimes he is extremely lazy but when occasion demands he is most alert and efficient. Holmes thinks that work is his only friend. "My

MARTIN BURN LOOK BACK TO OVER *180 YEARS OF SERVICE TO INDIA*



...to be able to compute this service by decades, not by years alone... to recall that our creed has consistently been the development of our country's resources through engineering and allied enterprises.. to take pride in planning that makes the many units in our organization fall into a rational and complementary group and each one a leader in its particular field, a position which some of them, early pioneers in India, held even in the last century. For us looking back is a worthwhile proposition —an incentive to *move forward.*

AMONG THE COMPANIES IN THE MARTIN BURN GROUP ARE:

THE INDIAN IRON & STEEL CO. LTD.: With a million ton integrated steel plant at Burnpur, the largest foundry in the Commonwealth at Kulti and its own collieries and iron ore mines, IISCO has an enviable record in production efficiency.

BURN & CO. LTD., HOWRAH WORKS: Pioneers in foundry practice in India, in structural steelwork fabrication and the manufacture of rolling stock—the origins of the Company go back to the year 1781.

BURN & CO. LTD., REFRACTORY & CERAMIC GROUP: Apart from stoneware pipes and chemical stoneware, the works of this group—eight in number and located in four states—manufacture nearly all types of refractories to meet the requirements of India's steel industry, power undertakings, railways, ordnance factories—in fact, any industry requiring refractory material for the maintenance of furnaces.

THE INDIAN STANDARD WAGON CO. LTD., SANTA: The oldest Indian unit started for the specific purpose of manufacturing railway rolling stock—has been mainly responsible for building up the wagon building industry. Also manufactures springs, forgings, pressings and stampings for heavy industry as well as automotive components.

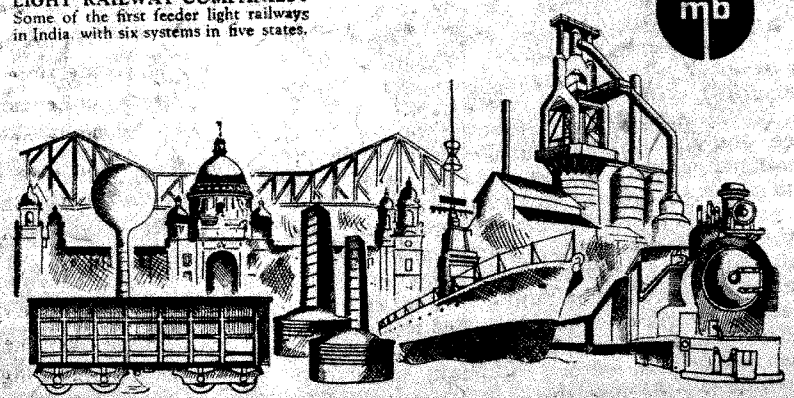
THE HOOGHLY DOCKING & ENGINEERING CO. LTD.: Established in 1819, the Company has a shipbuilding yard, a dry dock and extensive workshops at Salkia.

ROBERT HUDSON (INDIA) LTD.: A premier concern in its own field, the Company devotes itself to all types of light railway engineering—has important connections with the mining industries.

LIGHT RAILWAY COMPANIES: Some of the first feeder light railways in India, with six systems in five states.

ELECTRIC SUPPLY COMPANIES: Pioneers again in the generation and distribution of domestic power in India—serve 45 towns in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

THE VAUGHAN BURN CRANE COMPANY LTD.: A collaboration with The Vaughan Crane Company Ltd. of Manchester — manufactures hand operated and electric overhead travelling cranes and chain pulley blocks.



MARTIN BURN LIMITED Calcutta New Delhi Bombay Kanpur Patna

MBGC-22

mind", he says, "rebels at stagnation. Give me problems, give me work, give me the most abstruse cryptogram, or the most intricate analysis and I am in my own proper atmosphere. I can dispense then with artificial stimulants. But I abhor the dull routine of existence. I crave for mental exaltation. That is why I have chosen my own particular profession, or rather created it, for I am the only one in the world." He often draws his knees together to his breast, places the head on them, and is absorbed in thought. He loves music very much and he is a good composer himself. He is a good violin-player and is often lost in music. "All the afternoon he sat in the stalls wrapped in the most perfect happiness, gently waving his long, thin fingers in time to the music, while his gently smiling face and his languid dreamy eyes were as unlike those of Holmes the sleuth-hound, Holmes the relentless, keen-witted, ready-handed criminal agent, as it was possible to conceive." This shows his love of music and also his extreme concentration on the subject which he undertook to do. Doyle thus describes his hero: "In his singular character the dual nature alternately asserted itself, and his extreme exactness and astuteness represented, as I have often thought, the reaction against the poetic and contemplative mood which occasionally predominated in him. The swing of his nature took him from extreme langour to devouring energy; and, as I know well, he was never so truly formidable as when, for days on end, he had been lounging on his arm-chair amid his improvisations and his black-letter editions. Then it was that the lust of the chase would suddenly come upon him, and that his brilliant reasoning power would rise to the level of intuition, until those who were unacquainted with his methods would look askance at him as on a man whose knowledge was not that of other mortals." This is perhaps the finest estimate of the character of the master-detective. Sherlock Holmes is a bachelor and he wishes to be so for ever. He can not love any woman. The reason for this is very interesting. "Love is an emotional thing," he says, "and whatever is emotional is opposed to that true cold reason which I place above all thing. I should never marry myself, lest I bias my judgment."

DR. WATSON

Holmes and Watson are nothing but the two forms of the same soul. They are inseparable. Watson is the friend and colleague of Sherlock Holmes. He is a retired army doctor. He took much interest in the brilliant achievements of Holmes and recorded them faithfully in the form of stories. But Sherlock Holmes sometimes criticised them severely. Regarding one of such narratives he remarked, "Honestly I cannot congratulate you upon it. Detection is, or ought to be, an exact science, and should be treated in the same cold and unemotional manner. You have attempted to tinge it with romanticism, which produces much the same effect as if you worked a love-story or an elopement into the fifth proposition of Euclid." He is a plain and simple man but he is always energetic and active. He often expressed his opinions on the problems presented to Holmes and some of them gained Holmes' appraisal at times. He questioned Holmes again and again about his deductions and his methods of investigation which often helped the great detective in his work. He could not think swiftly and his intelligence also was not very sharp. But he understood his defects well and was not shy in expressing them. He says: "I trust that I am not more dense than my neighbours, but I was always oppressed with a sense of my own stupidity in my dealings with Sherlock Holmes. I had heard what he had heard, I had seen what he had seen, and yet from his words it was evident that he saw clearly not only what had happened, but what was about to happen, while to me the whole business was still confused and grotesque". But still there was necessity of Watson in the work of Sherlock Holmes. As one critic has put it: "A Watson was necessary for the existence of a Sherlock Holmes. He was the whetstone for Holmes's mind. He stimulated Holmes. His presence made it possible for the detective to think aloud and pursue his deductions." Dr. Watson himself was fully conscious of his necessity in the workings of Sherlock Holmes. On one occasion he said, "As an institution I was like the violin, the shag tobacco, the old black pipe, the index books, and others perhaps less excusable. When it was a case of active work and a comrade was needed upon whose nerve he could place some reliance, my role was obvious. But apart from these I had uses. I was a whetstone for his mind. I stimulated him. He liked to think aloud in my presence.....If I irritated him by a certain methodical slowness in my mentality, that irritation served only to make his own flame-like intuitions and impressions flash up the more vividly and swiftly." Hence rightly has Pearson called him Sancho Panza in relation to the almost Quixotic Holmes.

Doyle wrote eight books in all that are included in his Sherlock Holmes series. They are: Adventures, Case-Book, Memoirs and Return of Sherlock Holmes, His Last Bow, The Sign of Four, The Hound of the Baskervilles and The Valley of Fear. The first five of these books are collections of short stories and the last three are big novels. The stories are different in subject-matter and their movement from the first to the last can be divided into four parts: exposition, complication, climax, and solution. First of all, the problem is related to the detective in all its details; i.e. in exposition every detail about the case is supplied. Then comes complication: the detective has begun his work and one after another he comes across many knots in the case which he tries to clear up. The third part is climax. At this stage the detective has all the clues in his hand and the reader is expectant as to the end of the problem; he is eager and waits in suspense as to the final issue. Then comes solution or untying of the knots; the culprit has been arrested and the detective explains how he came to the solution of the problem. All the time the interest of the reader is held in grip and he cannot make out what is going to happen. Doyle never loses his grip on the reader's attention and thus the stories become very interesting in the end. Sherlock Holmes fails to reach the solution of the problem in two or three cases but the rest mark his triumphant glory.

Though Doyle's detective fictions are so popular, surprisingly very little good critical work has been done regarding them. There is lack of a good biography of Conan Doyle. Dickson Carr and Hasketh Pearson have done much to bring Conan Doyle to light. But little has been written and much more remains yet to be said about Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and his art.

Your
HEALTH
Needs
Nutritious Food
AND
it is From

GREAT EASTERN HOTEL

BAKERY & CONFECTIONERY

Automatic Machine Made and Fully Vitaminised

Milk, Brown & Sliced Bread, Twist Rolls, Crescent Rolls, French Rolls, Raisin Rolls, Current Loaf

* * *

Pastries, Cakes, Biscuits, Chocolate, Pudding

* * *

Prawn Cutlets, Vegetable Mutton & Chicken Patties

* * *

Visit our Air-conditioned Selling Centre at
29, Waterloo Street, Calcutta-1
and at
E-132-134 S. S. Hogg Market

Great Eastern Hotel Ltd.
Calcutta - 1.

See us for

QUALITY RICE

and
avail yourself of our home delivery service.

Pashupati Das
& SONS PRIVATE LTD.
43/2 S. N. BANERJEE ROAD
CALCUTTA-14
Phone : 24-4381

METROPOLITAN BANK
LIMITED

(A Scheduled Bank)

* * *

OFFERS

Banking Facilities of all Kind

Head Office :
7, CHOWRINGHEE ROAD,
CALCUTTA-13

The Cholaganga TEMPLES

By B. VENKATARAMAN, I.A.S.

KALINGA is the ancient name of the territory now comprised of the three modern districts, two of them, Vishakapatnam and Srikakulam lying in Andhra Pradesh, and the third, Ganjam, in Orissa. Very frequently, the extent of this region under a powerful monarch spilled beyond the traditional limits and covered substantial areas of Orissa and Andhra Pradesh while, when the fortunes ebbed, the territory was hardly a viable unit of administration.

Of the very many dynasties that held sway over this and its neighbouring areas, the Eastern Gangas stand out as the most prominent, the most brilliant and the most long-lasting dynasty ever to rule this territory. The Gangas, whose origin is lost in the misty past, came, according to local traditions, from near the former princely State of Mysore, and established the line of Eastern Gangas around 626-27 A.D. in the region between the Godavari and the Rishikulya rivers. This line is divided into three groups, the early Gangas, the medieval Gangas and the later Gangas. The last of the Gangas died around 1434 A.D. thus bringing to an end a dynasty that lasted for more than 800 years.

Between Kulottunga I, grandson of Rajendra Chola I, famous in history as the one who conquered the land watered by the Ganga (Gangaikondan; Kondan one who conquered) and his contemporary Eastern Ganga ruler of Kalinga, Rajaraja alias Devendra Varman, there were dynastic feuds but marital alliances as well; in fact such alliances were fairly common between the Chola-Vengi and Kalinga rulers for many generations before and after. Kulottunga I, alias Rajendra married his daughter Rajasundari to Devendravarman of Kalinga.

Of this wedlock was born the illustrious ruler, Ananta Varma Chola-Ganga who, coming to the throne very early in his life (he was hardly 11 years old) ruled his kingdom from the capital city of Kalinganagaram (near modern Chicacole) for nearly 35 years at the end of which he defeated the last of the Somavamsi rulers of Orissa, and shifted his capital to the Mahanadi delta around 1112 A.D. His

new capital could have been Varanasi-kataka, the modern Cuttack-Choudwar area or Yayatinagara or Modern Jajpur in Cuttack district, probably the former. From here he ruled for another thirty seven years his now vastly expanded empire and died a grand old man of 81. Anantavarman Chola-Ganga as he called himself was a contemporary of the Chola ruler Kulottunga I (of Tanjore) and was the first great ruler of the later Gangas. He assumed the dynastic appellation of Chola-Ganga in honour of his mother Rajasundari, the Chola princess. At the height of his rule, Anantavarman's (1077-1150 A.D.) empire of Kalinga extended from the Godavari in the south to the Bhagirathi (the Ganga) in the north. With the amalgamation of Utkal in his empire around 1110 A.D., he bent his energies to the stabilisation of the empire, and by 1135 A.D. had routed the powerful Kalachuris of the north-west; and with the consolidation of the kingdom brought about with the suppression of the last of his enemies viz., the Kalachuris, he turned his attention to works of piety and devotion.

JAGANNATH TEMPLE

The present Jagannath temple at Puri was constructed by Anantavarman Chola-Ganga. Started some time about 1130 A.D. this enormous temple at Puri (or Purushottama-kshetra as the inscriptions term it) dedicated to Lord Jagannath is a handiwork of Chola-Ganga who was a devout Saivaite calling himself a 'Paramamahesvara', but later became a staunch Vaishnavite, taking on such appellations as 'Parama-Bhattaraka' and 'Parama-Vaishnava' under the influence of the great Vaishnavite saint Ramanujacharya, who was a contemporary of Chola-Ganga and twice visited Puri, once in 1122 A.D. and again in 1137 A.D. It was not that Lord Jagannath was Chola-Ganga's creation. Puri had been the immemorial seat of the Lord who had been the guardian deity of all the empires that rose and fell in this region. Yayati Kesari, an illustrious ruler of the Somavamsi dynasty that ruled over Orissa between 930 A.D. and 1110 A.D. and a great builder of temples, gave the Lord, then housed in a dilapidated shrine, a fitting sanctum which however was again replaced two hundred years later by Chola-Ganga by the present majestic and commanding structure befitting the growing stature of the Lord.

THE DRUM CHRONICLE

There is a unique document preserved in the Puri temple called the 'madala panji' "Drum-Chronicle"—a name given to it because of its similarity to this percussion instrument. This records the history of the temple from its hoary origin to the 16th century when it was written. This chronicle (half tradition and half history) has been of invaluable assistance in writing the history of Orissa which can be described not inaccurately as the history of the Lord of Puri.

According to this temple chronicle, the construction of the present structure cost the exchequer five lakh tolas of gold while Chola-Ganga endowed the deities with ornaments worth 125,000 tolas of gold. Built on high ground, named the Nilachala (the Blue-hill) the Jagannath temple faces east removed about a mile from the sea. The Orissan temple has already stabilised itself in its evolution into a bi-cameral structure when Anantavarman came to build this shrine. We find the basic constituents of the Orissan temples, the Deul or the Sri Mandir or the *sanctum sanctorum* and the Jagamohan or the nave. The *bhogamandapa* or the Hall of offering and the natamandir or the hall of dance we find today are later accretions erected in the 15th century attributed to Purushottama Deva. This quadricameral temple presents a magnificent silhouette against the back-drop of the blue of the sky and the coconut studded green of the horizon, visible for miles on end. The cardinal points on the three walls of the *garbhagriha* are adorned with niches housing Vishnu in his Vamana, Varaha and Narasimha avataras. The *bhogamandapa* and the natamandir, which as mentioned earlier are later additions are studded with numerous panels depicting the pranks and feats of Krishna. The temple is girded by two concentric rectangular walls of enclosure, the outer one being 665' x 640'. An enormous monolithic chlorite *dwajasthambha* forty feet in height stands majestically in front of the main entrance to the temple. This *dwajasthambha* which once stood in front of the Sun temple at Konarak was uprooted from there and transported to Puri by a later Maratha chief named Guru Brahmachari who re-erected it in front of the temple of Lord Jagannath.

Yet another illustrious scion of this dynasty was Anantavaraman's grandson Rajaraja III's grandson Narasimha I (1245-64 A.D.) who built at the mouth of the Chandrabhaga river, a tributary of the Mahanadi, the grandest of Orissan temples, dedicated to the Sun God. Built between 1245 and 1256 A.D. on a cosmic conception of a heavenly chariot-on-wheels, the temple which faces east has the *garbhagriha* and the *Jagamohan* built on a single podium borne on twenty four wheels and drawn by seven horses, which flank the gracefully ascending flight of steps leading to the fantastically carved green chlorite porch of the *Jagamohan*. The Puri *dwajasthamba* must have faced this flight of steps a few feet away. Unlike at Puri, the *natamandir*, which in this case, is co-eval with the main temple, and is roofless, stands isolated between the main entrance at the Eastern wall and the steps to the *Jagamohan*.

The entire campus is enclosed by a compound wall 850' x 540'. Of its original height of 14' hardly 6' remains and the sand dunes have built up the ground level to the height of the walls with the result that the temple gives an impression of being sunk in sand, which it was for centuries till Lord Curzon disinterred it from oblivion and took up its renovation and preservation. The main tower over the *garbhagriha* called the *gandi* in the language of the Orissan architect is no longer there having collapsed at least a few centuries back while the tower over the *jagamohan* has been luckily preserved for us by the efforts of the pioneering work of the early archaeologists at the turn of the century, who has filled the hollow of the *Jagamohan* with rubble and sand to support the roof.

The *garbhagriha* walls house in the external niches of the three cardinal directions three exquisite and fortunately well preserved man-size green chlorite icons of the Sun God, two standing and one riding a horse, while the basement of the panel depicts the seven straining horses whose reins are held by Aruna shown between the feet of the deity.

UNBELIEVABLE STONE CARVINGS

The outer surface of the *garbhagriha* and the Jagamohan is one mass of sculpture, scroll work, and glyptic riot that passes description. For such enormous surface work on stone, with such diligent care

(Continued on page 256)

RABINDRANATH TAGORE AND HIS SOCIO-ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

By S. B. SARKAR

IT does not seem to be an easy task to isolate and marshal the social and economic ideas of an individual whose main province was neither sociology nor economics. Men of creative imagination, however, almost invariably leave behind discernible imprints, though in a more or less fragmentary manner, of their vision and outlook on many subjects other than their major creative arena. Rabindranath Tagore, a versatile genius of our times, was no exception. Essentially a literary personality of high distinction, Tagore freely allowed his creative thinking to hover over matters which, strictly speaking, bore no direct relationship with his literary pursuits. It is therefore but natural that we often come across glimpses of his ideas much of which can conveniently be classed as socio-economic, and yet Tagore was not an economic thinker or a social scientist in the modern sense of the term. He can perhaps more precisely be called a social reformer, but the field of social action conceived and at times even practised by him speaks of underlying economic considerations.

Tagore lived and worked in those troubled days of pre-independent India when nationalistic sentiments and patriotic fervour were reigning supreme in the entire socio-political scene of the country. Dwelling on the subject of evolution of economic thinking in India an eminent economist has aptly observed that "the seeds of nationalistic economics sown by Naoroji and nurtured to growth by Ranade bore ample fruits in the twentieth century partly in the period of the Swadeshi Movement of 1905 and after, and mostly in the inter-war period from 1919 to 1939. During the entire period of the first four decades of the present century, economic thinking in India was intensely nationalistic." * Indeed centuries of political bondage and economic exploitation quite naturally inspired, in those days, a class of Indian nationalist intellectuals to embark on bold schemes of political action the *raison d'etre* of which was very often social injustice and economic misery. Abject poverty of the Indian masses coupled with perpetual economic backwardness, the inglorious role of a potentially rich country as a traditional market for British manufactured goods, absence of any positive action on the part of the alien rulers to improve the economic well-being of the people—all contributed to the emergence of a plethora of progressively nationalistic ideas the like of which was not witnessed before.

It is singularly unfortunate that Tagore did not live to see the much-desired independence of India but he, like many others, had his unmistakable share in its achievement. Independence of the country which, historically speaking, was rather destined to suffer prolonged neglect and centuries of social and economic stagnation, brought in its wake renewed hopes and aspirations for a better and prosperous future. It must be recalled that Tagore, in no small measure, helped to kindle such hopes among the people especially during the days of the freedom struggle. We have, however, travelled a long way since independence and have been fortunate enough to witness the changing face of our backward country through a series of Five-Year Plans.

Perhaps it is not widely known that practically every facet of our socio-economic life engaged Tagore's attention and kept him occupied throughout his eventful life. A sensitive individual as he was, his absorbing interest in every possible aspect of human existence was almost a layman's puzzle. Indeed Tagore's concern for the suffering humanity, his sympathy for the neglected and downtrodden, his abiding faith in man as the creator of his own destiny, his emphasis on universal brotherhood and unified approach to human problems are all living inspirations to the present-day world torn by trouble and turmoil. It is unfortunate that today in our eagerness to attempt a materialistic interpretation of the contemporary history we are fast losing grip over our destiny and consequently are thrown in the whirlpool of devastation and despair. There seems to be hardly any escape for us from this tangled mass of events unless we make our imagination more balanced and realistic. True is the maxim—'as civilization advances poetry declines'—and it is even more true in the context of our present-day civilization which is creating problems faster than it can possibly solve.

SYMBOL OF UNITY

A rich product of Bengal, Tagore was a symbol of Indian unity, for he realised that collective good to the people could only be brought about by collective action. This realisation prompted him to denounce narrow provincialism and linguism in so many words. Even today, long after independence,

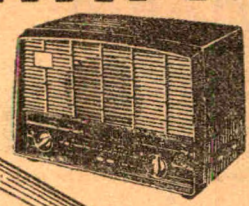
*1. Bhabatosh Datta : The Evolution of Economic Thinking in India (Dr. P. N. Banerjea Memorial Lectures, 1916), P. 19.

on Festive Occasions

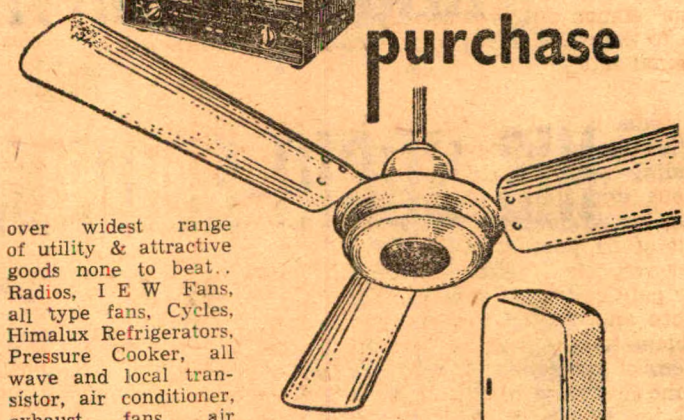
K·HORE'S

Toilet Products

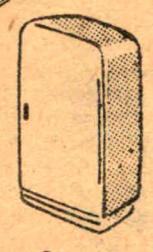
HAPPIER on



hire purchase



over widest range of utility & attractive goods none to beat.. Radios, I E W Fans, all type fans, Cycles, Himalux Refrigerators, Pressure Cooker, all wave and local transistor, air conditioner, exhaust fans, air Circulators, watches, clocks, motor pumps, typewriter, musical instruments, steel, wooden & cane furniture, Motor Cycle, Air Compressor, Flexible Shaft, Machinery.



THE MOST VISITED PLACE IN THE TOWN.

EASTERN TRADING COMPANY

2, India Exchange Place
(1st Floor), Cal-1. 22-3096, 22-3938

Enjoyable Reading.....

BICHITRA KAHINI & ARO BICHITRA KAHINI

(in Bengali)

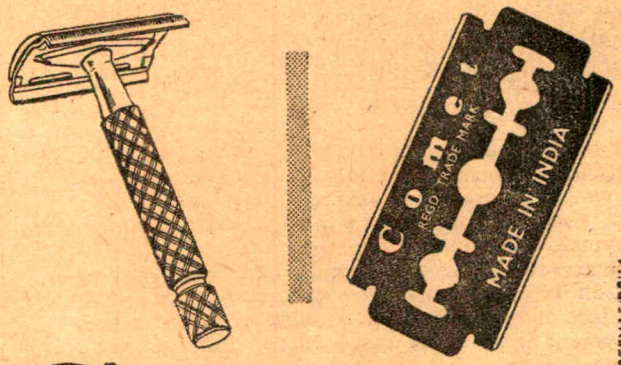
By

SHRI TUSHAR KANTI GHOSH

M. C. SARKAR & SONS
PRIVATE LIMITED
14, Bankim Chatterjee St.,
Calcutta-12.

the finest

SHAVING COMBINATION



BEEVAS/BB/14

Comet

SAFETY RAZOR & BLADE

COMET Safety Razor with COMET Blade makes the finest shaving combination for a cleaner, closer and smoother shave.

BALUBHAI & BROTHERS. 87, CANNING STREET, CALCUTTA-1

we are often tormented by the prevalence of narrow localised interests which cut at the root of national unity and cohesion and, in a bid to end all these, are straining our nerves to bring about what is called an 'emotional integration' of the people. The remarkable thing about Tagore's farsightedness is that he realised its necessity long before and took enormous pains to inculcate the true ideals of unity among the Indian people. His immortal 'Jana Gana Mana' stands out prominently as a fitting contribution to the cause of resurgent Indian nationalism and national unity.

India is still a land of mass illiteracy and millions in the countryside are not capable of understanding even the alphabets. Doubtless this is a serious impediment on our way to material progress, for without sufficient education and enlightenment of its population a nation however big in other respects is likely to remain backward not only politically but also socially and economically. Tagore appreciated the gravity of this formidable problem but he was no believer in the traditional system of education. It was Tagore who probably, for the first time in this country, felt the imperative need for purposeful education and started work in that direction. As regards education his was a novel concept. True to his uncommon poetic bent of mind and progressive ideas he devised a system of education which mingled man with nature, for he despised learning within the four walls of a traditional educational institution. Essentially a lover of nature he could not possibly conceive man divorced from nature's overpowering influence and naturally thought that it was nature which alone could exert the most powerful influence to shape human character and destiny. Tagore's Viswa-Bharati, now grown into the stature of an internationally known university, was born out of this vital need for purposeful education. His contributions in this regard were truly that of a pioneer. Students' indiscipline has lately become a problem of no small dimension and the educationists and planners in our country are continuously grappling with this problem without any appreciable measure of success. Tagore's ideals of education embracing within its fold the concept of natural development of human faculties and basic discipline could perhaps afford a possible line of solution to this problem so common these days.

It needs no renewed recital of the fact that the importance of small-scale and cottage industries as effective instruments for achieving the twin objective of rapid industrialisation and relieving unemployment has come to be recognised in unmistakable terms ever since the beginning of the planning era in India. Development of rural industries with the object of mitigating the rigours of rural unemployment is a vital part of our planned programmes. In fact, it is now the declared policy of the Government to bring about a revival of these hitherto dying industries for purely economic reasons. True that Tagore was unaware, at his times of the various strategies of economic development but when he conceived the idea of Sriniketan surely he had in mind the pains and penalties of the vast number of unemployed and under-employed rural folk. He might have been ignorant of the niceties of modern economic doctrines and their application to specific economic problems but his conception in this regard was fundamentally sound and was calculated to promote real welfare of the poor and economically handicapped village artisans. His heart ached at the untold sufferings of the millions of unemployed and under-employed in the countryside and by establishing an institution like Sriniketan he endeavoured to provide a solution to this problem in his own characteristic way.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The philosophy behind the Community Development Projects in our country on the success of which material prosperity of rural India largely depends is, in a real sense, a restatement of the ideals of self-help and co-operation so gallantly championed by Tagore. Characterising the first impact of the Swadeshi Movement of 1905 as "to some extent romantic" Dr. Bhabatosh Datta has observed that during this period "there were writings and lectures in which patriotism was the dominant element and sometimes patriotism clashed with practical wisdom . . . . . But this romantic phase performed the valuable task of turning the attention of the educated classes to rural reconstruction, revival of handicrafts and co-operation. Rabindranath Tagore's famous essay "Swadeshi Samaj" expressed forcefully what many Indians were thinking about the reconstruction of Indian village life through self-help and idealistic leadership; Tagore gave a well-knit logic which has again been revived in support of community project schemes."

Plentiful labour supply and relatively poor capital resources have prompted the Indian planners to concentrate mainly on labour-intensive schemes of development. To man our growing industries we also need a large number of skilled personnel but unfortunately the skill-building programmes in our country are still inadequate. To make matters worse, the youths of this country have an undue preference for white collar jobs and the dignity of labour is yet to be appreciated in its true perspective. It has often been said, and not without reason, that Bengali youths, even when they are full of possibilities, prefer to go unemployed rather than to accept a situation involving manual labour even for the sake of their livelihood. Tagore's understanding of the problem was basically correct and he deprecated this aversion of the Bengali youths to manual labour apart from emphasizing the dignity of labour in unambiguous terms. He seemed to be a realist when he made an apparently uncharitable suggestion that the Bengali youths should be mercilessly driven out of their cosy homes so that they might be obliged to set foot on the road to adventure and perforce become capable of assuming risks and shouldering responsibilities in the practical fields of active life. It might be pointed out here that assumption of risks is essentially an economic function which goes a long way to promote economic advance, and Tagore's reflection on this score, although occasioned by his concern for unenterprising Bengali youths, bears eloquent testimony to his economic vision.

It can hardly be denied that economic exploitation of many by a few is still one of our major economic ills. In fact, the Indian socio-economic scene presents an unhappy spectacle of glaring inequalities. Reduction of inequality and an even distribution of economic power are naturally among the declared objectives of our Five-Year Plans. India is truly a land of variety and the diverse pattern of her economic existence at once prove to be somewhat confusing. Probably no social malady clouds the Indian economic scene in a more undignified way than the presence of high incidence of inequality among the people. A land of strange paradox, India embraces within her fold both the

abnormally rich and the miserably poor, the latter in depressingly larger proportion. Tagore was fully conscious of this unfortunate social phenomenon and his 'Dui Bigha Jami' speaks of his awareness of the novel methods of exploitation of the poor by the rich. Even though Tagore had no concrete solutions to offer, his acquaintance with a modern economic problem is significant. His idea of the role of zamindars as trustees originated from his concern for the poor peasants who were almost defenceless against economic exploitation. Tagore strove for equality and sought to achieve social harmony which is yet a distant objective in our country even after a decade of conscious and calculated planning.

ECHO IN U. N. CHARTER

Tagore's emphasis on the reduction of inequality, his deep concern for the under-privileged and last but not the least, his intense inclination to preserve human rights afford valuable glimpses of his mature and refined socio-economic outlook. The United Nations Organisation today stands, among other things, for the preservation of human rights and without undue exaggeration we may perhaps say that the image of Tagore's vision is clearly reflected in the U.N. Charter.

The social and economic plight of women figured prominently in the writings of Tagore. He repeatedly emphasized that women must have their rightful place in the social set-up of a country if it is to maintain an even rate of socio-economic progress. Early during the present century, Tagore's writings on the trend of civilization in relation to the role of women are worth reckoning. He wrote—"At the present stage of history civilization is almost exclusively masculine, a civilization of power, in which woman has been thrust aside in shade. Therefore it has lost its balance and it is moving by hoping from war to war . . . . . Today's civilization, it is hoped, will be based not merely upon economic and political competition and exploitation but upon worldwide social co-operation, upon spiritual ideals of reciprocity, and not upon economic ideals of efficiency and then women will have their true place." (Personality—Woman, 1917-18). The Indian Constitution has recognised the equality of rights among men and women and has ruled out the possibility of any discrimination between the sexes in political, social and economic fields. The economic and social status of women in our country has thus been elevated to keep pace with the progressive ideas of our times. It is significant to note that writing in 1917 Tagore was not only alive to the social handicaps of women but also pleaded for their early removal.

The farsightedness of Tagore was indeed remarkable. In one of his famous addresses (Crisis in Civilization) written on the occasion of his eightieth birthday when the prospects of independence was simply a matter of pious optimism Tagore declared in clear and candid language that "the wheels of Fate will some day compel the English to give up their Indian Empire. But what kind of India will they leave behind, what stark misery? When the stream of their two centuries' administration runs dry at last, what a waste of mud and filth they will leave behind them!" Thus the great poet observed like a prophet and visualised the shape of things to come like a realist. What actually pained him was the nature of neglect and the extent of exploitation the Indian people suffered at the hands of their unkind alien rulers. Needless to add only a true patriot with a crusading zeal for social reform could have such a clear vision and forward-looking frame of mind. In fact, Tagore's richness of imagination and maturity of thought on all conceivable human problems startled the whole world. It is really difficult to imagine how a man who was essentially a poet could afford to th nk so much about so many things that affect humanity.

CHOLAGANGA TEMPLES

(Continued from page 252)

for detail, Konarak has very few parallels, and close approximations will be found in the Chandella temple-complex at Khajuraho or the Hoysala temples of Mysore. Animal life, vegetation, exotic as well as indigenous, fantastic animal figurines, naga and nagini images, erotic representations of men and women i inconceivable poses, dancing girls and gigant.c femal instrumentalists mantle every square inch of the structure, which even in its ruins stun the on-looker with its overpowering grandeur as a lithic repertoire of Orissan art. One has to stretch one's imagination to strained limits to share the feelings of the Chola-Ganga prince Narasimha I when he stood on the Chandrabhaga *sanghama* and drank of the idyllic beauty of this enormous embodiment of his cosmic concept.

Certainly no patch on this grandest piece of Eastern Indian art, but with its own right to its claim of a superb piece of architecture, is the shy delicate and beautifully built temple of Ananta Vasudeva, on the eastern bank of Vidusarovar, the sacred tank of Bhubaneswar.

Even as early as 1212 A.D. when Anangabhima Deva III, father of Narasimha Deva I came to the throne, the Sultan of Bengal had declared himself independent of Delhi and made inroads into Orissa, which were effectively resisted by both the father and the son. The Haihaya prince, Paramardi Deva, who was married to Narasimha I's sister, Chandrika Devi was one of Narasimha's able generals. It was in one of these border wars fought to contend the Sultan of Bengal that Paramardi Deva the Haihaya prince lost his life; and the pious widowed princess Chandrika who was a great devotee of Lord Krishna even from her childhood built and dedicated this temple to Sri Krishna and his brother Balarama. When it came to be built in 1278 A.D., a few decades after Konarak, the Orissan temple had evolved itself into its maturity of the full complement of the four components, viz., the Sri Mandir or the deul, the Jagamohan, the Bhogamandir and the Natamandir. Vaishnavism by this time had taken deep root in Orissa and even in an essentially Saivaite centre, like Bhubaneswar, a temple dedicated to Krishna and Balarama came to be built. The deul is cruciform-shaped, which marks it from the rest of the Orissan temples, while the three halls in front are crowned in true Orissan style by tiered roofs (called pidha). The niches on the garbhagriha walls also enshrine Vaishnavite deities.

Innumerable smaller shrines were built by the Chola Gangas over three centuries of their rule. One sees them dotting the Mahanadi delta where their glory rose to its greatest heights. They and the rulers of their predecessor dynasty, the Somavamsis have left a veritable storehouse of art and architecture, that is the wonder of Orissa.

EDITOR — TUSHAR KANTI GHOSH

Printed and Published by TULSHI KANTI DE BISWAS on behalf of the Amrita Bazar Patrika Private Ltd., at the PATRIKA PRESS, 14, Ananda Chatterjee Lane, Cal.-8.

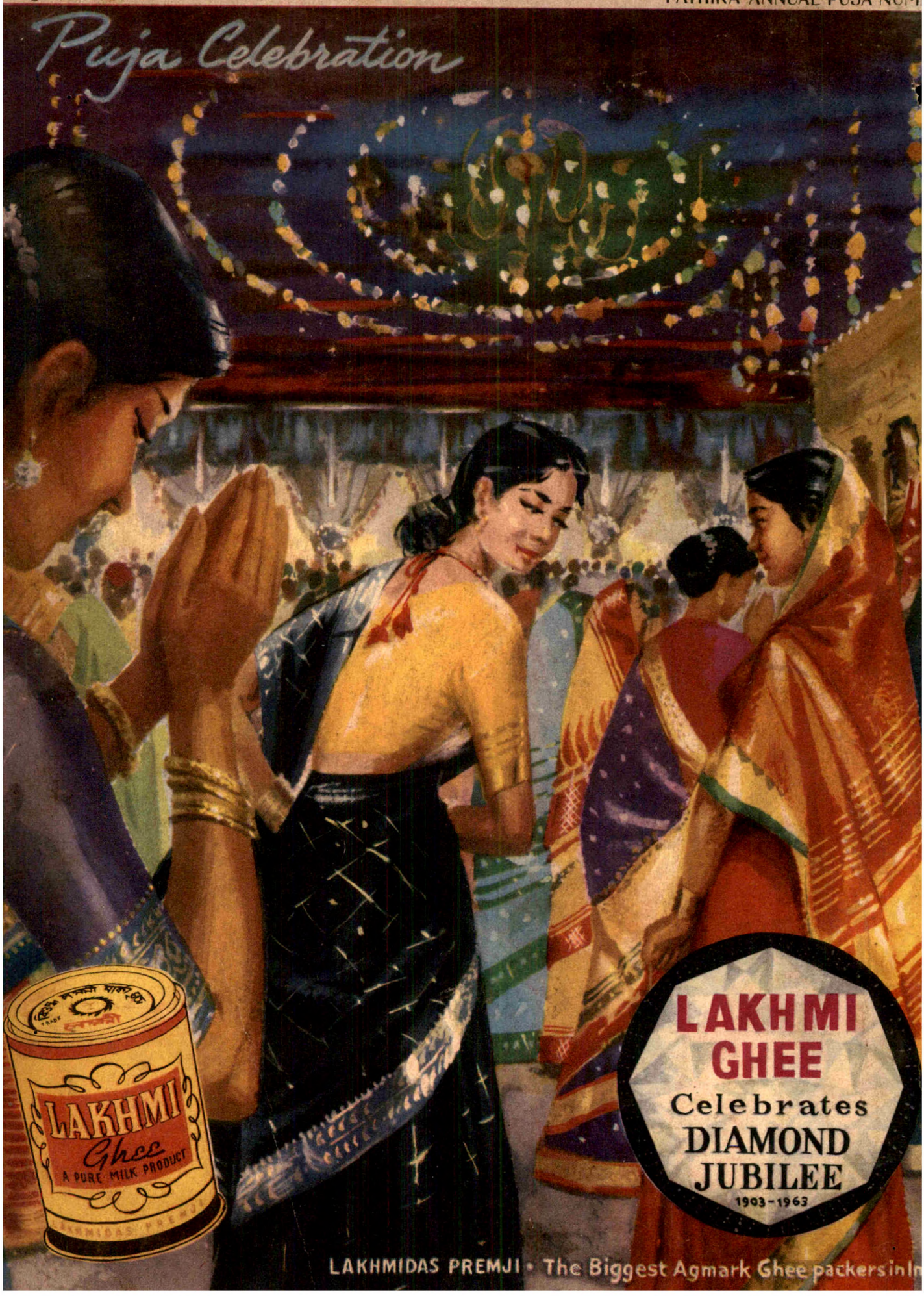
We are proud to announce that our Factory at the new premises on Transport Depot Road, equipped with up-to-date Modern Machinery and Equipment, has commenced production in superior quality remoulding of tyres for Cars, Trucks, Earthmovers and Cranes—a step forward in our venture.

UNITED TYRES
PRIVATE LTD.

59-D, CHOWRINGHEE ROAD, CALCUTTA.

Phone : 47-5437.

Puja Celebration



Amrita Bazar Patrika

PUJA ANNUAL 1964

EATING DRUMS FOR

Boroline

The medicated skin cream that will keep you fresh, radiant and on top of the festive world this Puja.

BOROLINE HOUSE • CALCUTTA

Your

foundation

for beauty—

femila

SNOW

One of a crowd or one in a million ?
The gentle assurance of your beauty
foundation will keep you relaxed and
petal-fresh in the most
pressing crowds.

BOROLINE HOUSE, CALCUTTA.

For healthy handsome hair

You must rely on a good Hair Oil. And there is none better than 'COCOLA', the quality Hair oil with a great tradition.

COCOLA

THE MOST POPULAR HAIR OIL

JEWEL OF INDIA PERFUME CO. PRIVATE LTD. CALCUTTA-34.

Here is Coffee to brighten you up.....nothing like Coffee.....warm and friendly. The rich aroma is so completely satisfying. Make it Coffee everytime.

WHATEVER THE MOOD COFFEE SATISFIES

Good Coffee is easy to make. Write to us for a free booklet. Mention the language you prefer.

COFFEE BOARD
BANGALORE

FDS/C9/17 B

Content

	Page
THE MOTHER BENIGN — By Dr. Roma Chaudhuri	9
THE IMPACT OF THE XIX CENTURY — By Hiranmay Banerjee	11
ANGRY YOUNG POETS — By Haydn Moore Williams	13
OBSCENITY & PORNOGRAPHY — By Sadhan Kumar Ghosh	16
CLIMBING THE SOCIAL LADDER — By Mukul Gupta	18
RAMENDRA SUNDAR TRIVEDI — By R. K. Das Gupta	20
REMEMBERING JAWAHARLAL — By Dilipkumar Roy	23
INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY — By Prof. Anil Chandra Banerjee, M.A., Ph.D.	28
TANTRIC CONCEPT OF ANIMAL SACRIFICE — By K. M. Purakayastha	31
NALAK — By Abanindranath Tagore	33
THE WRIST-WATCH — By Narendra Nath Mitra	48
THE WASP — By Kamakshiprasad Chattopadhyaya	52
FROM THE DIARY OF A JOURNALIST — By Tushar Kanti Ghosh, W.B.C.S.	55
THE UNEQUAL MATCH — By Dhirendra Narayan Roy	58
STONES ONLY — By Manabendra Paul	60
PUNISHMENT — By Balwant Singh	65
MYSTERY AT CARNIVAL LAKE — By W. T. Brannon	70
REBATI — By Fakir Senapati	81
MY GENIAL HOST — By Sheila Chaudhuri	85
FOLK SONGS AND DANCES OF UTTAR PRADESH — By Projesh Banerji	89
MY CRITICS HERE AND ABROAD — By Uday Sankar	91

(Continued On Next Page)

HOWRAH . .

KUSTHA-KUTIR

GLORY OF NATIONS !

An Institution with over seventy years' reputation has achieved unique success in the treatment of

LEUCODERMA

Anaesthetic patches, nodules of the body, depigmented skin — disease, eczema, psoriasis, dermatitis, fungus, pimples or eruptions of various kinds, infectious sores etc.

Free medical advice and interesting booklet obtainable on request.

FOUNDER:

PANDIT RAMPRAN SHARMA

1, Madhab Ghose Lane, Khurut, Howrah

Phone . 67-2359

Branch: 36, MAHATMA GANDHI RD., CALCUTTA-9

This is the time to go places. When care is a forgotten word and merry laughter is everywhere. Have the time of your life... Fly IAC. We bring people and places together the quickest way

INDIAN AIRLINES 39, CHITTARANJAN AVENUE, CALCUTTA-12

IAC-74

Consult
K·HORE
for beauty aids

For :—

● Casting

●● Machining

●●● Forging

●●●● Structurals

Please Enquire

KWALITY
ENGINEERING
WORKS

Makardha Road, Dasnagar
Howrah

336346-Phone-672303

Contents

Page

THE GREAT TEMPLE
By Sheila Chatterjee .. 93

THE BURGLAR
By Jatish Bose .. 97

AN ODOUR OF TUBEROSE
By Dhananjoy Bairagi .. 100

NEITHER PRESIDENT NOR CONVENER BE
By Charulal Mukherjea .. 127

MY FAVOURITE STREET
By Kabita Sarkar .. 129

THE ARMY OF GHOSTS
By L. N. Birla .. 131

THE CROCODILE, ITS LIFE AND HABITS
By Augustus Somerville .. 135

ANANDI BAI
By Parasuram .. 139

THE PRESENT
By R. S. Nallaporumal .. 143

THE THRONE OF JUDGMENT
By Premchand .. 147

PUJA HOLIDAYS
By Devdas .. 153

COME FROM THE DEAD
By Tarasankar Bandopadhyaya .. 161

BUY RADIO ON EASIEST INSTALMENTS

Initial down payment Rs. 100/- and 18 monthly instalments of Rs. 21/-

Model No. U-806 AC—AC/DC.

Price: Rs 434-50. including Excise Duty & Sales Tax

OTHER MODELS ALSO AVAILABLE ON EASY INSTALMENTS

MODERN RADIO SERVICE.

48, Free School Street, Calcutta-16, Phone: 24-2234.

8, Chowringhee Rd. Calcutta-13. (opp. K.L.M.) 23-7213

15-L, Lindsay Street. (Left side of Clock Tower) Calcutta-16, Phone: 24-1965

SUNDAY WORKING HOURS: 9-30 A.M. TO 1 P.M.

BEEVAS/MR/53

Contents

Page

HOUSE OF CARDS
By Probodh Kumar Sanyal .. 169

MISTER BHATIA
By Mohan Rakesh .. 175

BUDDHA IN THE TRADITIONS OF EARLY BUDDHIST ART
By Kalyan K Ganguly .. 179

THE ART OF THE CHANDELAS
By Prof O C Gangoly .. 183

THE FORT TEMPLE AT AIHOLE
By S R Balasubrahmanyam 185

TEMPLES OF MYSORE
By J C Das .. 187

MAHA-ASHTAMI AT SEA
By Lokesh Ghatak .. 193

ATOMIC ENERGY AND ITS USES
By S C Chakraborty .. 198

THE LAKE, THE FISH, AND MILLION BIRDS
By K P Biswas .. 201

THE SHAPE OF CITIES TO COME
By Bhaskar Mukerji .. 204

O RARE BEN JONSON
By Sunanda Sanyal .. 207

(Continued On Next Page)

Gram : "Agrahotel" Phone : 274606

AGRA HOTEL

16, Daryaganj, Delhi-6

INDIAN EUROPEAN and VEGETARIAN CUISINE

WELL FURNISHED ROOMS COURTEOUS SERVICE HOMELY ATMOSPHERE.

OUR OFFER
IN THE
FESTIVE OCCASION

COCKATOO Brand Flour
LANTERN Brand Flour
ROSE Brand Atta
HORSE Brand Atta

MILLED BY
THE HOOGHLY FLOUR MILLS CO. LTD.
THE UNITED FLOUR MILLS CO. LTD.

MANAGING AGENTS :
SHAW WALLACE & CO. LTD.

ISSUED BY
CHAUDRI & CO.
4/5, BANKSHALL STREET, CALCUTTA 1.

CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY PUBLICATIONS

		Rs. P.
1.	Acharya P C. Roy Centenery Volume.	15-00
2.	An Enquiry into the Nature and Function of Art.—Dr. S K. Nandi	10-00
3.	Aryamanjusrinamasangiti (Sanskrit and Tibetan Text) Edited by— Sri Durgadas Mukherjee	
4.	Bengali Folk Ballads from Mymensingh. —Dr Dusan Zbavitel	12-00
5.	British Relations with Hyderabad. —Sri Nanigopal Chaudhuri	10-00
6.	Classical Indian Philosophy. —Dr. S C Chatterjee	5-50
7.	Catalogue of:—Early Indian Coins in the Asutosh Museum.—Sri Chittaranjan Chaudhuri	10-00
8.	Catalogue of:—Folk Art in the Asutosh Museum. —Mrinal Kanti Pal	10-00
9.	Elements of the Science of Language:— I. J S. Taraporewalla	20-00
10.	Ethics of the Hindus.—Dr. S. K. Maitra	8-00
11.	History of Sanskrit Literature. —Dr. S. N. Dasgoopta and S. K. De	30-00
12.	Hadith Literature. —Prof M Z. Siddiqi	15-00
13.	Industrial Finance in India—Dr. S. K. Bose	18-00

		Rs. P.
14.	Kamala Lecture (The Buddha)— U NU (in English)	3-50
15.	Kamala Lecture (The Buddha)— U NU (in Tamil)	2-00
16.	Kamala Lecture (The Buddha)— U NU (in Hindi)	2-00
17.	Kamala Lecture (Indiaism and the Indian Synthesis) Dr Suniti Kumar Chatterjee	8-00
18.	Kamala Lecture (Indian culture and Religious Thought) Sri Asutosh Sayanam Iyyanger	5-00
19.	Logic value and Reality. —Dr. B K Bhattacharyya	10-00
20.	Nepali Language its History and Development. —Dr. Dayanand Srivastava	10-00
21.	Old Bengali Language and Text. —Dr. Tarapada Mukherjee	12-00
22.	Origin and Evolution of Indian clay Sculpture. —Dr. Charu Chandra Dasgupta	25-00
23.	Religious Essays.—Dr S K. Maitra	10-00
24.	Some Materials and Social Education of Tribals in E. India.—Sri K P Chattopadhyaya	5-00
25.	The Problems of Philosophy. —Dr. S C Chatterjee	6-50
26.	Yoga Philosophy of Patañjali (Rendered into English)—Sri P. N. Mukherjee	20-00

For further details please contact :—

Publication Department., University of Calcutta,

48, Hazra Road, Calcutta-19. Phone : 47-1766

World Famous

ASTROLOGER & PALMIST

JYOTISH-SAMRAT PANDIT RAMESH CHANDRA BHATTACHARYYA JYOTISHARNAB M.R.A.S. (London) of International fame. President of the world renowned **All-India Astrological and Astronomical Society** Panditji's wonderful predictions, Palm and Horoscope readings and Tantrik rites are unrivalled in India. He has won unique fame not only in India but throughout the world. **(viz. England, America, Africa, Australia, China, Japan, Singapore, Malaya, Java etc.)** Despaired persons are advised to test the powers of panditji

WONDERFUL TALISMANS

DHANADA KAVACHA:—For vast wealth, good luck health and all round prosperity honour and fame in life. Rs. 7-10. Special Rs. 29-11. **BAGALAMUKHI KAVACHA:** — To overcome enemies it is unique. Gets promotion in service and in winning civil or criminal suits and for pleasing higher officials it is unparalleled Rs. 5-2. Special Rs. 34-2. **MOHINI KAVACHA** :—Enable arch foes to become friends and friends more friendly Rs. 11-8 Special 34-2. **SARASWATI KAVACHA** :— Success in examination, retentive powers and sharp memory Rs. 9-9. Special 35-9.

DETAILED CATALOGUE WITH TESTIMONIALS FREE

H.O.:—50-2 (A.B.) Dharamtala St. 'Jyotish-Samrat Bhaban' Calcutta-13. Phone : 24-4065. Hours : 5 to 7 P.M. **Branch : 105, Grey St., Calcutta-5.** Hours : 9 to 11 A.M. Phone 55-3685.

GAY POOJA

KARCO

HOGG-MARKET CALCUTTA.

Invites you all to attend their musical & instrumental Programme in every Evening in their Air-conditioned Luxurious, Neat, and Nicely Decorated Hall at **Hogg-Market, Calcutta. Everyday preparation of Variety Indian and English Dishes, Ice-Cream and Lassi** attractive attraction. Specially made Sweets of highly taste, also arrangement for Vegetarian. Come with your Friends & Dearest. Ladies special arrangement. Outside orders carefully served.

Ring up 24-1988

Contents

Page

VOYAGES TO TERRA AUSTRALIS INCOGNITA AND DRAMA
By William Walker .. 213

MY MOST UNFORGETTABLE CHARACTER
By Ekayray .. 215

SCIENCE, PEOPLE AND SOCIETY
By Dr. U. P. Basu .. 217

HOW TO CONTROL A FLIGHT TO THE MOON
Dr. Patric J. Rygh .. 219

HINTS TOWARDS A TALK ON INDIAN MUSIC
By Jagannath Banerjee .. 221

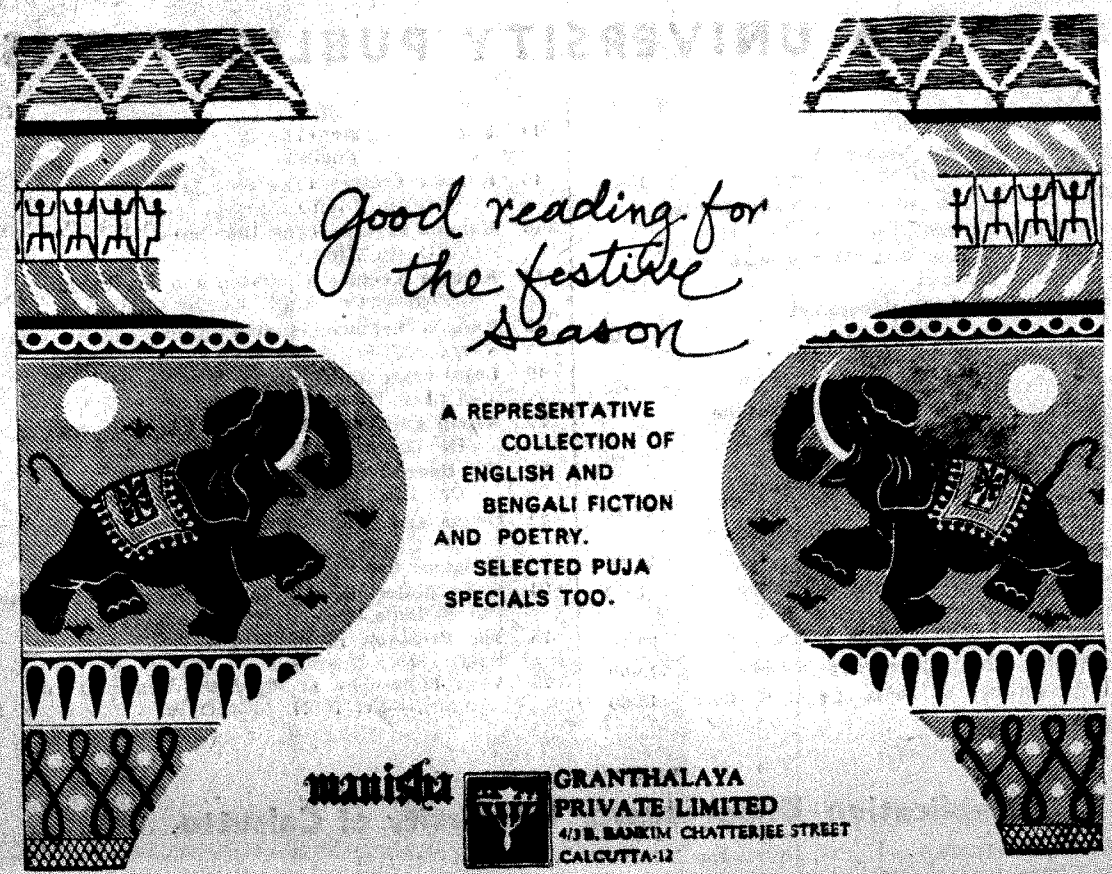
THE DECLINE OF AYURVEDIC SURGERY
By Japesh Das Gupta .. 223

RECENT TRENDS IN BENGALI LITERATURE
By Dr. Srikumar Banerjee .. 225

SHAKESPEARE AS A MAN OF THE THEATRE
By Prof. Sushil Mukherjee .. 227

ARTIST
By Rabindranath Tagore .. 231

A MOTHER TO BE
By Dakshina Ranjan Bose .. 233



Contents

Page

INVOCATION IN AUTUMN
By Swami Ramananda Giri .. 235

FRASERGUNJ ON THE BAY
By Debabrata Dhar .. 236

WHAT VALUES SHALL WE INCULCATE IN OUR CHILDREN
By Dr. Sukumar Bose .. 238

HOW TO KEEP OUR AUDIENCE TO OURSELVES
By N. K. G. 241

FILM-MAKING—AN ENJOYABLE PROFESSION
By Tapan Sinha 242

IN AN ARTISTE PRODUCER'S VEIN
By Sunanda Banerjee .. 244

INDIAN CHILDREN IN NETHERLANDS
By Samar Chatterji .. 245

RHYTHM AND TUNE
By Sadhana Bose 247

SPIRITUALISM: ITS EFFECT ON LIFE
By K. C. Chatterjee .. 249

ADVICE TO BOXERS
By J. K. Seal 251

THOUGHTS ON RANGER SEVEN
By Robert Stevens .. 253

HIGHEST PRICE
By H. P. Basu 255

ART PLATES

THE MOTHER

AMIYANIMAI GOURANGA

DEPARTED LEADER (NEHRU)
—Tarak Das

OUR PRIME MINISTER THE IMPRESARIO
—Shyamal Basu

PRISTINE GLORY: KONARAK
—Pratima Dasgupta

BATHING SPREE
—Prafulla Mitra

SYMPHONY IN STONES
—Amiya Tarafdar

WINTER IN SIMLA
—Amiya Nandy

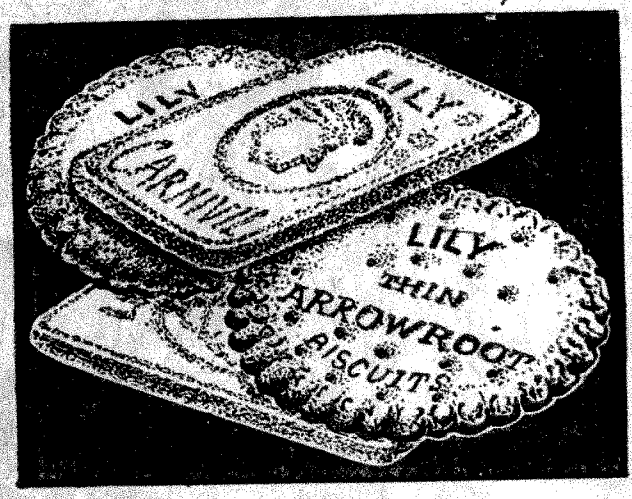
A RIVER TAMED
—Mona Chowdhury

OLD AND NEW
—Ranjit Gupta

RIDER OF THE SEA
—Panna Sen

LINE & HALFTONE BLOCKS
By Sarkar Chromotype & Co.

Sweet home Sweeter



On festive days

LILY BISCUITS

make every home sweeter

TWO WELL-KNOWN BRANDS

CARNIVAL THIN ARROWROOT

IS-1011

LILY BISCUIT CO.,
PRIVATE LTD.
CALCUTTA - 4

20/63

THE MOTHER BENIGN

By Dr. ROMA CHAUDHURI

"She creates the world of souls and Matter,
This Universe vast and fine.
And graciously brings salvation to all,
She, the Mother Benign."
(Sri Sri Candi. 1.56)

COILS and coils of incensed smoke, rising proudly out of the holy sacrificial fire, lit exhilaratingly on the occasion of the joyous Mother-Worship, go up and up, up and up, across the hills and the dales, over the seas and rivers, beyond the horizons and the quarters, carrying the eternal fragrance of the All-Beautiful, All-Blissful, All-Benign Mother — *"the Barada"*. With these, go up our in most, intense, incessant prayers also, again and again —

"Be gracious, O Goddess, the Saviour of devotees,
Be gracious, O Mother Benign,
Be gracious, O Mother of the World and save it,
O Mistress of the Universe fine."
(Sri Sri Candi. 11.3)

Again and again —

"The Goddess who brings us Heaven or Salvation,
Whose form is the world lovable,
When she is eulogised by us all,
What's Her homage suitable?"
(Sri Sri Candi 11.7)

"Barada!"—the Gracious Giver of Boons, the Benevolent Benefactor of Salvation, the Sweet

Saviour of Mankind! Why do we call Her so? Simply because we feel that our whole existence depends on Her and Her alone. But how do you know that — a critic might intrude in here. But we reply: We do not *know*, we simply *feel*. *Knowing* requires explanation, *Feeling* does not. The questions of *'How'* and *'Why'* are essential in the case of *"Knowing"*; never in that of "Feeling". For "Feeling" is just *"Being"*, a kind of direct experience, a kind of total realisation, a kind of universal apprehension, beyond all doubts, above all quibblings, away, aside, apart from all hair-splitting arguments of Reason, of any kind.

But Life is not so easy for all. It is an organic whole, and so it has necessarily to work out a harmony amongst its different sides — Reason and Feeling. So, this very fundamental feeling of absolute dependence on God has, too, been subjected to a through searching, logical and philosophical criticism. Hence let us be bold, face it and have done with it first. For, who can proceed for long, proceed further with the shadow of total annihilation hanging over one's head?

Philosophical Objection: The Law of Karma. The philosophical objection to the above Theory of Grace is based on the well-known Law of Karma, one of the main pillars of our age-old Indian Philosophy. On the surface, it is a simple enough Law: "As you sow, so you reap." According to this Law, thus, *Karma* and *Karma-phala*, an action and its appropriate result, are necessarily related, like a cause and its effect. In fact, a cause is a cause, only because it is fully capable of producing its effect by itself, without waiting for anything else—otherwise, it is not a "cause" at all.

In exactly the same manner, an action, the cause, by itself, brings about its result, the effect. Nothing else is necessary here. Thus, different kinds of *Karmas*, naturally, bring about different *Phalas*. Some lead to worldly results, like health, wealth happiness (or their opposites); some, *Svarga* or *Naraka* or results to be experienced in the next world, viz. in Heaven or Hell; some, *Moksa* or Salvation. But in all cases without distinction, a particular kind of *Karma* brings about its particular kind of *Phala* automatically, necessarily, independently.

But, what do we find, alas, in the above Theory of Grace? Here, we have the illogical, insupportable, intolerable intrusion of an outside something —Divine Grace! If our *Karmas* make us eligible for this or that kind of result — well and good — let us have those, let us have *Svarga* (Heaven), let us have *Moksa* — who objects, who does ever object, who can ever object? But God? However mighty and majestic He may be, however benign and benevolent, let Him remain there in His lofty isolation in His lovely *'Loka'*; but let Him not come down from His high pedestal to the dust and din of our world, impose His will on us, intervene in our affairs, interfere with the course of Justice. Yes, let Him not do that; let Him honour His own supreme Law of Justice; let Him preserve His own great gift of Free Will and Independence to Mankind.

Hence, how can the Supreme Mother be called "Barada", or *"Svarga — Moksa — Data?* In fact, She cannot grant us boons — we ourselves alone can do so. She cannot lead us to Heaven or Salvation — we ourselves alone can do so. So, what is the use of endowing Her with attributes which, we know, according to all canons of Philosophy and Justice, can never really belong to her?

Even if it be said that She alone, being the Supreme Cause, whatever is produced, must be due to Her and Her alone, still then, it has to be said that there is no question of Her *graciously* granting us anything, as She *has to* do so, according to our own *Karmas*. Hence, it is not necessary for us to *beg* anything from Her; rather we have every right to *demand* everything from Her, according to our own *Karmas*, straightway, without fear.

So, how can she be "Barada", the Mother Benign, the Giver Gracious, the Benefactor Benevolent of this or that to us?

Mystical Reply: Law of Love. As rational beings, we are, undoubtedly, all philosophers. But is not the end of Philosophy Mysticism,—not in a narrow, depressing sense of denying Reason and deifying Blind Faith; but in a wide, exhilarating sense of elevating analytic Reason to Synthetic Realisation? Thus, Mysticism does not nullify Reason, but pacifies it, purifies it, perfects it. How? It pacifies its insatiable pride, it purifies its intrinsic blind spots; it perfects its inherent gaps. And what has it to say to us from this standpoint?

Only this: The Law of Karma, the Law of Justice cannot, of course, be denied. Still, provisions will have to be made for its proper application in the spiritual realm.

Now, from the spiritual standpoint, what is the relation between God and the Soul? According to all views, the best, nay, the only relation is one of Love—not of awe, not even of reverence, but, finally and fundamentally, one of Love, and Love alone. Thus, the first and the last word here is: We love God, God loves us. And, the Law of Love is, indeed, a Law of Justice; but never a Law of Demand, a Law of Exaction, a Law of Force.

See, a son loves his father, and knows that his father loves him. Now, he also knows that socially, legally, he has certain rights in the family, rights of maintenance, rights of education, rights of property, and so on. But does he *demand* all these from his parents in a usurious, exacting, pound-shilling-pence counting spirit? Never. For, will it not at once destroy the very parent-son relation for good? In fact, as soon as a *son* thinks of demanding something from his father at the point of a sword, he simultaneously *ceases* to be a *son*, and becomes a mere outside lender, who can, with a clear conscience, *demand* his money back from his borrower.

Hence, a son, a real son never demands — at most, he may beg, he may request, he may ask for favours; but he never *demands*. Rather, he never even does all these — for he knows fully that he will get what is beneficial for him from his father always.

Has he, then, no real *rights* to the above: maintenance education, property, and all the rest? Yes, of course, he has real rights; yet he fully knows that his father will voluntarily, without any demanding from him, gladly, lovingly do whatever is necessary for him.

Such is the Law of Love. There is no compulsion here, no exaction; there is only a spontaneous union between two hearts in eternal understanding, faith, trust. What more is needed?

The Mother Benign. So, who can prevent us from singing out eternally from the depths of our hearts —

"Be gracious, O Goddess, the Remover of sorrows,
Whom all of the three worlds adore,
Grant boons to them who take refuge
Grant boons to all, more and more"
(Sri Sri Candi 11.35.)

It is, indeed, no reflection on us, on our freedom, on our Capacities, on our self-confidence, at

(Continued on page 27)

The Impact of the XIX Century

by Hiraunmay Banerjee

WITH the consolidation of British power in India towards the end of the eighteenth century, two distinct cultures came into close contact with each other. On the one side there was the old Indian culture which traces its growth to the Vedic literature. On the other, the new conquerors brought the message of a vigorous culture founded on Science and technology. An impact did take place, but it is generally believed that it produced effect only on one side. It is believed that the robust culture of the West roused India from the soporific effect of her own decaying culture, it helped to break her slumber and to modify her cultural life in many ways, but it did not produce any result on the other side. Evidently, it was felt that it was after all an unequal contest and age was bound to give way to youth.

This view does not, however, appear to bear scrutiny. It does not seem to give a correct idea of the total effect of the impact. There are good reasons to believe that it was not a one-sided affair and in fact both cultures were influenced by this close contact. It was more or less of the nature of a two way traffic. The result of the impact on Indian culture appears to have received adequate attention. An effort will, therefore, be made in the following pages to trace out the major effects produced by it on Western culture.

The contact between the two cultures at the initial stage was somewhat superficial. After all, the East India Company came to India to push their commercial interests. It was by a twist of luck that they found themselves installed as the ruling power in the eastern part of India and this in its turn, released a series of chain actions which helped them to expand and consolidate their political power. With the new burden of administration to discharge, men of high intellectual calibre had to be appointed to fill up important political as well as judicial posts.

It was by a happy stroke of luck that in this connection, Sir William Jones came to be appointed a Judge in the Supreme Court of Calcutta established by the East India Company. Barely thirty-seven years of age, he had already established his reputation as a linguist and jurist of great eminence. Master of all the important languages of the East and the West, he had translated important treatises, in English from diverse languages. He studied law to such perfection that he came to occupy the post of the Commissioner of Bankruptcy. He was knighted in 1783. The same year he came to Calcutta to take charge of his new post as a Judge of the Supreme Court.

Immediately after his arrival he founded the Asiatic Society in 1784 with a view to exploring the different fields of culture of Asia. He also started learning Sanskrit and with his characteristic vigour acquired such deep mastery over this language in a few years' time, that he was able to bring out an English translation of "Shakuntala" the famous drama of Kalidasa in 1789. This was followed by a translation of the "Ritu-Sambara," the "Hitopadesha," the "Gitagovinda" and considerable portions of the Vedas.

This is how Kalidasa's "Shakuntala" came to Europe for the first time. The impact was considerable and worked in two ways. At the first instance, it worked as an incentive to philological studies. The close affinity of the teutonic and latin languages of Europe had been already noticed by European linguists. It came, however, as a great surprise to them, when they made their acquaintance with Sanskrit, that it also bore close affinity to these languages, though it had thriven remotely away from them in a different continent. It was this affinity of the Indo-European group of languages that stimulated linguistic studies. The great German scholar Bopp found in Sanskrit a handy term of comparison with the European languages and demonstrated their close affinity with one another. He thus came to found the Science of linguistic philology, popularly known as comparative philology.

The second way it worked was more romantic. The translation of "Shakuntala" reached the hands of Goethe, who no sooner he went through it, fell literally in love with it. His admiration for the literary merit of this great drama was so profound that he lavished on it such words of praise as had never been uttered for any book. It thus made literary history. His utterances are well known and need not be quoted here. In substance, he said that if anybody was interested to see the good things of life on earth and the good things of heaven together, he has only to read Kalidasa's "Shakuntala." It

appears that his admiration for this book overflowed the literary contents and even extended to its form.

It is part of the dramatic form in Sanskrit dramas to have a prelude in which the Manager is expected to introduce the audience into the heart of the drama through some talks with the members of his staff. This technique of introducing the drama proper through a prelude is unknown to the West and had never been practised before When Goethe was introduced to it through the reading of the "Shakuntala," he so liked it that he adopted it in his Faust.

There is good reason to support this inference. The translation of Kalidasa's "Shakuntala" in 1789 introduced it to the European reader for the first time. That Goethe became intimately acquainted with this work is confirmed by the high tribute he paid to this work. On the other hand. Goethe took as long as 43 years to complete his great drama "Faust" in two Parts. He began it at the age of twenty and gave the final touch to the Second Part in the year of his death in 1832. "Faust" made its first appearrance as 'Faust in Fragments' in 1790 in the form of a loosely connected sequence It underwent a second spurt of growth in about 1897, when a substantial portion of the First Part was written out, the complete First Part making its appearance long after, in 1808 To the second phase of growth in 1797 belong the "Dedication," "The Prologue to Heaven" and the 'Prelude upon the Stage." The insertion of a prologue at the beginning of a drama is an old practice which continues from the time of the Greek tragedies It also finds a place in some of Shakespeare's dramas But the introduction of the "Prelude" is altogether a new feature.

The "Prelude" in Part I of Goethe's "Faust" introduces a discussion between the Manager, Merry Andrew and the Poet of a company of strolling players This feature where the Manager carries on a discussion with other members of the theatrical staff, is a regular part of Sanskrit dramatic form Evidently the Manager has been painted after the model of "Sutradharas" of Sankrit dramas. We may, therefore, justifiably conclude that Goethe drew his inspiration for the "Prelude upon the Stage" from Kalidasa's "Shakuntala"

The second wave of the impact came through a different channel and was evidently of a bigger dimension. The Upanishads represent the quintessence of Indian thought but had remained undiscovered to the Western people for hundreds of years. They contain the germs of the different schools of Indian Philosophy that grew up later As pure metaphysical thoughts, they attained a degree of excellence which is yet to be excelled anywhere in the world It lies to the credit of Dara Shiko the eldest son of Emperor Shajehar who tragically lost his life untimely in a scramble for political power, for forging a key for entry to this treasure house. On first acquaintance, he fell so much in love with it that he decided to have it translated into Persian, so that people unacquainted with Sanskrit could have access to it. This translation into Persian was completed in 1657, and thus began its journey westward.

This Persian version of the Upanishads in the long run profoundly influenced Western thought. A French Scholar named Anquetil Dupperron happened to find a copy of the Persian version and decided to translate it into French. He collated his French translation in 1775. French occupied then the position of an international language in the European continent Consequently, this translation introduced the Upanishads to the intellectual world of Europe as a whole.

In this manner, it reached the hands of German philosophers like Schopenhauer and Schelling. Schopenhauer admits his close intimacy with them clearly in his writings, but Schelling does not. There is, however, good collateral evidence to show that he came in colse contact with the texts and collected annotations on them and profoundly admired them. In fact, Schopenhauer fell in love with them even as Goethe fell in love with Kalidasa's "Shakuntala." A pessimist by temperament and a recluse by habit, who shuned society and kept for company only his pet dog, he at last found solace in the teachings of these Upanishads Like Goethe he lavished the highest words of praise for them We may profitably quote some of his observations in this connection, to show the depth of his feelings. He considered the access to the Upanishads through the French translation to be the "Greatest privilege which this still young century (1818) may claim before all centuries." He observed that the "influence of Sanskrit literature will not be less profound than the revival of Greek in the fourteenth century."

Elsewhere, he observed: "In the whole world there is no study, except that of the originals, so beneficial and so elevating as that of the **Oupnekhat (Upanishad)**. It has been the solace of my life, it will be the solace of my death." (Parergo II p.426).

PANTHEISM

Evidently, this contact with the Upanishads caused a deep stir in the mind of the European Philosophers of the time There is no doubt that Schopenhauer himself was profoundly influenced by them. Although his philosophical thinking betrays a spirit of extreme pessimism, which is contrary to the spirit of the genuine Upanishads, his approach to the problems bears the stamp of the Upanishads.

What is more striking is that it was about this time, that pantheism as a philosophical concept made its appearance for the first time in Western Philosophy In India pantheism can be traced even to the Vedas in a germinal form It attained maturity in the Upanishads In substance, it propounds a theory that a single principle pervades the entire universe and works in and through nature including man It was Schelling who propounded a similar kind of pantheism in the West for the first time. Like the Brahman of the Upanishads, his God is an impersonal principle. He is conceived as a universal creative force which is the absolute ground or source of all things, a single all pervading world spirit from which everything springs up

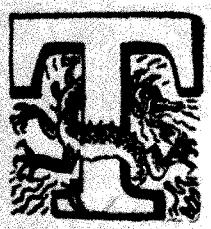
The proposition that a mature form of pantheism first made its appearance in Schelling's writings in West may perhaps be disputed A little clarification on this point is, therefore, called for. Geordano Breno (1568-1639) developed a system which has been labelled pantheistic He held the view that God is immanent and expresses Himself in the living world Even so, he believed that things are composed of uncaused and imperishable elementary parts called monads and the soul itself is an immortal monad and God is the monad of monads. In ultimate analysis, therefore, his theory resolves itself into a pluralistic concept the universe with a dominating principle exercising a general influence over the constituent parts It is not pantheism properly so called

Among other predecessors of Schelling Malebranche's (1638-1715) Philosophy has been acclaimed as pantheistic in conception. He propounded a view that things have no objective basis, what we see as things are not extended things, but ideas in the mind of a thinking God It appears to bear more

(Continued On Page 15)

Angry YOUNG POETS

By Haydn Moore Williams



THE poet was once considered to be identical with the *vates* or prophet of the tribe, and even in modern sophisticated times he occasionally plays a role not unlike that of the ancient Hebrew prophet, the scourge of complacent man. The difference lies in audience reaction: the terrible ancient prophet was frequently heeded and hated, whereas the modern poet is either ignored altogether or has to address his remarks to an increasingly narrow circle. English poets have frequently played the part of prophets crying in the wilderness of the last fifty years, and the story of recent English poetry is the story of the poet's love-hate relationship with the non-poetic world. This dialectic process can be traced from the "Waste Land" era (implicit and explicit recoil from the modern world), through the Left-Wing Auden & Co. of the Thirties (identification with "progressivism"), to the "Apocalypse" and Dylan Thomas in the war-years and the aftermath (exuberance and excess against austerity and sacrifice).

But on the whole the poet is happier when he is *against* the "establishment" than when he is forced (as in some Communist countries) to identify with an official position.

This has been particularly true of poetry in English since about the middle of the nineteen fifties. In the years that followed the second World War, Britain was a bleak place, and perhaps one reason for the amazing popularity of Dylan Thomas was not merely his attractive broadcasting personality but the direct challenge his verse made to the austerity of the English scene. His sensational death in New York as the climax of a long spell of hard drinking gave an extra fillip to his reputation. This event (in 1953) coincided with Britain's belated emergence into affluence. The problem of delinquency was now related not to poverty but to expensively clad and well-paid "Teddy Boys". Here was a new, more comfortable world, yet in many ways much more frightening, a world under the terrible shadow of the H-bomb, a world of senseless violence and vague anxiety.

It is significant that in this brighter and stranger Britain the younger writers began to turn away from the gay and ebullient figure of Thomas the Rhymer, back to realism and social commentary and satire.

For this was a period of iconoclasm and protest. Novels started appearing which made fun of some of the prominent features of English life, like Kingsley Amis's *Lucky Jim* with its anti-hero who won't coform to culture snobbery and makes rude noises at polite society. Then John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* dropped like a bomb in the West-End Theatre and started a cult of its own—projecting the image of an anguished bitter young man fighting not poverty (after all, haven't we got a Welfare State and all that!) but the more insidious and shadowy enemies of integrity and freedom—snobbery, the Establishment, the Chuch, tradition, even women! Both Amis (comically) and Osborne (seriously) presented literature of cynical rejection and dissidence, combining a vague "leftism" in politics with a contempt for all orthodoxies of Left and Right and Middle too. This attitude might appear now to be too negative and even juvenile to pass for genuine satire; but the point was that it had dramatic impact and a strategy of shock which enlivened and illuminated the literary world of the Fifties. Now some of the ideas and typical attitudes of these so-called "Angry Young Men" found their way into the poetry too.

The anthology *New Lines* edited by Robert Conquest appeared in 1956—a significant year for Britain witnessing the collapse of her power in the Middle East with the withdrawal from Suez, and the Soviet suppression of the Hungarian revolution. These events though they are rarely mentioned directly (the Suez intervention is only a background element in Osborne's *The Entertainer*) had a great deal if indirect influence on the development of the Angry Young Man cult and therefore on the emergence of a new type of poetry. *New Lines* presented nine poets: Philip Larkin, John Wain, Kingsley Amis, Thom Gunn, Elisabeth Jennings, D. J. Enright, John Holloway, Donald Davie, and Robert Conquest. Conquest claimed that the poetry of *New Lines* was "free from mystical and logical compulsions and—like modern philosophy—is empirical in its attitude to all that comes. This reverence for the real person or event is, indeed a part of the general intellectual ambience...." Conquest stresses the need for honesty and a characteristic distaste for ideology which he claims are trends shared by all these poets, but actually they have little in common. Gunn and Larkin are poles apart; Amis and Wain were both successful novelists vaguely and erroneously dubbed "Angry Young Men"—but there the resemblance ends. Their deliberate rejection of the influence of Dylan Thomas is understandable in a new set of writers determined to say something new in a new way.

But they also broke away from Auden and the "political" poetry of the Thirties, and professed weariness with the learned "cosmopolitan" poetry of Pound and Eliot. This was part of the attempt to restore poetry to a concern with everyday working life, and thus to identify the poet with the 'man in the street". So realism, naturalism, was combined with some ferocious social satire in the manner of Osborne and Wain.

Philip Larkin represents the quietly sceptical side of *New Lines* with no "Angry" ranting. His most famous piece, *Church Going*, suffers from a failure of nerve. The "awkward reverence" of the poet in his bicycle clips in the first part (splendidly described) doesn't issue in anything positive in the second part. True, Larkin thinks the Church will always remain and be needed if only to remind us of the dead, but we feel that Larkin doesn't even consider this comment to be a serious one. Yet, the poem has great merits. Although he prefers the luke-warm to the ebullient, Larkin has a firm grip on reality and makes you sensuously aware of the "feel" of modern English life. This awareness of the contemporary world is shared by Kingsley Amis. He too has a technical mastery of form and a witty colloquial style which links the facetiously termed "Movement" with the Augustans. Amis adds however his own spice of merry impertinence. Take *Dirty Story* with its wit and economy :

"Today a butcher, you cuckolded the grocer,
Fouling his sugar, in thirty seconds only,
All the while tickling a pretty customer."

Not merely funny this, but subtly ambiguous as if Donne were to be rewritten by P. G. Wodehouse and Max Shulman.

In 1957 another anthology, *Mavericks* (edited by Danny Abse and Howard Sergeant) was put forward as a corrective to *New Lines*. The editors of this new anthology alleged that *New Lines* lacked the necessary tension between "Dionysian" subject and craftsmanship. *Mavericks* featured David Wright, Michael Hamburger, Jon Silkin and Vernon Scannell. Something which the two anthologies had in common was the so-called classical element of good craftsmanship, a return to a formal structure, rhyme, metre, etc. This is particularly true of Kingsley Amis (see his *Ode to the East-North-East-by-East Wind*, etc.) and Jon Silkin.

It is interesting that Thom Gunn should be associated with *New Lines*. He might equally well have aligned himself with *Mavericks*. He is a "classical" poet with a highly "romantic" imagination. He deviated totally from Larkin's quietism, but his wit is more metaphysical than the leg-pulling witty style of Kingsley Amis. He has matured steadily from *Fighting Terms* (1954) to *My Sad Captains* (1961). He reacts sensitively to the contemporary scene ; he is a realist like Crabbe or Burns. The world of the Fifties comes alive for us in *On the Move* with its black-jacketed motor-cyclists:

"On motorcycles, up the road, they come:
Small, black, as flies hanging in heat, the Boys,
Until the distance throws them forth, their hum
Bulges to thunder held by calf and thigh.
In goggles, donned impersonality,
In gleaming jackets trophied with the dust,
They strap in doubt—by hiding it, robust—
And almost hear a meaning in their noise."

Here Gunn has caught the paradox of the teenage "rebel without a cause" of our time: the taste for speed and violence that conceals the uncertainty, the fear, the feeling of inferiority ("They strap in doubt"). This poem has become prophetically relevant in view of the recent "mods and rockers" riots in England. Though he describes the world of the Fifties in all its graphic reality, Gunn is essentially a philosophical poet, intensely intellectually curious about human behaviour. He is particularly good at exploring the consciousness of young teenagers, abnormal psychology, the strangeness of people, and the problems of living in an affluent society under the shadow of the H-bomb. The psychology of a gang-member in *Black Jackets* for whom even defeat is welcome if it increases his sense of solidarity with the "gang" is especially well done:

"It was only loss he wore,
He wore it to assert, with fierce devotion,
Complicity and nothing more."

Thom Gunn like Amis is a considerable social critic with a lively sympathetic — but candid— appreciation of the dilemma of the half-articulate youthful product of the "affluent" working class, apotheosised in an exaggerated form in the life-style of the Teddy Boy, Black Jacket, Stilyagi, cultus. There is a strongly intellectual strain in Gunn's poetry ; it suffers to some extent from its "metaphysicalness." It is gratifying to note the mellower emotional atmosphere of the poems in *My Sad Captains*. One of the best poems in this collection is *Claus von Stauffenberg*, a poem about the aristocratic Roman Catholic German officer who attempted to assassinate Hitler by planting a time-bomb in his bunker in July 1944. Von Stauffenberg had fought loyally for Germany suffering severe mutilating wounds which removed him from the front line to a Staff appointment. He became convinced that Hitler was Anti-Christ and was the leading spirit in the German resistance movement. The bomb blew up the bunker killing several of Hitler's aides but Hitler though wounded was not killed. The planned Army coup d'etat failed and Von Stauffenberg and others were shot. Gunn pictures the heroic mutilated soldier as a second Brutus :

"The maimed young Colonel who can calculate
On two remaining fingers and a will,
Takes lessons from the past, to detonate
A bomb that Brutus rendered possible."

The scene in the bunker where Hitler pores over the maps with his staff just before the bomb goes off is seen as a symbolic confrontation between two traditions, the rational and Christian versus the irrational and materialistic:

"Over the maps a moment, face to face ;
Across from Hitler, whose grey eyes have filled
A nation with the illogic of their gaze,
The rational man is poised, to break, to build."

The intellectual is not the most obvious characteristic of the poetry of Ted Hughes born in 1930, a year later than Gunn. Hughes's poems have a richly sensuous texture which aims primarily at affecting us through the senses and feelings. But the intellectual sub-structure is there. Hughes is a sort of belated "Maverick". The Dionysian subject-matter is certainly there. Animals fascinate him. In *A Dream of Horses*, the grooms dream of a stampede:

"We crouched at our lantern, our bodies drank the din,
And we longed for death trampled by such horses
As every grain of the earth had hooves and mane."

Hughes's poetry is not so much rational medi-

tation as an excited and exciting exploration through the nerve-ends, more "Romantic" than "Augustan" but with reminiscences of seventeenth century poetry too. His poetry is passionate and ebullient and even boisterous, a poetry of exclamation rather than quiet statement or ironical interrogation. Could this signal a return to Dylan Thomas? Certainly Hughes is a dissident figure in the chorus of terse and witty satirists, and is never afraid of rhetoric and over-statement. *Wind* is a typical sound-poem, onomatopoeic and highly alliterative. The woods "crash" and the hills "boom", and there are also sharply visual images:

". . . . . then under an orange sky
The hills had no places, and wind wielded
Blade-like, luminous black and emerald,
Flexing like the lens of a mad eye. . . . ."

Animals are for Hughes the living symbols of irrational forces, the elemental forces of Nature which are opposed to civilisation and reason. The hawk recurs as an image of terror. In *Hawk Roosting* Hughes makes his hawk say wittily:

"I kill where I please because it is all mine.

There is no sophistry in my body:
My manners are tearing off heads."

Hughes's poetry is refreshingly *rural* in contrast to the urban poetry of Thom Gunn. The countryside is a character in his poems; and his subjects have included birds, fish, bulls, horses, even a dead pig. But Hughes's Nature is fallen not innocent. He rejects Rousseau and Wordsworth, but has something in common with D. H. Lawrence and J. M. Hopkins, the pagan and the Christian priest! Even the thrush is portrayed as the terrible monster he appears to worms:

"Nothing but bounce and stab
And a ravening second."

To Ted Hughes life seems to be fascinating but terrifying too, a mixture of beauty and pain, violence and tenderness in paradoxical embrace. The pain is relieved by colour, vitality, passion, a kind of splendid viciousness. The hawk with its patient controlled, lethalness, its disciplined madness, its logical paranoia, is yet a figure of awesome beauty—Blakean innocence impinges on experiences. The martyrdom of the Protestant Bishop Farrar by Bloody Mary's men in the Welsh town of Carmarthen becomes a terrible but wildly fascinating (Elizabethan) orgy of bursting organs and steaming blood, and yet Hughes implies that all this horror may have meaning, a sermon in blood of God's love for fallen man, and of man's adherence to what he believes to be God's truth:

"The sullen-jowled watching Welsh townspeople
Hear him crack in the fire's mouth; they see what
Black oozing twist of stuff bubbles the smell
That tars and retches their lungs: no pulpit
Of his ever held their eyes so still,
Never, as now his agony, his wit. . . . ."

These two, Gunn and Hughes, are perhaps the most important and promising poets now writing. They link British and American poetry, for Gunn now lectures in an American University and Hughes is widely appreciated in America too. We may say that they loosely represent the classical (Gunn) and the romantic (Hughes) sides of the poetry of the Fifties. Ted Hughes will probably have a wider appeal because he is not afraid of passion and risks sheer excess. Yet he combines his furious delight in words with an acute sense of disciplined form, and his poetry is a vehicle which can convey a comic as well as a tragic vision of life.

I wish I had space to write about several other poets like the Welsh priest R. S. Thomas and the energetic ebullient David Holbrook who cannot be included in any "movement" or "trend" but who nevertheless have written some of the best poetry of our time. These must be left for another occasion.

IMPACT OF THE 19TH CENTURY

(Continued From Page 12)

resemblance to the Subjective Idealism of Bishop Berkeley (1685-1753) than to pantheism properly so called.

In this connection Spinoza's (1632-1677) grand concept of God as Substance comprehending everything is recalled to mind. It, however, conceived of reality as two completely detached parallel processes as manifest in matter and mind without interaction. It thus substitutes the dualism of substance by the dualism of attributes. It is not Pantheism proper.

Two points stand out prominently from the above analysis. The Upanishads reached the hands of Western Philosophers through the French translation of their Persian version compiled by Dara Shiko, towards the end of the eighteenth century. It caused a great stir among German Philosphers evidently, early in the nineteenth century. Schopenhauer's reference to the privilege of access to the Upanishads in "the still young century" appears to bear this out. The other fact is that Schelling's pantheism bears a close similarity to the pantheism as evolved in the old Upanishads. It is probable, therefore, that Schelling's thinking was greatly influenced by the Upanishads.

There is additional evidence to show that the degree of probability in this case is very high. There is clear evidence that Schelling not only came in contact with the teachings of the Upanishads, but he also admired them as much as Schopenhauer. The following quotation from Maxmuller taken from the Introduction of Volume I of the "Sacred Books of the East" will confirm this:—

"That Schelling and his school should use rapturous language about the Upanishads might carry little weight with the large class of philosophers by whom everything beyond the clouds of their own horizon is labelled mysticism."

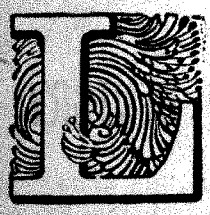
Evidently. Maxmuller speaks here from his personal knowledge as he had attended lectures of Schelling at Berlin and as a pupil had come in close contact with him. The following quotation from another part of the same 'Introduction' will confirm this:

"My real love for Sanskrit literature was first kindled by the Upanishads. It was in the year 1844, when attending Schelling's lectures at Berlin, that my attention was drawn to those ancient theosophic treatises and I still possess my collection of the Sanskrit manuscript which had then just arrived at Berlin, the Chambers collection and my copies of commentaries which I made at the time. Some of the translation which I left with Schelling, I have never been able to recover."

It may, therefore, be justifiably assumed that the second contact through the Upanishads, brought about more significant consequences. It profoundly influenced the philosophical thought of the West and gave birth to true Pantheism.

OBSCENITY *and* PORNOGRAPHY

By SADHAN KUMAR GHOSH



LADY CHATTERLEY has had rough luck. She has been dragged into the courts of the three continents, and the famous four-letter word—which forms part of the general currency of teddy-boy conversation, and can be overheard anytime in a tea shop or cafe—has been invested with a spurious glamour. Her worst piece of ill-luck is that she has been lumped with Fanny Hill. But a criminal prosecution is the sort of adversity that really brings strange bedfellows. First Mellor (but that was good while it lasted) and now Fanny Hill. Ladies are not overfond of each other, and this prosecution has really been conducted by the ghost of Mrs. Grundy.

Any trial for obscenity has its comic side. One recalls Ashenden's remark in *The Round Dozen:* "I remember Rhoda Broughton telling me once that when she was young people said her books were fast and when she was old they said they were slow and it was very hard since she had written exactly the same sort of book for forty years." Talk of Equity varying with the Lord Chancellor's foot! Obscenity varies with the responses of the Director of Prosecutions. And, of course, with Anno Domini.

The criterion of obscenity is the famous Hicklin test—whether the intention is "to deprave and corrupt." The test is easy to apply when pornography wears no masks as in the case of "Romance of Lust" or "Adventures of Lady Harper." It is less easy in the case of books with an ostensibly different intent—"The Naked and the Dead," for example or "For ever Amber."

In 1954, Messrs. Secker and Warburg were prosecuted for having published *The Philanderer* which was a sort of *Fanny Hill* in reverse but containing some very good writing. In this case Mr. Justice Stable applied the Hicklin test with great liberality. He directed the jury to read as a whole and to remember the distinction between obscenity and pornography. On the important words *to deprave and corrupt* the learned judge said:

> Remember the charge is a charge that the tendency of the book is to corrupt and deprave. The charge is not that the tendency of the book is either to shock or disgust. That is not a criminal offence. Then you say: 'Well, corrupt or deprave whom?' and again the test; those whose mind's are open to such immoral influences and into whose hands a publication of this kind may fall. What exactly does that mean? Are we to take our literary standards as being the level of something that is suitable for a fourteen-year old school girl?

Justice Cockburn, in R. Vs. Hicklin had explained that by "to deprave and corrupt" he meant the stirring up of libidinous thoughts. However, this cannot explain the various prosecutions conducted in the twenties and thirties at the instance of Sir William Joynson Hicks. The most notorious of these cases was the one against Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness.* This was an exploration of Lesbian love. John Chandos describes this as a "long, sad, dull book about a sexual relationship between two women." The Director of Public Prosecutions asked Arnold Bennett, one of the chief witnesses for the defence, whether he knew what women did with each other, when they took off their clothes. James Douglas, a yellow Press journalist caused some sensation by declaring: "I would rather put a phial of prussic acid in the hands of a healthy boy or girl than the book in question." Bernard Shaw offered to produce the phial, the book and the children, if James Douglas guaranteed to administer the prussic acid rather than the book. The book was banned and all existing copies ordered to be destroyed. Against this perverse judgment, almost every writer of note including Bernard Shaw, Arnold Bennett, T. S. Eliot and Lytton Strachey protested.

E. M. Forster told me at King's College in 1959 that there had been an earlier furore about H. G. Well's *Ann Veronica.* (It seems a very tame book to-day). It did not come to a prosecution but copies were being withdrawn from the circulating libraries. Then, as now, the *Spectator* was on the other side—i.e. the side of bishops, Home Secretaries, and Mrs. Grundy. E. M. Forster and Thomas Hardy wrote a letter to the *Spectator,* protesting against the persecution of H. G. Wells. The *Spectator* sent the cryptic and discourteous reply: "We are not impressed by famous names." I clearly remember E. M. Forster saying pathetically "It just showed how insignificant we writers were."

Long before this, Thomas Hardy himself had to fight his publishers over the alleged immorality of *Tess of the D'Urbervilles.* He had to compromise with his conscience and his needs by expurgating whole chapters and changing others. He even introduced a wheelbarrow at one point so that Clare might carry the dairymaids across a flooded lane without the distressing implication of physical contiguity between the man and the girls. But he made a private resolution to publish the excised chapters when he could elsewhere and finally the complete book in its original form was published in the last decade of the nineteenth century to loud cries of protest from the censor-perverts.

In 1935 proceedings were instituted against *The Sexual Impulse* by Edward Charles. Sir Julian Huxley had provided a Foreword to the book which was an effort to provide a corrective guide to perplexed, persons, written in a pleasant, tete'-a-tete', untechnical language. Professor Malinowski, the anthropologist said in evidence that open discussion of problems of sex such as those contained in the book in question was necessary in the interests of marriage and the family. Professor J. B. S. Haldane, the great scientist and humanist, who has made India his home said that this book dealt with various positions of coitus and was, therefore, valuable because a knowledge of variety was often necessary to avoid pain. The Bench ordered the destruction of the book, after a lengthy trial. Mr. E. M. Forster protested unavailingly against the destruction of this book at the International Conference of Authors in Paris in June 1935.

The boundaries between pornography and literature were not sharply defined before the nineteenth century. The first example of predomi-

nant obscenity was the Earl of Rochester's play *Sodom*. The theme of the play was the tyranny of a paederast, King Bolloxinian, who forbids all normal sexual transactions and enforces homosexuality by law. The play opens in the royal palace with the news of the arrival of gifts from a neighbouring sovereign.

COURTIER: My liege, a stranger at yon royal gate
Does from Gomorrah with a message wait
And forty stripling for a present bring.

KING: Oh it's a present from our brother King
Conduct them in, it was very kindly done

The theme entered satirical literature too and we find Charles Churchill writing in 1764:

Women are kept for nothing but the breed
For pleasure we must have a Ganymede
A fine fresh Hylas, a delicious boy
To serve our purposes of beastly joy.

And then there is John Cleland's *Fanny Hill*. It is generally supposed to be the best English erotic work, not cent per cent pornography. Cleland invokes the name of sentimental love which the average pornographer does not but this is mere decor.

Sylvia Beach, who ran the famous "Shakespeare and Company" bookshop on the Left Bank has left a fascinating account of how *Ulysses* came to be published, in her memoirs *Shakespeare and Company* published by Faber. When Joyce came to Paris, *Ulysses* was appearing in the *Little Review* which had to close down. No English or American publisher would touch the manuscript. Sylvia Beach says: "Three seizures of the magazine by officials of the United States Post Office, on the grounds of obscenity, failed to break the spirit of the editors, Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap; but a fourth one, which was instigated by John Sumner of the Society for the Suppression of Vice put an end to the magazine . . . . . Joyce came to announce the news. It was a heavy blow for him, and I felt, too, that his pride was hurt. In a tone of complete discouragement, he said "My book will never come out now." All hope of publication in the English-speaking countries, at least for a long time to come, was gone. And here in my little bookshop sat James Joyce, sighing deeply.

It occurred to me that something might be done and I asked: "Would you let Shakespeare and Company have the honour of bringing out your *Ulysses* ?"

He accepted my offer immediately and joyfully (Shakespeare and Company. Pp. 56-57).

And that is how James Joyce's *Ulysses*, supposedly one of this century's masterpieces was published.

Standards of obscenity, therefore, are like fashions in millinary; they change from age to age. Even in the same age, it is conditioned by personal responses. The obscene element in *Lolita* for example is indispensable to the story. But apart from the frequent bottom-pinching, the theme is ideal material for pornography. But so fine and discerning a judge as Somerset Maugham found *Lolita* not obscene but dull and unreadable. On the other hand, Nabokov himself has pronounced *Lady Chatterley's Lover* to be a mass of obscenities, thus contradicting the consensus which includes Helen Gardner F. R. Leavis and Walter Allen.

There remain, however, a pair of poems allegedly by Lord Byron—*Don Leon* and *Arabella* —the obscenity of which has not been properly tested. These poems, also known as *An Epistle from Lord Byron* to Lady Byron are supposed to have been found near Pisa. The poems are not in fact by Byron at least not in their entirety. But it is difficult to agree with those modern biographers of Byron who argue that they are not his work at all. The poems are so thoroughly Byronic that one always feels the author of *Don Juan* must have lent a hand in their composition, although there must be considerable interpolations.

John Chandos contends that the poems are not really obscene but constitute 'literature'. "There are two central themes: an examination of the nature of and an apologia for paederasty and an account of the circumstances leading to the commission by Byron upon his wife of the practice, usually associated with paederasty, which, it was alleged, was a cause of Lady Byron's estrangement from her husband" (John Chandos: Unicorns at Play). It is, in any case the most satisfactory explanation of the separation. She knew about Byron's incest and his other amours, but being a high-strung and peculiar person herself was shocked by the suggestion of unnatural coitus.

There are many quotable passages, but there is space for only three:

(1)

I love a youth but Horace did the same;
If he's absolved say why am I to blame?
When young Alexis claimed a Virgil's sighs
He told the world his choice and may not I ?

(2)

O lovely woman by your maker's hand
For man's delight and solace wisely planned
Thankless is she who nature's bounty mocks
Nor gives love entrance where he knocks.

(3)

An other path untrodden yet remains,
Where pleasure in her close recesses reigns,
The neophyte to that more hallowed spot
But rarely ventures 'tis the favourite grot
Where sages, prelates Kings and bards retire
To quench the rage of Priapean fire.
Then turn thee round, indulge a husband's wish
And taste with me this truly classic dish

Pornography flourishes and literature withers under censorship. The popular objection to pornography is that it corrupts i.e., leads to the indulgence of sexual practices which would otherwise not have been thought of. There is no evidence that this is so. There is ample evidence that pornography which is a form of fantasy-writing is generally depressing. That, however, is an aesthetic, not a moral aspect. Very eminent men have sometimes been addicted to pornography. In Victorian England the list would include Richard Monckton Milnes, first Baron Houghton, Coventry Patmore and even the poet Tennyson. My contention is that bad pornography—and much of it is inept writing —has a protective rather than a corrupting effect, precisely because it represents sex in a crude and loathsome manner. Good pornography *i.e.* alluring pornography has a cathartic effect. The fantasy is gone through in the mind and thus eliminated from the system. The only one who corrupts and depraves is the censor for he invests pornography with a false, spurious glamour. As Helen Gardner said in her evidence at the trial of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*: "I think Lawrence's intention was to make

(Continued on page 22)

THE SOCIAL LADDER CLIMBING

by Mukul Gupta

MY friend, who had had his upbringing in rural environs and could hardly boast of any lining of urban sophistication, was considerably intrigued, during his brief stay in Calcutta, by the words that head-lined what were supposed to be news of social interest featured in the English daily that he had been reading that morning. Accustomed to the language papers in his village home, he did not come across such captions as 'Marriage in High Life' and 'Society Wedding.' Marriage was marriage, normally a simple and straightforward affair to be performed according to the ancient prescribed formula which was applicable equally to all. And life was life. What, then, he puzzled was the import of this profound adjective 'high'? And, again, wedding was a social affair, by all reckoning. What was, their, the special virtue in fan-faring a wedding as a society one, he wondered.

I explained to him that life and society were entirely different in Calcutta and, for that matter' in all aristocratic cities, from what they were in the rural and suburban sectors. Every metropolis had its own definition of culture and classification of the people who lived there. There was, I told him, in every cultured city a ladder with several rungs. The cultured people of the city, men and women, would make it a point to climb up the rungs of the ladder, not, of course, for constitutional exercise but with the avowed oblect of raising their status. The exercise was euphemistically called social climbing. Whether one would be classified under 'high life' or not would depend on the position of the rung of the ladder one had manoeuvred to climb in one's desperate attempt to be reckoned as a member of the Society — with a capital and not small S.

When there was a social function, such as marriage, in such a Society, the newspapers described it as marriage in high life or a society wedding. My friend extended me the courtesy of listening to my explanation, but I could realize that it was too fantastic an exposition for him to swallow.

Indeed, the high society life, as it exists in the so-called aristocratic cities in India, is an amalgam of an insensible zeal for social climbing and an unrestrained indulgence in superficial sophistication. The denizens of this society have their own vocabulary, own codes of conduct, own canons of etiquette and courtesy and, what they vainly call their own high standard of living. The popularity of a member of this high society is measured by the frequency of the parties, cocktail or dinner, he can throw and the profusion of hard drinks in which he can make his guests sink or swim. Such parties and meetings are invariably reported in vivid details in the fashion papers which, again, have their own formula for reporting from which they would hardly ever deviate. For instance, whatever saree a woman guest might wear it would invariably be described as elegantly beautiful and however forbidding her physical dimensions might be, she would be pictured as charmingly pretty and delightfully slim!

It is always the ladies who lend life and zest to these mightly gatherings and a measure of success of such high society parties would be how late in the morning they continued and to what extent the guests were tipsy. The first item of conversation invariably is the weather — "how nice it is for a long drive" or 'how sultry it is for staying in' or 'just imagine how wretched it would have been had we not had our lounge and bed-rooms air-conditioned quite some time ahead of the Calcutta summer!" "Mind you," another butter-fly, scantily clothed, perhaps in sympathy with the masses of the country who perforce have to go half-naked, would butt in and sermonize: "Well, it is really bad economy not to have your home air-cooled. After these strenuous get-togethers one could pardonably expect a span of good sleep. I really wonder how people could manage in Calcutta without this simple, and, of course, inexpensive air-conditioning. I warned Lolita in time but she thought money was more precious than minimum comforts and now she regrets."

It is the height of bad manners to contradict one on weather. If one should say that the day was

lovely though, in fact, it was anything but that, the reply should be 'Oh, yes, how lovely it was." I am tempted to quote from George Mikes a few specimens of stereotyped conversation pieces on weather with minor amendments.

For **good weather**, the set of routine questions and answers are :

(a) "Lovely day, isn't it ?" "Oh, yes, couldn't be better."

(b) "Isn't it beautiful ?" "Divinely so."

(c) "The sun, isn't it gorgeous ?" "Never saw a lovelier sun."

(d) "It is so nice and hot." "Personally, I think it is so nice when it's hot."

(e) "I simply adore the weather, don't you ?" "One must be awkwardly dull if one doesn't."

For **bad weather**, the set of questions and answers are :

(a) "Nasty day, isn't it ?" "Isn't it dreadful ?"

(b) "The rain ....., I do really hate rain." "I don't like it at all. It keeps you sticking to home."

(c) "Fancy such a day in July. Rain in the morning, then a bit of sunshine, and then rain, rain, rain, all day long." "Could anything make life more miserable?"

(d) "I remember exactly the same July day in 1936."

"Yes, I remember too."
"Or was it in 1928."
"Yes, it was."
"No, no, it must have been in 1939."
"Yes, that's right, I should have thought so."

Next in priority in the stereotyped schedule of conversational etiquette is the animated talk about the saree and the choli. However grotesque in design and loud in colours the saree may be, the first query, obviously born of pretended curiosity, is : "My goodness, how lovely is the saree and how nicely it has gone with your choli ? You have really a delightful sense of matching. I wouldn't dare ask you the price as that must be very high and, surely, beyond me." Immensely flattered, the hefty content of the saree would fling back : "Yes, everyone thinks that I wear costly stuff. But, would you be surprised if I should say that I have paid only Rs. 600 for that ? Isn't that just for a song ? It is a modest birthday present from Tutul ! The conversation ends as artificially as it had begun. The saree might have been just for a song, but poor Tutul, the harassed husband must have felt the strain for calling the tune !

Age always is an item of animated and fraudulent conversation. Two things, they say, which a woman can peep secret are her own age and her husband's income. Invariably, one lady would ask another in a party the secrets of her keeping herself so young and petite. Though she might be on the wrong side of forty — her age being betrayed by the uncontrollable wrinkles on her heavily furnished face—and though the other lady might be fully knowing her real age, the accepted convention of the high society would enjoin on her to give her an over-draft of at least fifteen years. "You don't look a day older than thirty," would be the pattern of the query, "and do please tell me how do keep yourself so young ? I am sure, you are dieting." Deliberately understating her age, the set reply would be : "You are not far off in your guess. I am thirty-two and not thirty. And two years in a woman's life, as you know, mean quite a lot. You ask my secret. Well, there is nothing secret about it. I make it a point to be away from the sultry summer of your wretched Calcutta for at least two months every year. But, I am afraid, I would not be able to continue — any longer this frugal holiday. Last season, believe me, Darjeeling was literally invaded by people whom one would not love to see crowding the Mall and spoiling its peace."

Slimming is a very favourite subject for conversation. It is common etiquette that every lady should have the honorific adjective of being described as slim, irrespective of whether she is heavy-weight, bantam-weight or feather-weight. To describe the weight of a lady in terms of stone or maund exceeds the bounds of decency. She should have her weight told in ounces or grammes. If a lady is complimented by another saying "you are looking quite slims." the courteous reply would invariably be "Oh, no, not half so slim as you" as Somerset Maugham would put it.

INTERIOR DECORATION

Competence in interior decorations is one of the latest specifications for measuring the success of a Society lady. The greater the use of trifles and odd rejections, the higher is the merit of interior decorations made up of them. The latest craze is to use liquor bottles, as they are, without the contents but with the labels untouched, to serve as vases for flowers and creepers. The room may be air-conditioned and fully modernized otherwise but it must have a rural or what is more sophisticatedly called an indigenous outlook. In quite a costly teakwood enclave, fabricated by some expensive furnishers, there must be kept a few cheap terra-cotta toys and figurines just to create the impression that the lady of the house is a connoisseur of village arts and patron of rural crafts. In nine out of ten cases, little is known to the architect of the interior decoration about the story and tradition of the village craftsmen whose handiwork was being displayed in quarters for which it was not destined. Guests would express routine admiration for the tiny pieces on display and — indulge in mechanical appreciation of the delicate taste of their hostess, no matter whether they inwardly realized what they were admiring and appreciating. Once Marie Corelli described the craze for household decoration by the wealthy people as "adorning by tawdry paraphernalia which is sometimes affected by the rich to create an art impression." It would be uncharitable to underestimate the efforts of the Society ladies to make their home beautiful to the extent that of the great Victorian authoress had cynically gone.

Every Society lady must exhibit some measure of active interest in 'fashionable social welfare work. She must be either the patron or the president or the member of the executive committee of the **ad hoc** body for the organization of variety entertainments for raising funds for the relief of the victims of flood, fire or communal disturbances. The function may be a musical soiree or a dance-drama but if the money is raised for contributing to the funds of any high dignitary, the function must be nothing short of a night-long calypso, made colourful by fancy dresses and attractive by open-all-night bars tended by the sweet society girls. The end may be relief of distress but that should not necessarily prescribe that the means should not be brimful of mirth and merry-making. Imagine for a moment how many pints of drinks, soft and hard, the gay participants in the calypso have to swallow to forget, as also to relieve, the miseries of their brethren in distress. And how many sleepless nights the society ladies have ungrudgingly to pass for their sisters in affliction !

The latest fad of the ladies, who aspire to be reckoned as land-marks in the high society, is to

(Continued On Page 224)

Ramendra Sundar Trivedi

By R. K. Dasgupta

WHEN Ramendrasundar Trivedi was born on the 20th August 1864 the nineteenth century Bengali Renaissance had entered upon its second phase. Michael Madhusudan Datta's *Meghnadbadhkavya*, the most distinguished example of the new poetry was then about three years old, the Widow Remarriage Act, a fruit of Vidyasagar's reformist toils, had been in the statute book for eight years and although Bankimchandra was yet to produce his first Bengali novel, prose had already made some mark as language of reason. When he took his Master's degree in Calcutta University in 1887 both Vidyasagar and Bankim were alive and on the other hand Rabindranath had written twentytwo of his books including *Prabhat Sangit, Kari O Komal* and *Rajarshi*. He was twentyone when the Indian National Congress was founded in 1885 and was above forty when he was one of the inspirers of the Swadeshi Movement in 1905. So in Ramendrasundar we have a child of the nineteenth century Renaissance who had a creative role in the first two decades of the twentieth. This is important in a study of the man and his work for there is a certain severity of intellectual discipline in his writings which generally belongs to a latter-day thinker who is unaffected by the enthusiasms of early pioneers. He has indeed a large measure of that detachment which comes from the conviction of some maturity in the mental life of the community. Behind the quiet dignity of his prose there were the urgent pamphleteering of Raja Rammohan Roy, the insistent reasoning of Vidyasagar and the magnificent style of Bankimchandra Chatterji. He practised an economy of expression because he could distil his thought and feeling into ideas that could be stated in plainest words. In fact he achieved a style almost by shedding it.

Longinus discovered an element of 'weighty and sober magnificence' in Plato's prose which he called 'a gentle and noiseless flow of eloquence.' Certainly I do not call Ramendrasundar a Bengali Plato, but when I admire his prose I recall Longinus's appreciation of a gentle and noiseless flow of eloquence and if any one of us were to explain the beauty of Ramendrasudar's style he may spare much strain of analysis by quoting the same Greek critic's famous saying: 'beautiful words are the very light of thought.' The essence of the man and his work is in this light of thought. Those who knew him saw this light on his gentle face and Rabindranath saw this in the grace of his entire personality. In his personal address presented to Ramendrasundar on the occasion of his fiftieth birthday the poet said: *"Tomar hriday sundar, tomar bakya sundar, tomar hasya sundar, he! Ramendrasundar ami tomake abhibadan karitechi."* (There is grace in your soul, grace in your words, grace in your smile, Ramendrasundar I greet you.) This grace seemed remarkable in a man who from his early boyhood was well-known for his extraordinary intellectual gifts. He was the top boy of his class in primary school, stood first in the District Scholarship examination and in High School he stood second but once. In 1881 he stood first in his Matriculation examination and was admitted in Presidency College as a student in the First Arts course. He took the second place amongst successful candidates in this examination in 1883. In 1886 he took a first class in science in Calcutta University occupying the first position in the list and won the same distinction at M.A. in Physics and Chemistry the following year. After he had obtained Calcutta University's Premchand Roychand Studentship in Physics and Chemistry in 1888 his examiners remarked that "the candidate who took up Physics and Chemistry is perhaps the best student that has as yet taken up these subjects at this examination." This excellent academic achievement obtained for him an opportunity to pursue higher studies in science in the laboratory of the Presidency College. His relations advised him to study law for a prosperous career at the bar, but his temperament soon took him away from the course.

Professor Pedler of the Presidency College offered him an attractive appointment at Bangalore but he declined it on the ground that his relations would not welcome the separation. He also declined a teaching post in the Presidency College bacause he did not desire a transfer to a mofussil college. In 1892 he joined Ripon College as a Professor of Physics and Chemistry. He was the Principal of this college when he died on the 6th June, 1919.

His pupils admired his teaching and one of them recorded in a memoir that he had an extraordinary ability in explaining the mathematical portions of Physics without taking his students into the complexities of higher mathematics. The procedure would not be welcome to the advanced Physics Faculties of our universities today. But in days when teaching even in higher science was not in the hands of specialists the performance of Ramendrasundar in the class was certainly a pedagogical feat.

As a Principal too Ramendrasundar's achievement was very remarkable indeed. When he succeeded Krishnakamal Bhattacharya as Head of Ripon College in 1903 both students and teachers felt that the institution was being turned into a seminary of enquiring minds dedicated to the most important tasks of a civilized society. The first thing he did as Principal was that he made his colleagues feel that his high office would never isolate him from their company. He had no room of his own and when the University Inspector of Colleges criticized it as a deficiency he said that he could certainly operate the

college machine from a cabin of his own, but he valued meeting of minds in an academic institution. He soon formed a teachers's association and although it had no constitution it achieved a character as a community of thinking men attending to the true vocation of university teachers. Many of his colleagues who never thought of writing a page presented papers to the association and Ramendrasundar's own addresses delivered before it were included in his work *Jagat Katha*.

As an educationist Ramendrasundar worked more through his own example than through periodic outbursts against a rotten system. But when the Calcutta University Commission headed by Sir Michael Sadler asked for a statement of his ideas in 1917 he sent a note which is one of the most important documents in the history of Indian education. But I am afraid it is now a forgotten document and is not known even to our specialists. Ramendrasundar's biographer has put it in an appendix to his work : I think it deserves a place in any collection of essays on Indian education. Here he speaks of a kind of academic freedom which could be so powerfully enunciated in the period between the Partition and Jalianwalabag only by the most courageous of minds. Commenting on the official control of Indian universities he said: 'The universities and educational establishments here in modern India are all machines that require constant care and constant control of an everwatchful Government and are in constant need of mending and repairing. As a necessary consequence they cannot be allowed the freedom of spontaneous development along the lines most suited to the needs of the people, lines most in accordance with the needs of organic life. The life of the teacher and the taught have to be fettered by mechanical regulations, by chains of restrictions forged at the official smithy' About his own University he remarked: 'The end of universities education, the advancement of learning, which my own university has accepted for its motto, has receded to distance and is half-forgotten in the striving for the maintenance of a suitable standard or test of fitness among the clamorous claimants for its degree.' Perhaps even more important was his observation on English education : 'Western education has given us much: we have been great gainers; but there has been a cost, a cost as regards culture, a cost as regards respect for self and reverence for others, a cost as regards the nobility and dignity of life.' We must not call this a reaction against the educational ideas of Rammohan, Derozio and Macaulay and Ramendra never encouraged any form of intellectual swadeshi. He realized about half a century ago that our university system was gradually losing in character. Reflecting on the words at this distance of time we seem to wonder if happier political circumstance has really brought us nearer to a better system.

Perhaps it was his despair of our university which prompted him to work with great enthusiasm for learned institutions like Bangiya Sahitya Parisad. This literary association was founded in July 1893 mainly at the initiative of a Frenchman named L. Leotard and was first known as Academy of Literature in its first year. In 1894 it was renamed as Bangiya Sahitya Parisad and Ramesh Chandra Dutt was elected its first President. Ramendrasundar joined this association in 1894 and within a few months was elected its Secretary. His ambition was to make the Parisad an instrument of intellectual progress in Bengal through the cultivation of science and letters. He soon took initiative in two important directions : He instituted series of lectures in Bengali on scientific subjects and made efforts to prepare a scientific terminology in the language.

In 1895 Ramendrasundar took another historic initiative for the promotion of Bengali learning. In that year the Parisad moved the University to introduce Bengali. The University did not listen to the Parisad's pleading. Ramendrasundar persisted in his efforts and years later the University introduced an optional paper in Bengali in the First Arts and B.A. Courses. When still later the University permitted its students to write their answers in the History paper in Bengali in the Matriculation examination it was due to the hard work of Ramendrasundar towards this end. Sir Asutosh Mukherjee found in Ramendrasundar an ardent collaborator in his endeavours to establish Bengali in the University, and when the Government of India sanctioned the institution of a Master's course in Bengali Sir Asutosh approached Ramendrasundar for advice.

But Ramendrasundar did not spend his energy on institution of Courses in Bengali alone. He realized that if Bengali was to be the medium of instruction in our university hard toil was yet necessary to make it a fine instrument of expression particularly in scientific discourse. As early as 1895 he wrote an article on chemical terms in Bengali in the journal of the Bangiya Sahitya Parisad. In this article he presented three principles for the preparation of a scientific terminology in Indian languages. (1) We must not coin new words for things for which we have already our own words, for example swarna, raupya, lauha, gandhak, parad etc. (2) The terms which have already entered our scientific vocabulary must not be discarded, for example, amlayan, yabaksharyan (3) The rest of our scientific terminology should just be English words in our script with appropriate phonetic changes to suit the genius of our language. This third principl was first enunciated by Rev. John Mack (1797-1845), a Professor of Serampore College whose *Kimia Vidyar Sar*, published in 1834 is the first text-book of Chemistry in Bengali. In his introduction to this book Mack says: 'The chief difficulty was to determine whether the European nomenclature should be put into Bengalee letters, or the European terms be entirely translated by Sanskrit, as bearing much the same relation to Bengalee as the Greek and Latin do to the English I have preferred expressing the European terms in Bengalee character, merely changing the prefixes and terminology so as decently to incorporate the new words into the language.' Ramendrasundar was so attracted by this idea that he wrote an article on this book in the journal of the Bangiya Sahitya Parisad in 1898. Rabindranath Tagore discovered Mack's book in the library of the 'Tattvabodhini Sabha' and showed it to Ramendrasundar who readily accepted its terminological principle. Ramendrasundar, had, however the support of Jogesh Chandra Rav Vidyanidhi who had adopted the principle in his *Saral Rasayan* published in 1898. Sir P C. Roy approved the system.

But terminology was but a means to an end and Ramendrasundar realized this. His main objective was to produce a scientific temper in Bengal and he thought that the best way to do it was to produce a popular scientific literature in Bengali. He knew that the language was stil to develop its idiom for the scientific thinker and he called his contemporaries to the task of creating it. He showed the way by delivering his lectures in Physics and Chemistry in his college in his own language and by writing the finest specimens of scientific prose in it. The Bengali scientist of today uses a sharper tongue in discouraging the use of English in science teaching but we do not seem to know much about his Bengali pen.

Ramendrasundar's work for the awakening of a

scientific spirit in Bengal was only a part of his work for a social and intellectual regeneration of his people. In fact, he achieved a certain integrity of thought and action which gave a consistency to all that he did or said. To have such mental consistency in a life of such a variety of responsibilities as he took upon himself is very remarkable indeed. But to understand the man and his achievement in our generation it is important to understand this consistency in his character. In these later days we have developed different mental habits and different manners. Some of us would make of the man an image of an impossible moral rectitude, of high purpose and thought which we could salute from a distance as a gesture of patriotic homage to a great past. But we do not dare believe that we can have a Ramendrasundar in our midst today. And I imagine that those who will come after us would scarcely believe that such a man ever lived and breathed in Bengal. Should one of us still be able to write a readable biography of him they may take him to be a character in some ancient story, a hero of battles long ago the like of which we may not see again. When I think of him I wish my feeble imagination to give me a sight of the man in the company of Rabindranath a few days before his death. I call this a historic scene and this gives us a glimpse of the whole truth of his life, his love of the land and its culture and his faith in the dignity and the freedom of the human sprit. On the 30th May, 1919 Rabindranath relinquished his Knighthood as a mark of his protest against the massacre at Jalianwalabag and his letter to the Viceroy Lord Chelmsford appeared in the *Statesman* of June 3. Ramendrasundar was then suffering from a serious illness which ended his life on the 6th June. When the Bengali version of the poet's letter was published in *Basumati* he was in tears and sent his brother to the poet requesting him to pay him a visit and give him his blessings. Rabindranath was soon at his bedside when Ramendrasundar asked him to read unto him the letter to the Viceroy which the poet did in a moving voice. Ramendrasundar wept his last tears and in the traditional Indian manner took the dust of the poet's feet. No Bengali painter has reproduced the scene on a canvas and already it is getting blurred in our memory. But when we talk about the man to our children we may mention this tender episode which shows the man in the gentle light of his soul, the man who composed *Bangalaksmi Bratakatha* as the moral answer of his race to the political injustice of the Partition and who at the end of his life could now only shed a few tears of hope listening to the words of a braver protest against a greater injustice.

In Bengali literature Ramendrasundar lives as the master of scientific and philosophical prose. That prose is certainly one of the most civilized things in the language. But I fear the substance of that prose has ceased to be very important in Bengal today. It has ceased to be important because the pressure of our political and economic responsibilities has made us almost indifferent to the things of the mind. But if at any time we begin to realize the value of a mantal life and experience the tensions of the modern mind striving to preserve a life of the spirit in an age of science we may turn to writing of this man for some light on our way. Perhaps his works has something to give to the twentieth century man living in a split universe of diverse cultures. I do not say that Ramendrasundar could create for himself a unified universe of values ensuring a perfect philosophical contentment. Such a universe has never existed in the history of human civilization except in the private salvation of individuals. Throughout the history of human culture the higher intelligence of man has been striving to achieve some integrity of ideal, a happy consistency of thought and action as the highest satisfaction of the human spirit. To a later civilization the task is more difficult because of the large accumulations of human thought presenting a confusing variety of ideals. In the nineteenth century the impact of sciene was a fresh challenge to the life of the spirit. Bankimchandra, Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo reaffirmed the idealism of the Hindu metaphysics and we listened to their powerful voice. In Ramendrasundar there is no doctrinal urgency, no desire for system-building. But he experienced the tensions of modern thought, had his moments of intellectual despair and strove to attain the truth of his life in steady and careful steps. His later writings are records of that striving. Those of us who have read them would believe that the danger of two cultures such as our C. P. Snows seem to have created for the modern man does not exist for a mind that really cares for a spiritual fulfilment.

OBSCENITY AND PORNOGRAPHY

(Continued from Page 17)

us feel that the sexual act was not shameful and the word (the famous four-letter word) used in its original sense was not shameful either."

No writer in recent years has glamourised a forbidden subject i.e. incest between brother and sister as John Ford did in the seventeenth century. Giovanni is madly in love with his sister Annabella and declares his passion:

GIOVANNI: True, Annabella! it is no time to jest
I have too long suppressed my hidden flames,
That almost have consumed me. . . . It is my destiny.
That you must either love, or I must die.
* * * *
Must I now live or die?
ANNABELLA: Live; thou hast won
The field and never fought. What thou hast urged
My captive heart had long ago resolved
I blush to tell thee—but I tell thee now—
For every sigh that thou has spent for me,
I have sighed ten; for every tear shed twenty!
And not so much for that I loved, as that
I darest not say I loved, nor scarcely think it.

The censor is an enemy of civilisation. It is not so much the misuse but the whole concept of censorship which is malign. Censorship has an obvious attraction for the most intolerant and the least refined elements in society. And it is often a decoy operation. It does not speak much for the sanity of our society that road-hogs and road-house keepers go unpunished while vendors of pornography are persecuted. If pornography were sold freely, very few would read it. It is sad that the police are insufficiently vigilant about rash drivers whose homicide is always quietly condoned, or about children being kidnapped by sexual maniacs, not one of whom has heard of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* or *Fanny Hill*. And the debaser of English—now, alas, a familiar figure in all the Indian Universities—depraves the taste more thoroughly than the cheapest and the lowest form of pornography. The Police would be better employed in protecting the lives and ensuring the safety of citizens than in compiling an *Index* or an *Index Expurgatorius*. Our reading should be off their beat, anyway.

Remembering JAWAHARLAL

DILIPKUMAR ROY

AN epoch has ended. A memorable epoch rife with thrills and dreams of a new sunrise. And the one who was devoted all his life to the deepening of the new dawn is now no more. But let none give in to dejection even when the depressing shadows infiltrate relentlessly. For the one we mourn never gave in to the despair. He always looked beyond the night to the day. His idealism had a remarkable affinity with that of the Great philosopher Empedocles who said:

Fear not! life still
Leaves human effort scope.
But since life teems with ill
Nurse no extravagant hope.

Because thou must not dream thou needst not then despair.

I will not try to appraise the inestimable value of the legacy Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has left us. I shall leave that to more competent assayers: the great historians of posterity. I will confine myself today to paying my personal tribute from the heart to one to whom I have owed much, thanks to his unfailing sympathy and responsive encouragement whenever I stood in need of the same. In a word, I will reminisce about him and endeavour, as best I can, to show up a few traits and impulses of his generous nature which made him so lovable the world over.

My friendship with him extends over four decades, dating from 1923, when I met him first in Delhi Congress whither my dearest friend, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose had taken me in tow. I was to sing there some patriotic songs. Seated beside Panditji, I sang an Urdu national song—presumably Iqbal's. As I was singing it, thrilled—because of Panditji's contiguity—he nodded at me approvingly. His noble face was flushed and his luminous eyes shone with a hint of unshed tears, especially when I sang the hortatory couplet:

muhibbane vatan honge hazaron bevatan pahle:
phalega Hind piche aur bharega Andaman pahle

that is:

Let thousands who love our India first live
As exiles, far from home,
In the desolate Andamans—for only then
She'll flower out in full bloom.

Since that memorable morning I have met and sung to him here and there many a time. One of my most cherished memories was when, at 1, Woodburn Park—the residence of Sarat Chandra Bose, Netaji's elder brother—I used to sing to him, seated beside Gandhiji. (I once sang there with my pupil Uma Bose, whom Mahatmaji called "the Nightingale." Panditji also loved her beautiful *bhajans.*) My heart tingled with joy every time he responded to my singing. I once told him laughingly that his ever-alert responsiveness seemed almost to add up to loyalty, a virtue he set store by all his life, whether dealing with his master or friends. I stress this as he not only never once let me down, but did not mind even when I wrote or spoke to him (as I sometimes did) taking exception to something he had written or said publicly. I refer to this astonishing tolerance on his part not only because it is so characteristic of him, but also because in this age of dark dictatorships we have a deal to learn from his soul of refinement which forbore to retaliate even when adversely criticised. To give an instance in point.

Once I wrote to him, in 1949, protesting against a political pronouncement of his. After posting my letter in haste I repented in leisure as my outburst was wholly uncalled-for. Then, in 1950, I gave a concert in Delhi at the Constitution House I went

somewhat diffidently to invite him. To my agreeable surprise, there was no lack of response in his welcome. Taking heart, I told him about my object. He raised his hand and said: "Impossible, I have to move a resolution in the Lok Sabha."

"But after that?" I insisted.

"Well," he answered, "It will be too late. You see, to break in upon a musical soiree like a gust of wind when you would be singing—"

"Oh," I chimed in sweetly, "the breath of wind from the heights can't but be bracing in this noble instance."

"All right," he laughed, clapping me on the back. "Have it your own way: I capitulate." And he did come and stayed to the end.

Requests for favour used to flock to him in shoals as bees flock to flowers, but he seldom turned them down closing the petals of his bounty. It has been said of the celebrated moralist Thoreau that he said 'no' far more easily than 'yes'. With Panditji it was always the other way about, he having never been afflicted with the parsimony of spirit which so often goes hand in hand, alas, with diplomats and politicians. Had it been otherwise, he would have forfeited long ago the indefinable charm which girdled him like an aura—aye, *charm*, which a celebrated playwright has defined as "a sort of bloom" on a person. "If you have it," he assures us, "you don't have to have anything else; and if you don't have it, it doesn't matter what else you have." (Barry — *What Every Woman Knows*)

Which recalls to my mind a scene in Paris thirty-five years ago. I was the guest of a dear friend of mine, Vladmir Vanek, Consul of Czechoslovakia. His wife Marthe, the daughter of a Countess, had married him for love. She was idealistic by nature and cultured to her finger-tips. I had first met her in Switzerland under the aegis of Romain Rolland who genuinely admired her for her charm and idealism. Suddenly one morning, I received an invitation from the Indian students in Paris. They were giving a dinner at a big hotel in honour of Panditji who had just arrived in Paris en route to Moscow. I was asked to sing there the opening song. Marthe admired him and, as he knew French (for she didn't know English at all), she insisted that I must somehow bring him to tea with them at the Embassy. As I was placed next to Panditji at the dinner table, I could tell him all about Marthe and Vladimir. Panditji accepted their invitation readily and so we spent a delightful afternoon on the morrow at their lovely flat. I saw then once again how charming he could be with women of birth and breeding, and I was delighted to note that he spoke French with the fine accent he did: he coul pronounce even the glutteral "r"! After his departure, Marthe was in ecstasies over his charming personality. "Il est veritablement le Prince Charmant, Dilip" she said, borrowing from Oscar Wilde's novel, *Picture of Dorian Grey*. And, I was no less delighted to shine, albeit in a borrowed lustre.

Another incident, testifying to his charm, recurs to me. I was then singing away in Allahabad in company with Uma. I went to Ananda Bhavan and invited him. He at once promised to attend our musical soiree. Uma was aghast. "O Dada, how can I sing before him?" she stammered. "I. . . . my voice would be frozen!" "Not with horror, I hope?" I teased. When, I related this to Panditji, he laughed and drawing her to him said tenderly: "My child, how could you be afraid of one who knows nothing of music?" When he left, Uma clapped her hands in joy and said: "O Dada, what a charming man! I felt as if I had known him for ages!" Barry had not overrated the miracle power of personal charm.

But I must not forget to mention that our soiree, on that memorable night, was graced by another world-celebrity: Dr. Meghnad Saha. In passing, I happened to have blurted out that I admired Aldous Huxley. Dr. Saha was scandalised. "Oh, how can you admire such an author, Dilip!" he gasped. "He is downright immoral!" Panditji caught his breath and interjected: "But why do you call him immoral? He has only portrayed contemporary life in Europe. And he *is* a brilliant thinker." Panditji was not only steeped in the essential best of Western culture, but was gifted with a discerning mind utterly free from Puritanical inhibitions. That is why it was always a joy to converse with him on culture in its broadest sense.

And it was because his heart responded almost automatically to culture in the broadest sense that he could respond so vividly to the highest culture of the heart, to wit, the ideal of one world drawn together by the magnetism of love. That was why he was so moved by my father's (D. L. Roy's) masterpiece, the drama of Mevar Patan whose message is that our love must admit of no barriers of caste or creed, race or colour, nationality or religion. At least that is how I interpret his reaction to my translation enitled *Fall of Mevar* which I sent to him in 1946. He wrote to me:

> Thank you for sending me 'Fall of Mevar'. I have had little time in recent months to read books. I have now come here, a remote place in the Kumayun Hills, for just five days' quiet and rest. I brought a few books with me and among them was 'Mevar Patan'. This morning I read it under the pine trees and I liked it very much. It is powerful and moving. I wish I could read it in the original.
>
> Soon I shall have to leave the cool mountains and return to the hot and dusty city of Delhi with all its burdens.
>
> With good wishes.

But it was in 1952 that he put me under the deepest debt, coming like a veritable ray of God's own light when my world had toppled in darkness due to the sudden passing of my Gurudev, Sri Aurobindo, in 1950. I felt stifled in Pondichery and longed to get away to recuperate. An opportunity presented itself unexpectedly in 1951: Mr. Gainsborough of the American Academy for Asian Studies invited me to lecture on music at his college in San Francisco. But as I was a destitute at the time, there could be no question of my crossing the seven seas. However, it so happened that Panditji and Maulana Azad came to hear about it from a mutual friend and offered to finance our world-tour. Indira, my daughter-disciple was to dance to my singing and teach Bharat Natya to her pupils at San Francisco and I was to sing and lecture on music and philosophy. A very timely help, indeed, and given so gracefully at that—on a cultural mission, so dear to my heart. In fact it was not a human help but a godsend which came to me, like manna from the blue, in one of the darkest crises of my life. Had not Panditji and Maulana Azad volunteered to send us as their representatives, I could never have visited the great country of America and our temple-home, Hari Krishna Mandir at Poona, would not have come into being.

But it was not in this instance alone; he was always the soul of kindness and forbearance to all

to whom he once offered his hand of friendship. I will give a typical instance to illustrate what I mean.

It was in January, 1948—a few month after India had attained her freedom. Wanting to see Panditji, I telephoned his Personal Secretary, who rang me up after a couple of days and said that Panditji had graciously consented to grant me an interview on the 9th at 5 in the afternoon. "But," he added, somewhat officiously, "he is a very very busy man you know, and probably won't be able to give you more than five minutes at most."

I felt hurt and, in a huff, despatched a letter to Panditji by a courier. "I am informed that you can't give me more than five minutes", I wrote. "So, I won't trouble you."

Panditji wrote back in his own hand:

". . . . . During the last few days I have lived in a kind of whirl . . . . . I was looking forward to meeting you and trying to find a suitable time for the purpose. At last I set aside an hour this afternoon. There was no question of my seeing you for five minutes and I don't know who told you so.

I still hope I shall be able to meet you before you return (to Pondichery)."

So it was arranged once again that I was to call on him.

I went there punctually, somewhat like a penitent, having realised by then the enormity of my 'gaffe': to have actually cancelled in hot haste an engagement with a man of his eminence, not to mention his status!

For all that, our meeting the next evening was as happy as happy could be.

After a little desultory talk on this and that he lighted a cigarette ensconced in a holder and asked me pointblank: "Tell me, Dilip Kumar, is Sri Aurobindo still interested in all that is happening in our mundane world, or is he immersed in meditation all the time?"

"He wrote to me once," I answered "that his life had been a battle all along and that he was still fighting the dark hosts with his Yogic force. I quote this from memory of course."

Panditji (after a pause): You mean he still believes in action?

Myself: I do. I can't throw and light on *'how'* he acts, but I can tell you one thing: that as a tireless *'karmayogi'* he can hold his own against any one in the world, I will give you just one instance Panditji, if you have time—

Panditji: Please go ahead.

Myself (heartened volubly): I joined his Ashram in 1928. From 1929 he began writing letters to us now and again in reply to our questions. But as his disciples increased in number, our letters also shot up in number and gained in volume. So, he began dealing regularly with his correspondence at 9 P.M. and wrote out his answers in an hour or two. By and by, two hours increased to three, three to four and so on till he had to go to bed towards the small hours of the morning. Once he wrote to me at 4 o'clock in the morning, and still he had not finished.

Panditji (aghast): My word! Till 4 o'clock in the morning? Writing for seven hours—nightly?

Myself (somewhat triumphantly): And not for a brief spell, acting under pressure for a few weeks or a month or two and then call it a day. He went on writing reams and reams of letters—let me see—he started in 1930 and ended in November, 1938 after nine long years. But it isn't a question only of writing letters to us to lead us on like a kindly light. He had multifarious work to do; compose his poems, write new books and last, though not least, to listen religiously—throughout the last War—to the war news over the radio thrice a day, without fail. He told us that the news helped him to direct and canalise his Yogic force against the Asuric forces which were phalanaxed behind Hitler, whom he called Enemy Number One of Civilisation and Liberty.

Panditji (cautiously): I don't know what to say about his Yogic Force, but I can say this that we all—barring a few—were glad to learn that he sided out and out with the Allies against Hitler.

Myself: He was no less glad that our Congress had ranged itself on the right side. He wrote to me in 1943 a long letter in answer to my question why he, a great Yogi, had chosen to throw in his weight with the Allies in their tussle with the Axis Powers. In this letter— which has since been published in a pamphlet form—he wrote that he supported the Allies not because they were angels or perfect, but only because they had ranged themselves on the side of the evolutionary forces which alone could lead man out of the wood, even as it had progressively lifted him out of the rut of his primitive animal state. But, he added, if Hitler —the stooge of the Asuric forces—won, it would spell the ruin of our hopes. And for this he gave not a little credit to you because your outlook was entirely right on this question. But I am getting too garrulous.

Panditji (pleased): Go on.

Myself (shaking my head): No. A truce now. For I came to hear from *'you'*, our King now, how you like your crown.

Panditji (smiling): Of thorns, you should have added. But first you must tell me more about Sri Aurobindo who remains still, for all his greatness, somewhat of an enigma to the likes of us.

Myself: But you are not like the rest of us, Panditji. And you can't possibly be unaware that you would stand out even in a crowd.

Panditji (deprecating): Oh, don't.—

Myself: But I must since this wasn't mine alone, but *'his'* appraisement, too, of your character. In fact he wrote to me three or four letters about you in answers to my questions. In one he wrote—I am quoting from memory again—that you have the stamp of the *'sattwic'* nature on your face and are a fine synthesis of the Indian and European culture, a man of admirable integrity of character and so on. And then—

Panditji: Wait a moment. May I know what was the occasion of his writing letters to you about me?

Myself: It all happened because I was deeply moved by your beautiful autobiography— as I wrote to you in more than one letter from Pondicherry. But what I did not tell you is that I was very sad to read that you felt a deep longing for peace—the peace of the Buddha as you have characterised it in your book, you remember? (He nodded). Well, after reading this I felt depressed and so wrote to Gurudev—as I always did, whenever I felt like a fuming pessimist: "Why on earth must such a noble soul like Panditji be so peaceless? Can't you send him a little peace, Gurudev? For if you decline I propose to pray for him, mind you!" And so I went on driving home my thesis that surely all was not right with the world even if it were with its Maker in high heaven.

Panditji (laughing, amused): Thank you, Dilip Kumar. But what was his reaction?

Myself (laughing): It 'is' difficult to draw him out. He evaded cleverly by saying that peace was a

laurel hard to win and then added that he wondered if Buddha would have been able to stabilise his Peace had he undertaken to lead the Congress Movement today.

Panditji (after a brief pause): He is right, Dilip Kumar. But I must correct you on one point. It isn't that I have never savoured peace in my life. From time to time I have had interludes of exquisite peace. But you see, my trouble is that I can't sit still chewing the cud of my peace. I am too active by nature to be able to be a quietist. You wrote to me more than once that you had read my autobiography from cover to cover. So (with a smile) you may remember—and I know you have a good memory — that I have written in it somewhere that when one climbs a mountain the joy of climbing more than compensates one for the strain even when the breaths comes short. Gandhiji was wont to say that effort was not less rewarding than attainment. (A pause). But so far as I am concerned, what I strive for is neither peace to thrive on nor attainment to glory in. A number of incendiaries are busy setting fire to houses all over the place. What I am busy with is to circumvent them so that the fire may not spread. I am ready to sacrifice my personal peace to achieve this.

Myself (moved): The sentiment is, indeed, worthy of you Panditji. But I remember you wrote almost these identical words to me when I was in Pondicherry. Only I deeply regret that I have lost that valuable letter.

Panditji (with a nonchalant laugh): But since you remember the words, surely the loss of the letter can't be called a tragedy. Didn't Sri Ramakrishna once say that somebody wrote a letter to a friend giving him a list of things he wanted and the friend noted the things to be brought and then tore off the letter? (Laugh).

Myself (laughing in unison): Your love of laughter is priceless, Panditji. No wonder you admired Gandhiji so much for his love of laughter. But I mustn't presume too much upon your forbearance—your time is far too precious. Only one last word: Yesterday I explained in my letter all about Shrimati Subhalakshmi's film Mirabai. Please preside over the opening night if you possibly can. I ask this as a personal favour.

Panditji: Well, I would gladly comply; only you see, I can't promise unless they let me know in time the exact date when it is going to be released. You may tell them to notify me at least two weeks before.

* * * *

He did comply with my request. I read later in the paper that he had presided over the opening night of Mirabai and friends told me that he genuinely liked Subhalakshmi's Mirabhajans.

I have never had any occasion to hold converse with him about religion or mystic experience. But there is a good deal of evidence to prove that he reverenced all true saints and sages of India like Sri Ramakrishna, Vivekananda or Sri Aurobindo. I will quote only a part of the opening paragraph of his address on the 114th birthday anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna at the Ramakrishna Mission, New Delhi, on March 20, 1949:

"Swamiji, and friends", he said, "I am grateful for this invitation to come to this celebration and I am glad to take this opportunity to express my homage to the memory of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. I do not know that I am particularly fitted to speak about the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna, because he was a man of God and I am a man of earth and engaged in earthly activities which consume all my energy. But even a man of earth can admire and perhaps be influenced by a man of God, and so I have been admiring godly men, though sometimes I do not altogether understand; and though I do not fully understand what they said, I have admired these great men of God. and have been influenced by reading what was written about them by their disciples. These extraordinary personalities have powerfully influenced their generation and the succeeding generations. They have powerfully influenced great men and changed the whole tenor of their lives. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa obviously was completely outside the run of average humanity. He appears to be in the tradition of the great *rishis* of India, who have come from time to time to draw our attention to the higher things of life and of the spirit".

I exchanged quite a few letters with him after the Chinese Aggression in 1963, when I restarted singing patriotic songs in different parts of India, as well as in our temple-soirees in Poona. He was so pleased that he wrote about it applauding me and then I was invited by the Delhi Radio authorities—presumably asked by him—to sing these national songs which were broadcast afterwards from Delhi, Calcutta and a few other centres.

I may mention that I raised for our troops about Rs. 2000 in Jaipur which I sent him duly. He thanked me and then went on to encourage me to stage our play on Mirabai—entitled, *The Beggar Princess*—at Poona. A few weeks before the performance I wrote to him putting him abreast of all that was happening on our side of the world. I told him about how hard Indira Devi was working coaching our Ashram devotees, boys and girls, including our two American friends who were staying with us at the time. In the end I wrote: "We are getting a lot of unexpected help from friends as well as strangers despite, alas, the malicious tongue-wagging of a few spiteful people. But then didn't Swami Vivekananda himself lash at those among us who specialise in jealousy and calumny? The poet Rabindranath Tagore told me more than once that we were a "suicidal" (*atmaghati*) race in that we love to belittle those who have raised our prestige all over the world. But let them wallow in their own saliva", I added determinedly, "for I am going to give a concert in Bombay too, God willing..... I want you to tell us to whom we are to hand over the money? To you, personally, or the Chief Minister? What is the correct procedure?"

He replied promptly, as usual, giving me once again his friendly hand-clasp:

> Your letter of the 12th January. I am glad to know of the success you are having in your work. Certainly you should give a concert in Bombay as arranged.
>
> It is unfortunately true that many people in India love to run down their fellow-countrymen. We have to put up with that and carry on our work. You have my good wishes.
>
> The money collected can be sent either to me or to the Chief Minister of Maharashtra. Probably, the Chief Minister will be glad to have it. He can forward it to me.

I have written at some length about his affectionate courtesy and steadfast sympathy which never failed me. I will end with an instance of his large-heartedness which has always been such a distinctive characteristic of his expansive nature.

I came to love years ago (in Berlin) a remarkable man: Shahid Suhrawardy, a poet, linguist, artist and idealist rolled in one. He was appointed Pakistan's Ambassador to Spain by his brother H. S,

Suhrawardy of the Awami League. When Ayub Khan became the dictator, Shahid was recalled. He came back to Karachi a broken man, afflicted with serious heart-trouble and cataract of both eyes. I wrote to Panditji a long letter telling him all about Shahid's ailments and requested him to take my friend under his wing. He replied promptly (29.5.63):

> I am interested and rather sad to have news of Shahid Suhrawardy. I knew he had gone as Pakistan's Ambassador to Spain. After that I had no news of him.
>
> I would gladly help him or do something for him. But I do not quite know what I can do. If he can come to Delhi, I would welcome and try to help him. I do not think I should write to him directly. My writing to his brother, H. S. Suhrawardy will probably be misunderstood.
>
> If you can, you might write to him and tell him that I have very pleasant memories of him and am sorry to learn of his illness. If he can come to Delhi he would be welcome here.

I sent a copy of this letter to Shahid who wrote me back, moved:

> I am more than grateful to you for your love and friendship and through you also to Indira Devi for her kind wishes.....
>
> Your excerpts from Pundit Nehru's letter to you about me touched me to the quick. I was surprised that he still has thought for a poor person like myself when his mind is occupied with world questions. You will see from what I have written that no special sanatorium is needed by me. I have decided not to write to Pandit Nehru; should my heart, by some miracle, improve and I become normal, I shall go to Delhi myself; it would be better still, should you get an opportunity somewhere to meet him, if you could talk to him about me, express to him my gratefulness and how his words moved me to tears. I am the same age as he. I certainly believe that friends like you exist for me in spite of differences of regime. I think often of you and Indira Devi in my prayers and I beg you to pray for me.

Dostoievsky wrote in his *Brothers Karamazov* of the "tears of humanity with which our earth is soaked from crust to centre". But few, even among the humanitarians, feel this in the throb of their blood and the marrow of their bones—as Panditji did. No wonder he endeared himself to millions all over the world and thousands of derelicts wept like stricken souls.

People have written (and will write much more, I am sure) about ever so many traits and facets of his multifoliate character, and we all should, if only to feel stimulated by his many-mooded ideals and lonely strivings. Someday I, too, may write more about these. But as my tribute has already spun out to an unconscionable length, I will conclude with an instance of how he helped me once when I was in deep distress. Briefly, it happened like this:

Netaji once invited me—in 1924, I think—to his house to sing before a pleiad of our political luminaries. I had just begun my song when two of them started an animated discussion (presumably about the spectacular things they were going to achieve, stalking the land.) I stopped singing—rather abruptly. Subhas felt deeply embarrassed and apologised to me in a whisper, because, being the host himself, he could not very well reprimand his guests. I felt humiliated and was thinking of an excuse to make an exit when Panditji suddenly came to my rescue and thundered: "Gentlemen! If you don't care for music have some consideration at least for those who do care".

There was a startled hush: the situation was saved and I sang again.

THE MOTHER BENIGN

(Continued From Page 10)

all, from any point of view whatsoever. What, after all are we? Can we ever have more separate existence than that of a tiny wave on the bosom of the infinite ocean, more freedom than that of a tiny leaf on a huge tree; more capacity than that of a tiny spark of a brightly burning fire; more self-confidence than that of a tiny grain of sand on the illimitable desert? This is our nature, this is our destiny, — what harm is there, what shame to admit this? On the contrary, it is our greatest Glory, it is our brightest beauty, it is our sweetest salvation — to have in this way, our essence in the Mother, our existence in the Mother, our exaltation in the Mother.

Sweet Paradox. In fact, what a sweet paradox Life is—free yet, fully dependent on Another; self-confident, yet eternally looking up towards Another: courageous, yet intensely hankering for Another! It is this 'beyond', it is this 'beside'; it is this 'above', it is this 'across'; it is this 'other', it is this 'onward' that constitute the very beauty, the very sweetness, the very grandeur, the very strength of Life! See, the small flower blooms forth on its small stalk, no doubt; but spreads out its petals all around, towards the horizons, towards Infinity. See, the small brooklet issues forth from a small hole of the mountain; but flows on and on, through wide tracts, towards the oceans, towards Infinity. See, the small gust of wind springs forth from a small corner of the sky; but blows forth gushingly towards the wide, wide world, towards Infinity.

Such is Life, such is our so-called puny, imperfect, miserable Life — from the physical side, smallest of the small; from the spiritual, greatest of the great! How beautifully does The Upanishad say —

> *"The hundredth part of a hundredth part*
> *Of a hair-tip fine.*
> *This Soul, still it tends towards*
> *Infinity, eternal shine."*
>
> (Svetasvatara Upanishad)

So, let us not be confined to the four walls of our own selves alone. But let us all pledge ourselves anew, on this supremely auspicious occasion of this joyous Mother — Worship, to dedicate our lives for having such a supreme Expansion of life, such a sublime Exaltation of life, such a sweet Exhilaration of life. What more is needed?

And, this in fact, constitutes the quintessence of the lofty, lovely, lovable Philosophy of Sri Sri Durga Puja!

INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

By Prof. ANIL CHANDRA BANERJEE, M.A., Ph.D.

WHEN India was a part of the British Empire her foreign policy was determined, as a matter of course, by the British Government from London. The geography of the country, the distance between London and Calcutta, and the difficulty of communication between the two capitals vested the Governor-General-in-Council with a large measures of initiative and freedom, but this advantage was lost in the seventies of the last century when submarine cables connected Britain with India. The Government of India became a mere agency of the British Foreign Office so far as India's relations with her neighbours were concerned. Lord Morley observed, as Secretary of State for India, that the British Empire could not have two foreign policies. India had to conform to British Imperial policy in the sphere of international relations. Even a resourceful Governor-General like Lord Curzon had to modify his policy towards Tibet under imperious orders from London.

In those days the Governor-General personally controlled the Foreign and Political Department of the Government of India, but that Department was not really concerned with international affairs in the broadest sense; it dealt with matters connected with India's neighbours only. The great questions of foreign policy which disturbed the European Foreign Offices were beyond the scope of India's Foreign Department although she was not free from the consequences of conflict. For instance, India was dragged into the European War in 1914 although she had no voice at all in the march of events leading to that catastrophe. It goes without saying that India had no separate diplomatic representation at foreign capitals; the British Ambassador spoke for India if it was necesary to speak for her at all.

The War of 1914-18 initiated a process of change. The Imperial Conference of 1917 recognized the desirability of the readjustment of the constitutional relations of the parts of the British Empire "based upon a full recognition of the Dominions as autonomous nations of an Imperial Commonwealth and of India as an important portion of the same" and the recognition of the right of the Dominions and India to an adequate voice in foreign policy. This recommendation of the Imperial Conference preceded the British Government's announcement of August 20, 1917, regarding the progressive realization of responsible government in India.

When the Peace Conference met at Versailles India's legal and constitutional position was unchanged; the declarations mentioned above had no formal effect or statutory force. "It was open to the British Government to insist on treating India as an integral part of the Empire for foreign policy. Instead, without any coercion, and rather to the surprise of those immediately concerned with Indian affairs, it was decided to treat India as a Dominion, to give India a distinct place in the negotiation of the treaty and its signature, and to secure for India separate membership of the League of Nations". Thus India became an Original Member of the League of Nations through the grace of Britain. She acquired an international status. In 1929 the Indian delegation to the League Assembly was headed by an Indian. India had a distinct representation on the Labour Organisation of the League.

But India's international status was not reflected in her internal constitutional position. Not to speak of the Act of 1919, even the Act of 1935 did not make her a Dominion in terms of the Statute of Westminster (1931). A British writer says: "In the long run an India which was merely a duplicate of the British Government would be an anomaly in League proceedings". In practice India's presence in the League meant little more than the addition of a vote for Britain. India secured no control over her foreign relations, no independent voice in the sphere of international relations. As in 1914, so in 1939, she was dragged into the European War as a part of the British Empire without being given any opportunity to make a decision for herself. Troops were despatched from India to Aden, Egypt and Singapore under orders of the British Government. The Central Legislature was bypassed, and Lord Zetland, Secretary of State for India, explained the position by saying that "It would clearly have been the height of folly to have given the world by discussion in the Legislature advance notice of our military dispositions".

Towards the close of the Second World War the precedent of 1919 was followed: India was made an Original Member of the United Nations. But the anomally of a dependent country acquiring a full-fledged international status persisted. India was not yet a free nation; therefore, *de jure* Indian representation meant *de facto* British representation. India's membership of the United Nations represented a process of historical continuity; it was a logical continuation of her membership of the League of Nations which had died meanwhile "unwept, unhonoured and unsung". It became a reality only when the Day of Deliverance arrived and Britain's link with India became a constitutional form rather than a political chain.

II

It was Jawaharlal Nehru who made the Indian National Congress really conscious of the intimate relation between domestic policy and foreign policy. For no less than half a century after its birth this premier national organisation concentrated its attention exclusively on domestic issues. The fate of Indians in South Africa, the victories

of Germany in the First World War, the abolition of the Caliphate: such issues might stir the Indian nationalist conscience, but the leaders — not to speak of the masses—did not think of India as a unit of the world of colonial exploitation or as a member of the Family of Nations having rights and obligations in the international sphere. Raja Ram Mohan Roy was the first Indian to think internationally, to acclaim the victory of Revolution in Europe as a triumph of the human spirit. His mantle fell upon Rabindranath Tagore, who made internationalism a familiar concept in thought and literature. He was India's cultural ambassador to many countries in the West as well as in the East. In the purely political sphere, however, Jawaharlal Nehru practically took up the thread from where Raja Ram Mohan Roy had left it a century ago. He educated himself through intimate contact with the West; he saw the West at its best as also at its worst. And he educated the Congress through his untiring efforts to emphasize the significance of stirring developments in other parts of the world. He extended the horizon of our political thought even though, during the British regime, he was unable to extend the horizon of our political action.

In 1927 a Congress of oppressed nations was held at Brussels under the presidentship of the veteran Labour leader of Britain, George Lansbury It was attended by the spokesmen of many nations; delegates came from many European, Asian, African and Latin American countries. Nehru attended this congress as the sole representative of the Indian National Congress. It is necessary to remember that he was practically self-nominated, for it was he who suggested (he was in Europe at that time) that the Indian National Congress should send a representative to Brussels. The veterans of India's struggle for freedom were not yet aware of the significance of such international conferences.

Readers of Nehru's Autobiography need not be told how his mind was disturbed and his thought shaped by the victories of Fascism and Nazism in Europe. The Civil War in Spain and Japan's invasion of China moved him. He examined the Marxist line of thought and action. During the years 1934-39, when forces determined to crush Liberalism and Freedom appeared to be irresistible in Europe, Africa and Asia, Nehru's mind established a link between the destiny of India and that of other countries struggling to be free. The India of his dreams became a fighting writ in the great world crusade against Imperialism and Fascism. His influence was contagious. He persuaded his colleagues and fellow workers to see the truth, to realise that India's deliverance was by no means a local or isolated issue, and to broaden the perspective of her struggle for her birth right.

The new vision of the Congress was reflected in noble words in the resolution adopted by the Working Committee (September 14, 1939) as a protest against the British Government's action in dragging India into Hitler's War without asking for her consent. It is almost certain that the resolution was drafted by Nehru; in any case it breathes the new spirit which he had infused into the Congress. It says:

The Congress has repeatedly declared its entire disapproval of the ideology and practice of Fascism and Nazism and their glorification of war and violence and the suppression of the human spirit. It has condemned the aggression in which they have repeatedly indulged and their sweeping away of well established principles and recognised standards of civilized behaviour. It has seen in Fascism and Nazism the intensification of the principle of imperialism against which the Indian people have struggled for many years. The Working Committee must, therefore, unhesitatingly condemn the latest aggression of the Nazi Government in Germany against Poland and sympathise with those who resist it".

That sympathy, however, could not be mobilised into action by "orders issued by external authority". The resolution continues:

"A free democratic India will gladly associate herself with other free nations for mutual defence against aggression and for economic co-operation. She will work for the establishment of a real world order based on freedom and democracy, utilising the world's knowledge and resources for the progress and advancement of humanity".

In this passage we have a prophetic anticipation of the dual functions of the United Nations: (1) mutual defence against aggression, and (2) economic co-operation based on the utilization of the world's knowledge and resources. And even in those dark days India's potentiality as an important factor in international politics was not underestimated: "With her vast resources she must play an important part in any scheme of world reorganization". That such reorganization would be inevitable at the end of the War was clearly foreseen:

"The crisis that has overtaken Europe is not of Europe only but of humanity and will not pass like crisis of wars leaving the essential structures of the present-day world intact. It is likely to refashion the world for good or evil politically, socially and economically".

The war, says the resolution, means "no quarrel with the German people or the Japanese people or any other people"; it means the Indian people's "deep-rooted quarrel with the systems which deny freedom and are based on violence and aggression". And the picture of the refashioned world is drawn in the following words:

"They do not look forward to a victory of one people over another or to a dictated peace but a victory of real democracy for all the people of all the countries and a world freed from the nightmare of violence and imperialist aggression".

In conclusion, the resolution emphasizes the determination of the Indian people "to achieve the freedom of India within the larger freedom of the world".

III

This resolution of the Working Committee provided the basis for Free India's foreign policy. When the Congress took up the great task of framing the Constitution of India in accordance with the provisions of the Cabinet Mission Plan, the principles outlined in 1939 were given a more or less definite shape.

The Objectives Resolution which Nehru moved in the Constituent Assembly on December 13, 1946, contained the following words indicating the principles of foreign policy which India as "an independent, sovereign Republic" hoped to adopt:

"Wherein shall be maintained the integrity of the territory of the Republic and its sovereign rights on land, sea and air according to justice and the law of civilized nations, and this ancient land attain its rightful and honoured place in the world and make its full and willing contribution to the pro-

motion of world peace and the welfare of mankind."

In his explanatory speech Nehru said:

". . . What we are going to do in India, is going to have a powerful effect on the rest of the world, not only because a new force, independent nation comes out into the arena of the world, but because of the very fact that India is such a country that by virtue, not only of her large size and population, but of her enormous resources, she can immediately play an important part in world affairs. Therefore, it is right that the framers of our Constitution should always bear this larger international aspect in mind.

"We approach the world in a friendly way. We want to make friends with all countries. We want to make friends, in spite of the long history of conflict in the past, with England also".

The decision "to make friends . . . with England also" explains India's "full membership of the Commonwealth of Nations and her acceptance of the King as the symbol of the free association of the independent nations and as such the Head of the Commonwealth". (Declaration of the Prime Minister's Conference, London, April 27, 1949). Here the emphasis is placed on the concept of "the free association of the independent nation". This "free association" is neither mentioned in nor prohibited by the Constitution of India; it is extra-legal. It is a voluntary association with the Commonwealth which India can cut off at any moment.

So far as the Constitution is concerned, its framers did bear the "larger international aspect in mind"'. Article 51 says:

"The State shall endeavour to—

(a) promote international peace and security;

(b) maintain just and honourable relations between nations;

(c) foster respect for international law and treaty obligations in the dealings of organised peoples with one another; and

(d) encourage settlement of international disputes by arbitration."

This provision reminds us of analogous provisions in the Constitutions of two foreign countries. Article 29 of the Constitution of Eire (1937) says:

"(1) Ireland affirms its devotion to the ideal of peace and friendly co-operation amongst nations founded on International law and morality.

(2) Ireland affirms its adherence to the principle of the pacific settlement of international disputes by international arbitration or judicial determination.

(3) Ireland accepts the generally recognized principles of International Law as its rule of conduct in its relations with other States."

The Preamble to the Constitution of the Fourth French Republic (1946) says:

"The French Republic, faithful to its traditions, abides by the rules of international public law. It will not undertake wars of conquest and will never use its arms against the freedom of any people. On condition of reciprocity, France accepts the limitations of sovereignty necessary to the organization and defence of peace."

Article 51 has been placed in Part IV of the Constitution under the heading "Directive Principles of State Policy." In introducing the Draft Constitution (November 4, 1948) Dr. Ambedkar told the Constituent Assembly:

"If it is said that the Directive Principles have no legal force behind them, I am prepared to admit it. But I am not prepared to admit that they have no sort of binding force at all. . . . whoever captures power will not be free to do what he likes with it. In the exercise of it, he will have to respect these . . . . Directive Principles. He cannot ignore them. He may not have to answer for their breach in a court of law. But he will certainly have to answer for them before the electorate at election time."

Indeed, the Constitution itself says that the Directive Principles "are . . . . fundamental in the governance of the country and it shall be the duty of the State to apply these principles in making laws" (Article 37).

Provision for "fostering respect for international law and treaty obligations" was made by Article 253 of the Constitution:

"Notwithstanding anything in the foregoing provisions of the Chapter (*i.e.*, Part XI: Relations between the Union and the States), Parliament has power to make any law for the whole or any part of the territory of India for implementing any treaty, agreement or convention with any other country or countries or any decision made at any international conference, association or other body."

The power of making treaties and the duty of implementing them are vested in the Centre (Seventh Schedule: items 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 18, 21). In exercising this power and in performing this duty it may be necessary for the Centre to legislate on State subjects. The authority to do so is given by Article 253. In exercising these powers the Centre is required to be guided by the principles laid down in Article 51.

IV

The delicate task of evolving a foreign policy for Free India fell inevitably upon Nehru in 1947. It was a task very congenial for him, and having regard to his previous interest in international affairs and the part he had played in laying down the principles of international conduct he was obviously the fittest person to take charge of the Ministry of External Affairs. But to take direct charge of an important and expanding portfolio was to add to the heavy burden which he carried as Prime Minister. From a long-term point of view it was unwise to combine these two exacting offices. We follow British precedents, but only two British Prime Ministers—Lord Salisbury in the last century and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald in the present century—made such an experiment.

In Nehru's case the combination of two offices had two results. In the first place, he was doubtless too busy to look after the details of the work done by the Ministry of External Affairs. He had to depend too much on the bureaucracy. This was particularly unfortunate in case of this Ministry, for it was staffed by officials who had no previous training for the task entrusted to them. As British India had no independent foreign policy the Government of India before 1947 had no Foreign Service. A handful of I.C.S. officers, not exceeding half a dozen in number, had been assigned jobs connected with the war after 1939, but they acquired no diplomatic experience worth the name. The average I.C.S. officer, however efficient, was a novice in the Ministry of External Affairs. He had to learn his job before he could advise his Minister. In Parliamentary Government Ministers are amateurs and have to depend on officials for technical advice. This system works well in Britain because the top officials in every Ministry are trained experts with long experience of the type of work assigned to them. The Permanent Under-Secretary in the Bri-

(Continued On Page 218)

Tantric Concept of Animal Sacrifice

By K. M. Purakayastha

IT was in July 1920 that Mahatma Gandhi gave his call for "non - violent non - co-operation." Whether Gandhiji intended non-violence to be a creed of political resistance or whether he enunciated in it an all-pervasive philosophy of life is a matter on which opinion may well vary. But one thing is clear that where the tradition of Jainism and Vaishnavism failed to make a deep impression on public mind, Gandhiji's preaching succeeded in shaping public opinion to a large extent. As a signal point of illustration, it may be pointed out that animal sacrifice in connection with the worship of Mother Durga has in the recent decades largely been falling into disuse. In the several thousand community worship held in Calcutta every autumn, the worship is performed in most cases without animal sacrifice being made a part of it. There is a veiled revulsion against animal-killing being attuned to the worship of the benign Mother.

Three decades earlier than the call for non-violence was given by Gandhiji, the case against animal sacrifice in connection with the worship of a deity was most powerfully voiced by Tagore in his well-known melodrama entitled "Bisarjan." The plot was based on a medieval tradition of the Tripura Raj family entailing a grim duel between the reigning King and the official priest of the patron-Godess of the State. The crisis was worked out by the poet on the priest's man having taken away a beggar woman's child-goat for the purpose of sacrifice and the King on her complaint having peremptorily ordered the stoppage of animal killing in the deity's temple. The priest resisted the order by every means and at last amidst a tragic scene of self-slaughter offered by the beloved disciple of the priest, the deity was consigned and cast away to the flowing river of the capital. Emotionally, the case was hundred per cent lost by the traditionalist.

To every reader of Tagore the Shrieking and palpitating words of the goat-owning beggar girl, Aparna by name, have rung and rung in the years for the last six decades. She was a kind of mother to the child-goat tending and rearing its tiny limbs and she powerfully argued that the Godess, the Mother, could never accept the sacrifice of such a tender innocent thing. The priest Raghupati was incorrigibly unperturbed. Violence and destruction, he said, are foolish slogans; the whole world is a slaughter house and every particle of dust is studded with death and destruction. Crafty and dishonest as he was shown, the priests bizarre reasoning falls flat on the reader. The poet's sympathy could be clearly read even in the midst of dramatic detachment.

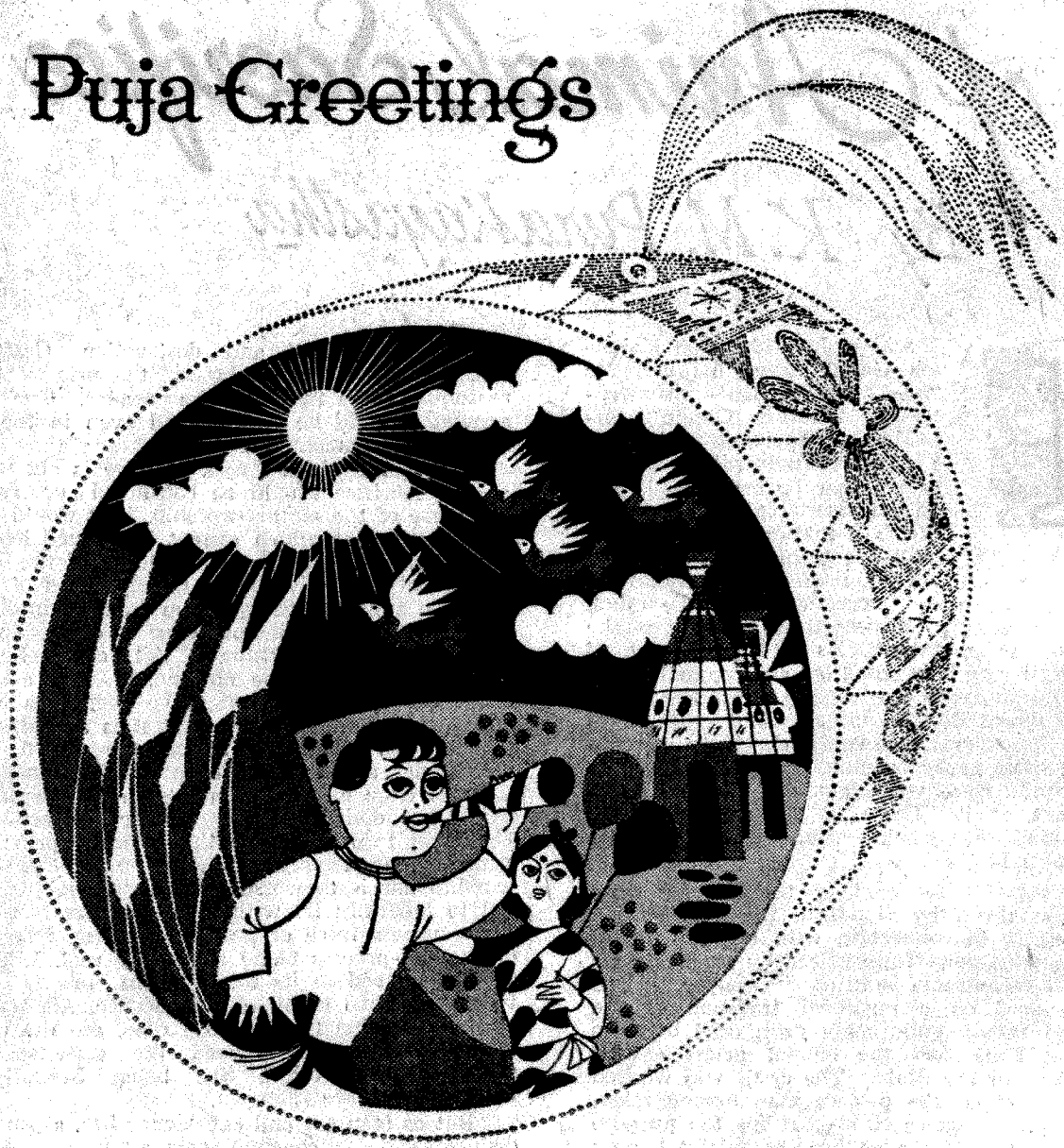
The point which I seek to raise is not whether animal sacrifice should be continued or scrapped in course of the mother-worship. That would depend on many things which cannot be argued here. But there should be some understanding of the Tantric concept of animal worship in any kind of Shakti Puja. To approach the question from an intellectual and sentimental point of view as often done, is however most unfortunate. All classical Hindu religious worships have nothing, if not a spiritul basis. For imstance, it might be open to a modern apologist of animal killing that it is a Nietzscheian prescription, calculated to still the heart of the worshipper and to remove charity, kindness and softness from human nature. Such an explanation would be diabolical. The Tantric mother is the Universal Prakriti she is the cosmic principle of dynamism in a spiritually personified sense. To worship her is to worship the individual will in a bid to indentify if with the Universal will of consciousness force or power-dynamism. Every inch of the life-process being spiritually real. Life must be experienced in its totality but in its never-failing spiritual depth of significance. All activities of life including the religious rites, are the way to worship the Mother. Indeed the activities themselves are the Mother, She being basically the Universal power-dynamism.

But as men act and experience life, a process of disintegration is concomitantly operative. According to Tantra, every act of human experience, mental or material, entails a corresponding disintegrating transformation of the creative cells constituting the human symbol. To re-create at one point, man has to disintegrate at another. There can be no attempt at worshipping the Universal Will, that is to say, realising It in the supra-mental consciousness of the worshipper, oblivious of this basic pattern of creative-destructive process. Bali or the animal sacrifice in Tantric worship is intended to emphasise that destructive impact of all creativity, to heighten the consciousness in the worshipper's mind that the Mother that creates is also the Mother that destroys. Without a reference to her destructive role the creative role of the Mother cannot be from a spiritual standpoint visualised.

For men and women treading their existence in every-day life, however, Tantric worship is

(Continued On Page 224)

Puja Greetings



Inserted by **Keo-Karpin** Division

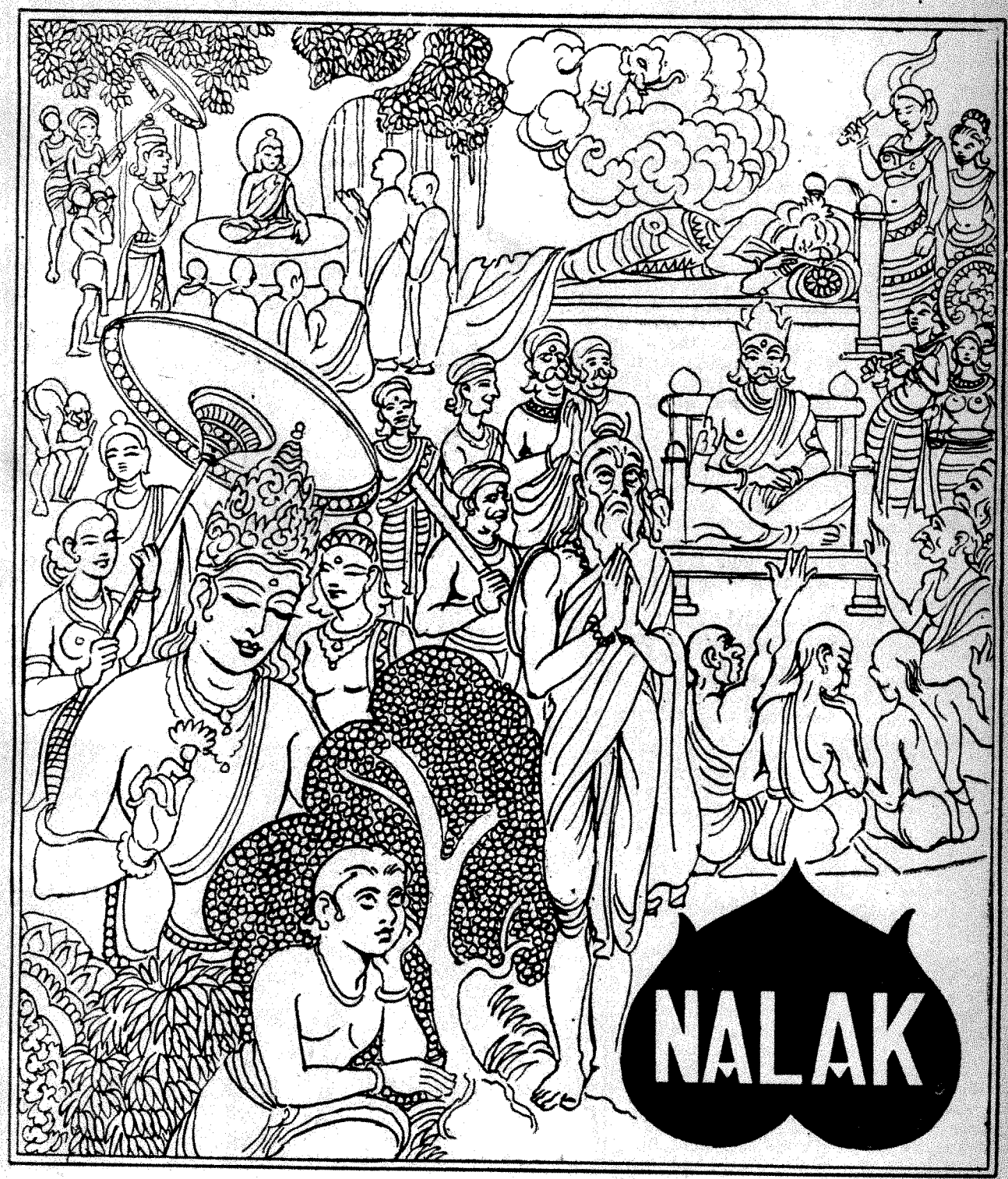
Dey's DEY'S MEDICAL STORES PRIVATE LIMITED, CALCUTTA

(PXDMKE)P7

THE MOTHER

A hundred year old image of Goddess Durga, the household deity of Late Ishan Chandra Basu of Ramkrishnapur, Howrah.

Colour transparency — Prafulla Mitra.



NALAK

By

ABANINDRANATH TAGORE

RISHI Debal was in meditation. Nalak — a boy of tender age — was waiting on him. The forest of Bardhan was already dark, dark was the foot of the banyan tree, while the gloom deepened along either bank of the Ganges. The stars twinkled on the dark sky in that quiescent night — the wind was asleep, a hush lay over the water and the leaves of trees were still. Then, there gleamed a light in that darkness, — it bloomed in rhytmic graduation as a flower blossoms, as the moon waxes — subtly and imperceptibly. The whole universe quivered like water-drops unsteady on a lotus-leaf swinging to and fro. Rishi opened his eyes and beheld an unearthly light in the sky. That was neither of the moon nor of the sun, but a light blended of

lights that are never beheld. It oked like an ensign of rainbow-colour unfurled ross the sky by some unknown hand, like flights light built in the void by an architect for some d to descend on this earth.

Rishi stood up from his seat and said to Nalak y boy, Lord Buddha will be born in Kapilabastu. am leaving for that Kingdom, so that my eyes may st upon Him. Please remain careful.'

A narrow winding track led through the middle the forest. Rishi took that path and disappeared rthward. Nalak sank in meditation alone, amidst at solemn silence, while scene after scene passed efore his vision.

The royal palace of Kapilabastu appeared first. ueen Mayadebi was asleep on a golden bed-stead. n open verandah adjoining her room overlooked the rden, the city, temples and monasteries at a stance. Far beyond these rose the Himalayan ountains mantled in white snow. And, beyond at range an aureole of wonderful white light over-pped the whole horizon through which the sun owed like a vermilion speck.

King Suddhodan stared at that marvellous lumination, when Mayadevi woke up and called to e king—'Oh Lord! What a delightful dream I st have had! In my dream I saw that a white aby elephant with two tiny tusks curved like the escent moon, came across the clouds and descended n my lap; but thereafter I could not see where it isappeared. And oh! it bore a mark on its forehead ike a dot of red-vermilion'.

The King and the Queen talked about the dream; ne day had dawned. The court-pipers began playing n their instruments in the palace-portico; people oved about on the streets, sounds of conch-shells nd gongs poured from the temples; in the inner yard f the palace the maid-servants were carrying water n golden urns for Mayadevi to bathe in, the female ardeners were collecting flowers in golden latters to worship with, the pet peacock f the Queen flew down on the cornice of he roof, the pair of Suk-Sari inside the olden cage began quarrelling with the naid-servant for their breakfast, the eggar appeared on the doorway — 'Long ive our Queen Mother!' The dream of he Queen became a matter of discussion mong the palace-inmates.

King Suddhodan adorned the royal hrone with the brilliance of the morning un. He wore a crimson cloth made of ilk, bore on his head a crown set with ewels and had on his forehead a sacred nark of red-sandal. His chief councillor stood by his side, after him the sceptre-bearer holding a golden sceptre in his nand; on the other side stood the umbrella-bearer spreading open the white umbrella, and after him the Mayor of the city with sword and shield in his hand.

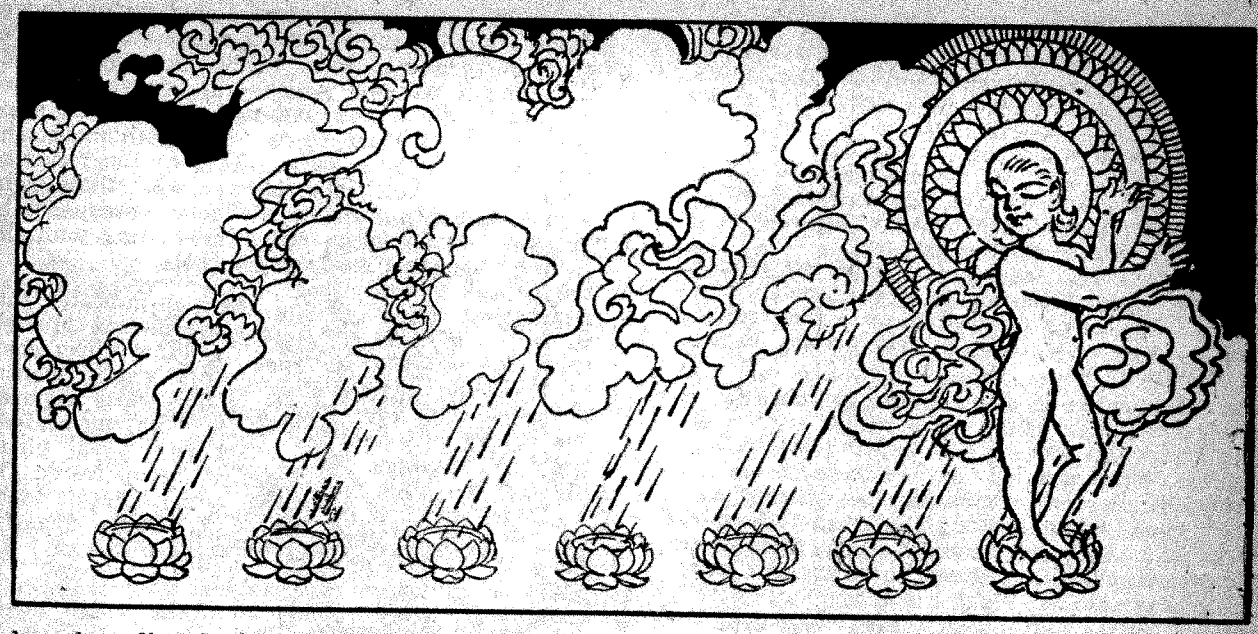
Two corridors lay along the two sides of the royal throne. One of them was reserved for the Brahmin scholars and the other made room for the subordinate kings and princes within the kingdom and outside. The royal court was surrounded by the common subjects of the kingdom, who were again encircled by sentries carrying stout clubs in their hands and wearing red turbans on their heads.

Just at the centre of the court were laid eight pieces of red-coloured blankets on the floor beneath the red-canopy, and on each of these eight seats eight fortune-tellers of the royal family sat together to interpret the Queen's dream with chalk in their hands and scriptures and almanacs opened before them. Some of these scholars were grey-haired, some bald, some with single tufts, some with moustache resembling the broomsticks. Each of them carried a box of snuff. Now, thus followed what those eight foretellers observed as the probable consequence of the dream of the Queen either by writing with the pen or by drawing lines with a chalk:—

'The dream concerning the sun indicates that the child born to the king shall be the greatest ruler and supreme in might. The lunar effect shall endow the Prince with physical grace, mental nobleness and enviable longevity. The white elephant signifies that the prince shall be calm, meditative, world's rarest and most renowned of the pious, supremely wise and a deliverer of the distressed. Oh king! be certain without the least stain of doubt that a saint is coming down to this Sakya dynasty. The writ on the scriptures never goes in vain! So, rejoice!'

Instantly, there rolled murmurs from every corner—'Rejoice, rejoice! Give alms to the poor, offer them food, clothings, candles, incense, land!' Chants of merriment rang through every quarter in Kapilabastu—in the royal palace, in tenants' huts, in fields and in forums, the sky dazzled in delight, the wind blew in a joy. The diamonds of the king's crown, pearl-set frills of the royal umbrella, the necklace round the neck of the chief councillor presented by the king, the Bhutanese red blankets gifted to the scholars by the queen, the red silken veils offered as charity to all the subjects irrespective of age and sex in and out of the palace began to dance and dangle in an atmosphere of joy and festivity.

Next was unveiled the picture of the vast garden before Nalak's inner eyes. It was an endless



garden abounding in innumerable trees and green grass, having exhilerating lake-breeze, cool shades, twittering of birds, and fragrance of flowers. In the centre of the garden lay an expansive lotus-tank. On one of its edges stood a skyscraping 'sal' tree—its boughs and leaves profusely in blossoms. the southern breeze was letting down some of them on a marble-table beneath that tree.

Evening was creeping in slowly. Handsome maidens of the neighbourhood took their afternoon wash in that lotus-tank and left the garden. A group of gardeners with their hair tucked upwards in a sheaf, strings of beads round their neck and golden ear-rings, swept the withered leaves with brooms, watered the flower-plants and departed at the close of their work and of the day. Neither a particle of dust nor a fibre of hay did they leave anywhere within the garden,—either on the green grass, or on the shore of the tank or at the bottom of the tree.

Night was following by steps—a full-moon night of the holy Spring ! In the west, the sun was setting, while in the east the moon was getting up. One of the horizons looked hemmed in gold, while the other glittered in silver lining. The azure sky overhead was filled with countless stars and the sounds of gongs and conch-shells of the evening prayer. At such a juncture, Mayadevi, with her *confidante*, came for her evening walk in the garden in a golden palanquin fretted with silver lattice-work, followed by royal maids carrying floral fans and betel boxes. Placing her hand on her confidante's, the Queen leisurely rambled through the shades, and at last came to halt beneath that lofty 'sal' in the middle of the garden,—her left hand resting on the flowery bough of the 'sal' and her right hand on her waist.

Immediately, the day ended, the birds gave out their parting chirrups, the breeze streamed with the fragrance of flowers, the sky gleamed in the light of the stars. The round moon of the full-moon climbed on the east like a golden umbrella above the 'sal' tree. Just at that time, Lord Buddha was born resembling a doll made of gold, like another moon over this earth abounding in 'champaka' flowers. The surrounding area glowed in brightness, and not a speck of darkness remained anywhere. Holy Buddha came down on the lap of the Queen Mother, Mayadevi, and on the wide lap of this earth, like a tiny drop of dew on a lotus—serene and beautiful.

In no time, the garden of Lumbini swelled in streams of people; King Suddhodan attended by his councillors and followed by his courtiers came to look at his new-born son; the ladies of the royal palace welcomed the occasion by blowing conch-shells and yodelling.

The gods in Heaven welcomed the occasion with showers of flowers and sounds of large drums that resounded through the clouds; the sounds of conch-shells and gongs in every house of the mortals churned the air; the sounds of the kettle-drums and trumpets rolled and rattled within the nether-world. Lord Buddha was born amidst tumultuous cheers of the three worlds and advanced his first seven-steps on this earth. On each place where His seven graceful foot-prints were left, seven golden lotuses each resembling a spinning wheel of fire, emerged above the soil from within the unimaginable depths of the nether-world; and the seven sheets of clouds carried water from the seven seas to sprinkle gently on those seven lotuses.

Nalak was amazed to realise through his inner eyes that the gods and demons and men of the three worlds hailed the advent of Lord Buddha amidst those seven lotuses! In the meantime, Nalak's mother came there and called to him—'Naughty boy! Rishi is not here, I find, and you remain alone! Don't you at all feel the urge for either sleep or food or study, only wasting time on the pretence of a devotee! Eh! Chasing the shadow of an ascetic at the age when the cradle calls!'

With this, Nalak's mother began to drag him by the hand; the boy rolled on the dust and lamented—'Please, leave me, mother, let me go; let me see what comes next!'

And, the forests around echoed that lamentation—'Leave me, oh mother, let me go!' But all were in vain. The boy was imprisoned within the four walls of the room.

Nalak was now forcibly sent to the village primary school. The teacher there was giving lessons. But he was attentive neither to reading nor to writing. His soul flew to the shade of that banyan tree in the forests of Bardhan and to the capital of Kapilabastu.

A small window in the thatched hut of the primary school used to bring a glimpse of a tamarind tree, a portion of Kas-hedge and thorny shrubs, a cluster of bamboo plants, and a pond. At noon, a patch of sunshine shone on the spot, a wood-pecker

with a crimson tuft on its head would perch on a shady branch and began to warble, a black hornet would drone around the flowers in the thorny hedges—once it came near the window, the next moment it flew back. Nalak stared at that fly and thought—'How I wish I had wings like that fly; then I could defy this confinement within this room and would reach the forest at one run'. Just at that moment, the teacher cried—'Well, write on, boys!' Immediately, the birds disappeared, and the pens ran rapidly on the palm-leaves. Alas! How others would feel what mental pangs distressed Nalak. His pen refused to write, still he would not be allowed to stop writing; tears trickled from his eyes, yet he would be forced to murmur the alphabets one after another—no matter it was summer or rain, day or noon.

When Nalak was led home back from the school by his mother, sometimes the easterly wind would perhaps blow shaking the palm-tops above the 'sal' and the crows cawed through fear within bamboo-bushes. Nalak desired there would occur such a strong gale as would smash and sweep away the whole village along with the straw-roof of the primary school; in that case, his parents would have no way but to reside in the forest, and he would be set free from such imprisonment. At night, as the wind squalled outside and the lightning flashed at intervals, Nalak prayed in his heart of hearts—'Oh! let there be storm, let there be rain, let the mud-wall give way, let the peg of the door be off its hinges!' And practically the storm came, the rain inundated the places around; but alas! never did the portals open and the wall give way—they remained closed for ever and for all time!

How then could he again return to that forest of Bardhan surrounded by wide meadows and expansive sky where the birds flew in merriment and the fawns skipped around in glee! Where there was none to hold him up in the shade of the trees and in the breeze of the meadows, — where freedom danced in every bird, beast and insect!

Nalak was yearning for the return of the Rishi. At the other end, Rishi Debal too, absorbed in mental pleasure to consecrate his body with the blessings of the holy dust of the feet of Buddhadeb, was returning homeward dancing with raised hands and singing all through the villages he crossed — "Bow to Thee, oh Sun, the Light of all lights! Bow to Thee, oh Moon! the Marvel of the Night! Bow to Thee, oh Treasure of Endless Qualities, the Holy Heir of Sakya Dynasty!"

It was then autumn. The sky glittered in golden sunshine. The meadows on either side of the road smiled in golden crops. The minds of the people declined to remain within. The Knights arrayed their cavalry to set out for triumphant war; the commoners spead abroad in different directions — some to the market-place with goods on their heads, some for weeding out their cornfields, some for trading across the rivers and the seas. People who had no occupation otherwise, also joined the Rishi in his melodious hymn—"Bow to Thee, oh Lord, the Sun of Wisdom!"

The evening had set in. The sky was perfectly blue without a speck of cloud, the moonlight streamed down to the earth from the heaven, the milky-way overhead shone like a piece of luminous lattice-work along north and south. Rishi Debal sang through the village - path — "Bow to Thee, oh Holy Heir of King Sakya". The children on their mothers' lap listened to those chants. Mothers standing on the mud-built verandah attended that. The old grand-mother heard that from inside the room, and at once called out everybody to bow down in reverence. Gongs and conchshells of the village temple resounded in harmony with the hymns of the Rishi—'Bow to Thee, oh Lord!' When the night approached dawn and the dew-laden lotuses bent to say 'Bow to Thee', and the moon leaning to the west prayed—'Bow to Thee', Nalak rose up from his sleep and saw the Rishi before him immediately on opening his eyes. The doors opened and allowed the golden rays into the room to rest directly on the head of Nalak. He bent down to the Rishi who blessed him—'Be Thou happy and emancipated!'

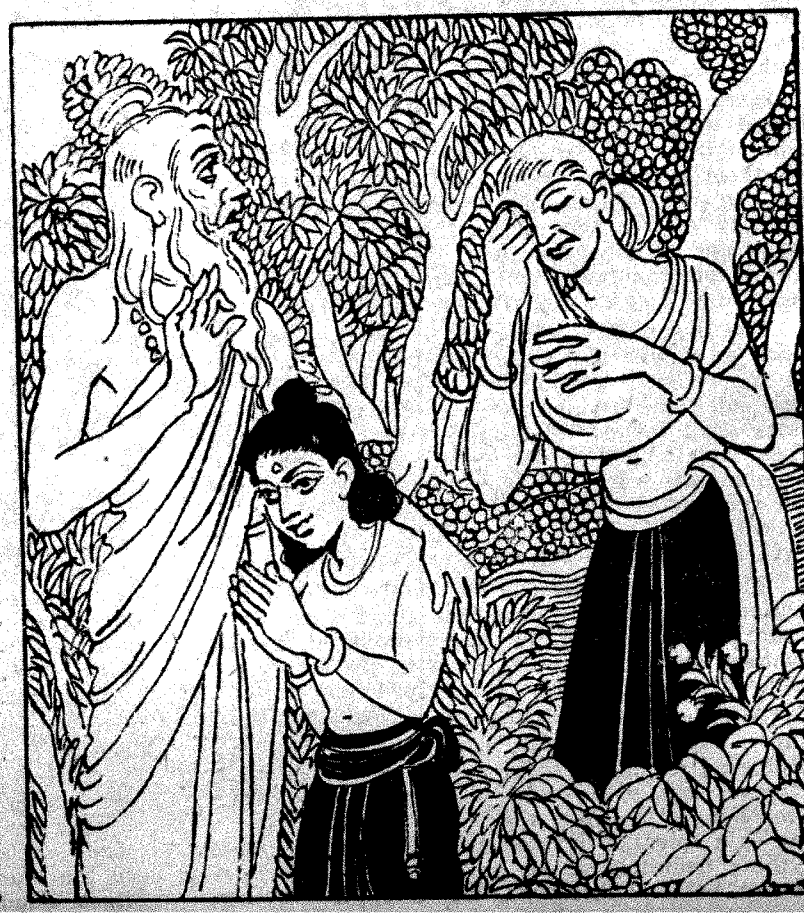
Holding Rishi by the hand, Nalak came down on the road; his mother begged the Rishi with tearful eyes—'I have none else in this world save only Nalak, so please do not take him away from me!'

The Rishi consoled her — 'Do not grieve, you shall get him back after thirty-five years from this day. Do not be afraid; come, dedicate your son to the feet of Buddhadeb'. Rishi uttered the incantations and the mother holding her son by his hands repeated—

'Beneath the cloudless sky, I worship Lord Buddha; I worship Him with Nalak, the loveliest of all flowers'.

The Rishi then held Nalak by his arms and disappeared towards the forest.

Again, they returned to the forest of Bardhan, to the foot of that banyan tree! Beneath that tree,



Rishi Debal and a group of ascetics sat round the fire, their tridents glittering in the flames of that fire.

The forest was dense indeed. A profound darkness hung on all sides to leave nothing visible; only clusters of banyan leaves, the roots and the matted locks of the ascetics shone in the crimson flames of boiled gold like the lightning in a thunder-laden sky.

Amidst that darkness, Nalak silently sank in meditation. Over his head lay the blue sky, down in the forest reigned the undisturbed gloom. There was neither any stir nor any sound from any quarter; only, at intervals, Rishi Debal broke the silence—"Well, next?" And the scene rested before Nalak's eyes and he described:

'King Suddhodan adorned the ivory-throne covered with the skin of a deer, with Buddhadeb on his lap; on either of his sides four fortune-tellers took their seats, the sacrificial fire burnt in his front; on one side sat mother Gotami, surrounded by the twigs of grass and corns, gongs and conches, flowers and sandal paste, resin and incense.

The oblation was over. The king asked the Brahmins—"How do you want to name the prince?"

'The Brahmins answered—"We offer to call the Prince as Siddhartha, as all the material prosperities and religious attainments of the people of this earth will come from this Prince. Being a King, the Prince shall favour the people with his immense riches, and if he does not become a king, he shall enlighten this world by achieving omniscience, and after renouncing this mortal life shall identify himself with the final emancipation of Soul to the Spirit. Siddhartha is therefore a fit name for him".

'The king requested the Brahmins—"Please calculate unmistakably whether the Prince shall ascend the throne and rule his kingdom, or he shall renounce everything and proceed to the forest and devote his life to attain Divine Wisdom".

'The eight fortune-tellers of the King delivered their conclusive opinion in conformity with their astrological formula. Sri Ram Acharya, the foremost of the scholars observed by showing his two fingers to the King—"Oh king, the Prince may be either a King or a spiritual devotee. It is difficult to predict anything definitely as he possesses equal inclination for both". Lakshmana, his younger brother, endorsed his elder's opinion with his eyes shut. Jayadhwaj remarked by waving his palms — "It may be either 'yes' or 'no'" Srimanta swung his head on either side and put in—"I too bear the same opinion." Raising his two eyes, Bhoja commented—"This or that, both are correct". Sudatta declared turning his head right and left—"I verify both the sides as equal". Subam, the younger brother of Sudatta pushing two pinches of snuff inside his nostrils concluded—"In my opinion what my elder declares seems to be correct". Only Kaudinya, the youngest in age, but the greatest in learnings, raised only one finger to the King and affirmed "My Lord, there appears to be no 'either' in my calculation; I can assure you the Prince shall tread no other path of life than the path of spiritual emancipation. Under no circumstances shall he confine himself within the palace. On the very day he comes across an old man worn out by age, a destitute rendered skeleton by sickness, a corpse and a mendicant, this Prince Siddhartha shall renounce the pomps and pleasures of your palace leaving it to an abyss of grief,—as a bird flies away tearing the golden chain".'

The ascetics stood up in reverence. Nalak opened his eyes and saw it was dawn.

Nothing fresh passed before Nalak's eyes any more! From that day onward, whenever he sat in meditation, there appeared before his eyes a colossal, formidable golden wall built of gold-bricks, that obstructed the blue of the sky, checked the movement of the air and dazzled like a furnace in the rays of the sun. The wall had neither any beginning nor any end. The mind of Nalak now often flew like a bird through the air and returned with a check against that wall. In this way, the days and months and years rolled by. Siddhartha remained confined to the inner side of the wall while on the other side Nalak moved freely—like a bird in a cage and a bird in the bush.

King Suddhodan, out of fear, kept Siddhartha amidst lures of happy dreams, smiles and music, pomp and pleasure, like a bird in a golden cage, lest his son should quit his palace as a monk. When during summer, the sun became scorching, water dried up and the places around appeared to burn in the blazing winds; when in the rainy season, fresh clouds gathered in the sky, the earth was

flooded, rivers swelled in spate; when in autumn, the sky wore blue, the white clouds sailed through the puffy winds, water of rivers receded and showed the sand-beds bare; when in winter, the snow and mist covered all sides, leaves of the trees withered, flowers were worn out; again in spring when the buds and blossoms laid a soft carpet, the air was filled with an aroma, happiness trickled from the southern breeze, the moon-beams and the songs of the birds, the soul of Siddhartha cried for getting out of the imprisonment within that golden wall like the bird fastened in the cage. As if, he heard that the whole world, the whole universe lamentingly implored him,—whether in summer noons or rainy nights, or in autumn evenings, or in wintry dawns, or in spring hours—sometimes in the cooing of the cuckoos, sometimes in the sighs of the wind, sometimes in the spatterings of the rain, sometimes in the shiverings of the winter, or sometimes in the rustlings of the leaves,—'Come Thou out, oh Lord, bring us Salvation! A furnace of miseries and death blazes continuously in this mortal world, lives shrink and shrivel in grief and in affliction. Behold, the drops of tears overflow the hearts, the tides of sorrows wash out the mind's confidence.

'Pleasure is like the lightning of the sky, that flickers and is gone; happiness is like the autumn-clouds that float away and never return. Life withers like the Sefali flowers on the dewy bed of the winter; songs of the Spring are transcient Alas! the fire of misery and the pyre of death smoulder day and night in this mortal earth! Who is there to quench that flame? Who is there except Thy Holiness to dispel fear from this earth? Do not remain under spell of allurements; leave the snare of flowers, come Thou out—deliver us! *Bestow Thy courage on the mortals!*'

The soul of Nalak, the souls of the mortals, the soul of the sky and the air impatiently longed to take a glance of Buddhadeb. The woes of their hearts sometimes dripped like rains, sometimes they struck the golden wall like a gale; 'Come Thou!' they begged in the form of light; 'deliver the people'! They prayed in the shape of darkness! Like the red flowers they blossomed and withered away like dried leaves,—the smiles and the tears, the birth and the death of the people of this earth bubbled around Siddhartha—by day and by night, through months and through years, in one form or the other, in this place or that.

One day he observed a flock of swans flying across the blue sky like a wreath of 'Parijat' flowers in unbounded ecstasy. Their thousand wings clapped in a harmonious cadence of swell and fall, their thousand voices quacked in unison, 'Let us march forward!" The sky responded to their call; clouds floated with white sails, the wind whistled through the clouds, the earth vibrated with their quacking. The river flowed to the sea, the sea returned to the river breaking the rocks and pushing through the sands. Amid such unending joy, an arrow shot by some cruel hand pierced the wings of a swan like a lightning, and instantly the whole universe shivered in a painful cry. Stained with blood ,the wounded bird swooned helplessly at the feet of Siddhartha like a withered flower from a torn wreath. All its raptures were lost in a moment—its rhythmic movement through the air, its quacking. All the rejoicings of this universe seemed to hush in a twinkling! The sky lay vacant, the air ceased to blow; only an arrow brought an end to everything—all sounds and stirs and endless raptures! Only from a distance mournings and wailings began to ring in the ears, in the heart of Siddhartha! An unceasing lamentation that rent one's heart. By day and by night, in labour and in leisure, at pleasure and at peace, at work and at rest, he began to hear that ceaseless, endless lamentation throughout this mortal earth.

After a continuous rain, storm and darkness for days and for nights, a bright cloudless morn visited the east; the sky smiled in joy, the air blew in merriment, a honey-coloured light shone on the clouds; the birds in the groves, the peasants in villages, the children at homes choired the prayers in delight. Standing on the Eastern Gate Siddhartha watched that there was no sorrow, no tears anywhere! As far as his eyes could see and ears could hear—there was joy everywhere, on all sides. Happiness smiled in the greenness of the fields, happiness waved across the flowers in groves and orchards, happiness glittered on the smiling faces of the children, in their coloured garments and toys; happiness streamed like showers of petals—from leaves and from creepers; happiness puffed about

like golden dusts along the paths in clouds of red-vermillion.

The mind's chariot of Siddhartha—his golden chariot slowly advanced amidst that happiness towards the light of dawn, towards the end of darkness along the eastern path. No sorrow, no misery, no tear seemed to him to exist but happiness alone —happiness that vibrated in the waking after sleep, in th light after the dark, in the blooming of the flowers, in the waving of the garlands, in the music of the lute. Nothing withered or wore out in this earth—it seemed to him.

All on a sudden, an age-worn, toothless old man, stooping on a stick, magically appeared before his chariot blowing out that stainless, endless joy and happiness like a candle before a storm. He carried along only a litter of bones without a pinch of flesh over his skeleton. He was bent with age, his feet and hands and neck trembled, his words mere mumblings. He neither saw nor heard anything; but only stretched out his two shrunken, charred hands before him and walked from light into darkness—in a very slow pace and alone; He was completely out of strength and steadiness, bereft of any heir, relation or next of kin. Everything was lost to him, everything was dead to him, all the charms and chances were rinsed out of his life to the last drop. Light pained his eyes, music sounded hoarse in his ears, happiness brought gloom to his mind. Wrapped in a cloak of eternal darkness woes and miseries, pangs and sufferings like a tatter with numerous stitches and patches, he staggered alone in some direction—away from the lights and delights of the world. Life flew away from his neighbourhood, music ceased to hear his steps, happiness feared to come near him, beauty shrank in fright at his sight. Casting a grim shadow of darkness over the brightness of the day, and laughing a weird laugh that spectre-thin figure obstructed the path of Siddhartha and addressed, 'Behold me! I am Infirmity incarnate! No mortal can escape my grip, —I destroy everything, I wither away everything, I suck out everything, I devour everything! Mark me, oh Prince! You too shall fall a victim some day! Being a King's son, you cannot escape the grip of infirmity'. And he laughed a frightful laugh and turned his eyes to all directions. In a moment, the brightness of the heaven, the greenness of the earth faded out, fields and meadows blazed and burnt, rivers ran dry—everything that was new turned old, everything that was fresh became stale. Siddhartha observed that the mountains came tumbling down, trees were uprooted, everything was being found to dust—and through the raging portents, the ghastly figure of Infirmity staggered in slow, tottering pace waving his white hair, putting out all light, blowing out all the joys of the earth, crunching and squeezing everything, rattling in the litter of bones.

Another day his golden chariot wheeled on slowly through the southern gate of Kapilabastu fluttering the royal ensign in gentle breeze. The breeze sweetened by the fragrance of numberless flowers, sandal-wood, softly touched the skin, relieving all sufferings and afflictions. It was the sweet breeze that awakened the buds, that refreshed life, that brought to the ears the musical notes of a cowboy's flute from a distant field, the melodious songs of the cuckoos from distant thickets! Everybody was out in open air, under the starry sky—everybody was merry! Above in the sky lay a soft bluish lustre, down on the earth played a splendid network of numberless shadows; the fragrant breeze passed gently through the space—happiness sang everywhere, merriment rang everywhere—in water and in land, in woods and in groves, at home and abroad. Hearts swung, minds swelled in delight to bathe in that breeze. His mind's chariot sailed on dancing with the music of the boatmen's songs on the still water of the ocean of happiness. Venus stared at the earth from Heaven like a flower of a dreamland and the lustre of happiness streamed down, the breeze of happiness blew gently—in east and west, in north and south, at all ends and corners. Miseries appeared to fly away, misfortune appeared to exist nowhere; the whole universe, each and every mortal of the earth seemed to live in boundless comfort, peace and happiness.

Just about that time, the curtain rose, the dreams of happiness shattered and a pallid figure, stricken with fever and groaning with illness rose before his eyes. He was unable to stand, and trembled. He could not walk. Sometimes he shivered in chill, sometimes he cried for water in agony. All the blood of his veins and arteries seemed to force out through his eyes, that rendered the sky as red as fire. The blood of his body had turned water that streamed across his frozen, pallid body as white as a sheet of paper. The air became cold

like ice to come in his contact. He seemed to suck out the soul of this earth by his inhalation. He appeared to spread by his exhalation all the maladies and malignance of his own life around this earth. Siddhartha observed that the light of the earth was gone, air was dead, all songs and murmurings were hushed. Only a sound like someone hammering violently on a stony wall came out from the heart of that soiled, untidy, fever-stricken pallid figure—'Drum, Drum!' And, with the rhythm of that sound, all the stars in Heaven twinkled and dwindled, the air blew and stopped alternately.

Siddhartha returned home with an impression of the frightful figure of disease; he walked into the pomps and riches, into the lap of happiness, but still he constantly heard that frightful drumming sound within his bones and ribs.

His mind's chariot—his golden chariot then set out through the western gate towards the west where the sun declined, where the day ended. Everybody was returning from that direction to their respective abodes. Birds returned to their nests in the boughs behind the leaves with parting chirrups, the lowing herds returned to their sheds along the meadows and river-side raising a cloud of golden dust of the dusk. The cowboys led their steps towards the lap of their mothers along the village path playing on their pipes. Everybody walked homeward from the distant markets and ghats. Everybody returned home—far and near. The starry sky showed light to those who were homeless. The large earthen-lamp at the foot of the holy altar burnt for those who were at work, who were reading, who were playing. Everybody came back either to his mother's lap, or to his friends, or to his brothers and sisters. Even, the beggar played on his single-stringed instrument and sang in delight the blessings of the Mother Earth. Heaven and earth, air and water were replete with charm and reverberated with the melodious tune of union, meeting and happy returns.

Siddhartha observed there was not the least want of happiness anywhere; there was not the smallest rift in that happiness which sorrow could enter through. Happiness flowed like a full-brimmed river, happiness flooded the earth. Nothing was left dry, nothing was left vacant. Happiness dashed through the doors, happiness burst into the rooms, happiness embraced happiness, happiness clung to hapiness. Everybody was happy to meet his dearest, to sit by his nearest, to talk to his loving best. He exclaimed to himself—"There is no sorrow, no tear, no pallor, no misery, but an unending flow of joy and happiness !" At the very moment, a brazen voice sounded in his ears as if in response to his joyous exclamation—'There it is ! This misery and this suffering!' And, instantly, there rolled and resounded heart-rending lamentation, that rent the sky, and pierced the air.

Siddhartha was abruptly awakened from his happy dream. He looked up to the heaven to see that the brightness of the stars was like the pupils of a dead man ! He turned his eyes to the earth to notice that a curtain of grey mist enveloped the earth and water—drawn quietly by some unknown hand. The burning lamps and candles in each house of the earth flickered, dimmed, and ultimately went out shrouding the earth in eternal gloom. The whole universe held breath. The sky became overcast with a dark water-laden cloud that was bent like lashes of two tearful eyes. Tears trickled in drops of rain on the soil of this earth.

Siddhartha with his inner eyes saw that a procession of people passed through that darkness carrying deadbodies laid under white sheets. They trod the soil without any sound, their hearts swelled in mournings without any utterance. Beyond the river where the sun set, the light of the day faded out, the darkness of the evening creeped in—these people led their hurried steps with a vacant look towards the vast cremation ground—away from their hearth and home, away from their joyful, peaceful abode of happiness, far from their warm bosoms, beyond the path of their happy return.

Tears of deaths and fires of pyres rolled and raged on either side of the path the people took to mourn and let others mourn. At times a gust of wind carried with it like a burning breath heaps of ashes and spilled them on the gasping, dying men ! The ashes turned the hairs of the people white, the colour of their skin bloodless. The hot ashes of the blazing fire were scattered on the air. Ashes of smouldering fire rose into the air; lives flew into the air as ashes, death hovered in the air as ashes ! Happiness, sorrow—everything of this earth, which was mortal, leapt into the air as ashes and spread far, far away like a grey sheet of cloud beneath the livid sky. And down on this earth, Siddhartha observed that a mother clinging her dead son to her breast, stared at him with listless eyes—and the wind moaned around in lamentation. Siddhartha returned to his palace and found that his golden flower-vase contained in place of a full-bloomed lily, a handful of ashes and a piece of cindered rib of a dead man.

The chilly wind that day pierced his heart like a dagger. The nature around came to be enveloped by the mists of the winter—neither the sun-shine nor the star-light gazed on the earth—the day and the night appeared to be the same. In the haze of that light, every colour looked black and white, everything appeared remote and distant—wrapped in smoke and blurred in dews.

Standing on the opened northern gate, Siddhartha watched that all the greenness of the earth with her flowers and leaves was obscured under snows and mists; all the roughness and ruggedness of the earth, her streets and meadows looked smooth and plain under the snow ! Not a bird crossed the air; not a puff of fragrance of flowers, not a drop of pleasing air, not a bit of music of happiness appeared to float in the air, everything was still and dumb like a stone-built statue amid white snows, wintry mists and intense cold—as if the earth had fallen into a swoon.

Day in and day out, Siddhartha stood amid cold mists and white snows of the north and pondered—'Will not light come again through that misty web? Will not happiness fill and overflow this earth again ?' Every corner and every quarter remained dumb to answer his question. Siddhartha tried to hear minutely if any sound entered his ears from anywhere. But nothing seemed to reach his ear through that chaotic gloom of day and night. He stood there speechless and motionless. As far as his sight could pierce through, he marked the barricade of ice and the curtain of mist. Infirmity peeped through that with his grey locks ; fever trembled with his pallied eyes and vacant look; death danced wrapped in a white shroud as cold as ice. Like the reflection of one's own self on a mirror, like the various sketches on a white sheet of paper, Siddhartha observed on the mirror of that frozen wall of ice prominent on that dense mist, that the mortal beings were being born, brought up and ultimately taken to grave; the Eternal Fear was chasing all these mortals with his blood-stained trident; fever, infirmity and death followed him like three hounds

gnawing down everything to pieces with their fangs and claws. Nothing was spared, nothing was pardoned before their cruelty ! They jumped to the river, and the water dried in fear; they dashed against the rocks and the stones were pounded to dust and debris; they snatched away the babies from mothers' laps without pity or mercy. Everybody — whether a king or a commoner, high or low—withered before this Eternal Fear like dried leaves borne by the gust of wind. Everything trembled, everything swooned through fear. Everything was dried up, everything was destroyed by Fear—everything was puffed out like a candle flame before a storm. The heaven and the earth, the air and the water shook and shivered and surrendered to Fear —fear of fever, fear of infirmity, fear of death. Nothing was there,—neither peace, nor comfort nor happiness ! In the depth of his mind, Siddhartha felt that Fear, he saw that before his eyes; Fear roared like thunders above his head, Fear tormented the earth like an earthquake, Fear fettered the universe in an endless snare! Thousands of hands groped towards the sky for shelter, the air resounded with only one cry—'Relieve us, deliver us!' But who was there to deliver, to protect ? The whole mortal earth was trapped in a snare of Fear ! Who was there devoid of all fears, sorrows and afflictions ? Who was there so omnipotent as to deliver these mortal beings from the grip of this Eternal Fear ? Immediately the heaven and the earth, the air and the sea, the east and the west, the north and the south rang and reverberated with a sound as if in response—'There are the Saviours, there are the Deliverers ! The Omnipotent sons of Wisdom ! They guide the mortal beings towards the true path of emancipation. They bear the ever-burning torch of divine peace and happiness; they are true benefactors of the world; they are like a piece of floating log to one marooned, a shelter to the homeless, a refuge to the poor, a friend to an orphan, a hope to the disheartened, a last resort to those who are scared'.

And, gradually the picture of that Eternal Fear shadowing this mortal world dissolved from the mind, from the sight of Siddhartha like darkness followed by the brightness of light. He saw that the hanging mist streamed down to the earth like a flood of light. Ice melted away in that light adorning the earth again in green leaves and blooming flowers. Happiness began to glow in that light. Light enlivened the songs of the birds in wood and thickets. Music woke up, raptures overflowed and peace rejoiced in that light. The light opened wide the path of joy and merriment in the three worlds and fluttered the banner of peace of rainbow colour. And, through that flood of light, Siddhartha felt that he himself walked alone along that illumined path ! His feet were bare, his head uncovered. He had neither any fear, nor sorrow, nor suffering ! He walked through that mist and snow in an eternal pleasure, happiness and fearlessness — encouraging everybody, blessing everybody. That great fear trembled under his feet like a patch of shadow. The snare of allurements was torn down beneath his feet like pieces of clouds !

As on previous days, Siddhartha returned to his palace that day; but his mind refused to be confined any more within the four walls of his room fretted by a network of allurements and happy, golden dreams. His mind flew forlorn renouncing the fetters of his worldly attachments along the banks of so many unknown rivers and ravines, treading so many unfamiliar tracts of land,—alone, undaunted.

Like a bud blooming with the evening star, the tender and charming face of the new-born son, born to the new mother, Yashodhara, Siddhartha's consort, the unbeguiled smile of her attractive face, the joyous songs of her confidantes, the wreaths of illumination of rainbow colours in every hut and house of Kapilabastu—none of these could draw and divert the mind of the prince towards the worldly riches and responbilities. King Suddhodan being quite assured of Siddhartha's remaining in his palace for the attachment of his new-born son, called the baby by the name, Rahul. But he was soon to be disillusioned. Everything remained as it was—his son Rahul, his consort Yashodhara, his palace and his friends. Siddhartha left behind everything to the sole care and custody of his father, King Suddhodan and walked out unknown and unconcerned to the direction his mind led him.

That was the full-moon day of the month of Ashar (June). The hour indicated midnight. The inmates of the palace were all deep in slumber. Siddhartha stopped his musical hymns, put out his

burning candle and called out, 'Chhandak, bring my horse'. Chhandak, the obedient servant of Siddhartha, harnessed the horse, Kantak, in golden saddles and bridles and led him to the palace at that time of night. Siddhartha rode on that horse till the bank of the river Anama. The palace of Kapilabastu faded and gradually sank into the darkness behind; and in his front lay the path flooded with the sublime rays of the full-moon.

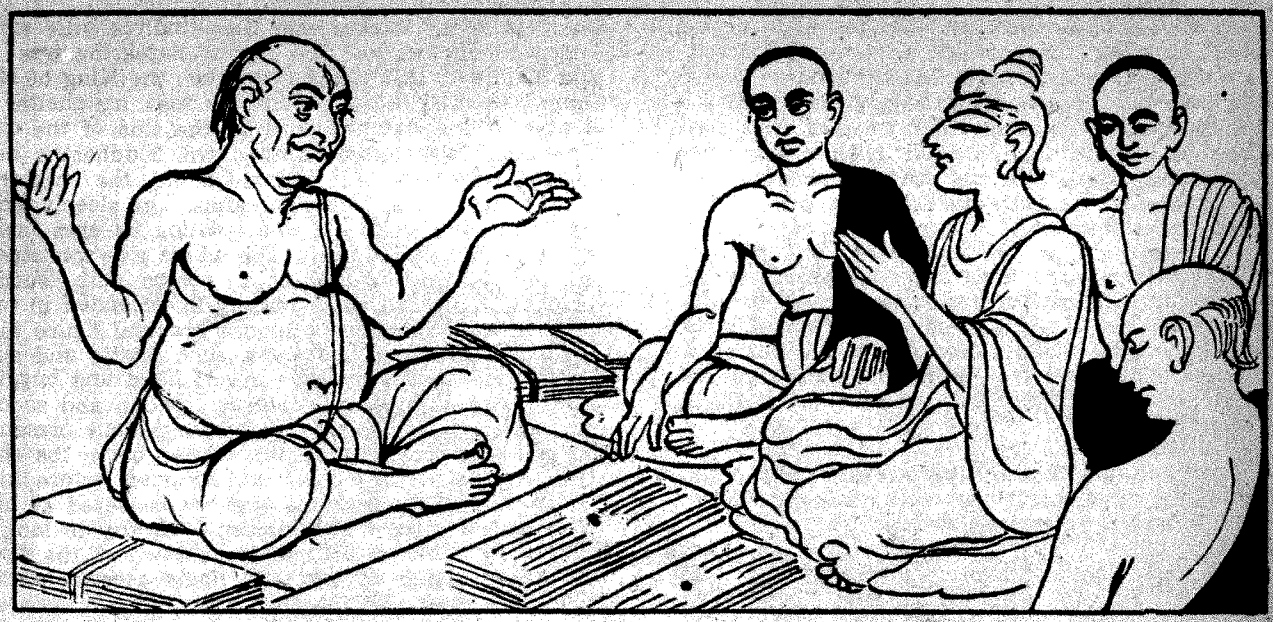
Chandak returned towards Kapilabastu carrying with him the crown of Siddhartha, his bangles, his carcanet, his ear-rings and his horse, Kantak, while Siddhartha walked forward on foot towards the forest across the river to devote himself to meditation—to realise the final end of all mortal sufferings.

The river was thin and known as Nama; people called it by other names as well—Anama, Anoma. That side of the river from which Siddhartha descended to cross it was already having a slow and gradual erosion and abounding in thorns and rocks with no bathing ghat. And, the other side he ascended gradually sloped down to the edge of the water. The path along that side of the river was shaded by the trees and skirted by green grass and wild blossoms. The river Nama wound onward with a murmur in between these two banks. A fisherman was catching fish with a small net. Siddhartha exchanged his costly gold-bordered cloth for tatters of that fisherman and proceeded.

The river flowed in a zigzag course along the orchards of fruit-trees and by the small hillocks—moving sometimes towards the east, sometimes south. Siddhartha led his steps along the shaded path in an immeasurable ecstasy. The berry-trees laden with fruits and thickly covered with leaves almost bent on the river. Just at the foot of these trees lay the hermitage of the ascetics. Spending seven days and seven nights in that hermitage Siddhartha arrived at the city of Vaisali. There the matted-haired Ararh Kalam, the greatest scholar of the time, had settled on the outskirts of the city with his three-hundred disciples. Siddhartha took lessons on Sastras at his feet and came to acquire knowledge about meditation, Asanas, Yogas and Mantras but could not acquire that knowledge of how sufferings could be conquered.

Again, he walked on. The Vindhya hills stood high around him and the city of Rajagriha was at the middle of that range. Vimbisar, the King of Magadha, reigned there. Siddhartha took his shelter in a cave of the Ratnagiri hill by the side of the city. The night was approaching dawn. Siddhartha descended from that hill and stood on the highway stretching out his palms for alms. The sleeping city had just then woke up, and opening its eyes saw a young Sannyasi before it. The whole city was amazed and charmed to look at a person with such a bright complexion, such smiling lips blended in tenderness and compassion, such a graceful figure as if made of eternal cheerfulness, such gentle and sublime eyes, offering courage in one hand and begging alms in another, who had ever trodden and sanctified the dust of the city by his auspicious presence. People who crossed past him turned back; the children set aside their play and stopped before him; the women-folk removing their veils stared at him. Nobody was afraid of him, none felt shy to look at him. King Vimbisar himself came down on the street to take a glance at him ! So many ascetics walked along the streets of the city abegging, but none appeared so devoted as he did ! The city highway was crowded with people from end to end to gaze at him, to offer alms to him; the shop-keepers desired to offer their whole shops as alms, the tradesmen wanted to exhaust all they had at his feet, even the man who earned his living by begging from door to door sought to offer Siddhartha all his day's earnings from his begging-bowl. The outstretched palms of Siddhartha in the meantime overflowed with alms, yet the people were not content to serve him till their last might. They heaped up gems and jewels, gold and silver, fruits and flowers and all the commodities of their daily need at the feet of Siddhartha without the least heed to any objection or forbidding.

That day Siddhartha went abegging at each and every door of the city of Rajgriha—whether a King or a commoner, whether high or low and was so earnestly entertained by everybody to his heart's content as was never or could ever be dreamt of by any other Sannyasi. So much of gems and jewels, gold and silver, clothes and draperies were found to be strewn on the streets of the city as were enough to humble down the stores and treasures of any King



of any Kingdom. But Siddhartha kept only a handful of dried rice for his own and distributed all the treasures he had among the poor and destitutes of Magadha before he left the city.

Pundit Udarak opened a 'Tol' (school for Sanskrit teachings) in Goyalipara with a troupe of seven hundred disciples. Here Siddhartha began to learn the 'Sastras' under different scholars. At that time, there was no rival to Pundit Udarak throughout this great land of India. Proverb ran that Udarak was gifted with the brain of Rishi Vyas and the belly of God Ganesh. Within a very short period, Siddhartha came to be an unchallenged scholar in all the teachings of the 'Sastras' and left no scripture unattended. At last, he asked the Guru (preceptor) one day — "Please teach me how the mortal sufferings can be overcome".

Udarak advised Siddhartha — 'My child, let us open a "Tol" together on a very large scale and send for students from far and near. They will flock here for learning and we shall live quite happily and merrily. This belly is the root of all sufferings. Pacify him and no trouble will torment you in the least.'

Bidding him good-bye from a distance, Siddhartha left the 'Tol'. On the way, he saw that the seven hundred disciples of that great scholar were carrying sweets in pails and buckets to keep the belly of their preceptor pacified.

Siddhartha left the village path and led his steps towards the forest. In this forest, he met Kaudinya who earlier presaged in the royal court of King Suddhodan that Siddhartha would renounce the Kingdom. Kaudinya was accompanied by four other Brahmin youths who had also left Kapilabastu as Sannyasis to wait upon Siddhartha in his penance.

The forest of Urail spread along the bank of the river Anjana. In that forest, Siddhartha sat in meditation. He meditated for years as ordained in the scriptures and the Sastras and as communicated to him by his preceptors.

He fasted, and without moving a fraction of an inch from his seat in sun, rain or cold, he continued his strict and stubborn penance ever inconceivable in the three worlds! His body was reduced to a piece of dried and fibrous wood and not a drop of blood appeared to exist within. It was difficult to say if he was dead or alive by just looking at him.

Everything that he had—the strength of his muscles, the grace and beauty of his physique, the everflowing pleasure and spirit of his mind — became lost in course of time due to austerity. He hardly looked to be a human being from his appearance and practically resembled a withered, worn-out tree.

In that way, so many years rolled by. The month of Baisakh welcomed the new year and along with it the tender foliage, young fruits and new blossoms. The birds, the butterflies, the fawns and the peacocks of the Urail forest started and skipped, hopped and hovered in an unknown and unbounded ecstasy. The five disciples of Siddhartha minutely listened to someone sing within the intense depth of the forest to the tunes of a one-stringed instrument. They also observed that after a lapse of so many years, the still and fixed eye-lashes of Siddhartha were that day trembling gently like dried petals shaking in a breeze. The light of the day was gradually waning; the crimson hue of the parting rays of the setting sun painted the foliage and besmeared the banks along the river like saffron cloth.

A pack of deer descended on the sand-bed to drink water, a peacock fluttering wide all its plumes in the cool breeze danced to its heart's content for the last time before the evening set in. Just about that time, Siddhartha opened his eyes and leaving his holy seat of meditation proceeded towards the river after a long lapse of years. His disciples noticed that he was too weak to walk. A myrobalan tree almost hung over the water. Siddhartha took hold of one of its branches and got into the water with extreme caution and slow steps. Thereafter, rising from the water, he plucked a few fruits of that myrobalan tree and was about to proceed towards the forest, when he fainted on the shore. His disciples rushed to him and carried him to the hermitage. There he recovered under their earnest care and nursing. Kaudinya asked him—'Oh Lord, have you come to realise the end of mortal sufferings?' Siddhartha replied with a nod—'No, not yet'. The remaining four begged him—'Lord, we pray to you therefore to take your holy seat once more, and

to realise the final end of all sufferings'. Siddhartha kept silent.

Kaudinya humbly questioned — 'Oh Lord! Is there no way to know that?' Siddhartha replied—'I do not have the torch of the true path as yet, but I am already miserably weak, and physically ruined through fruitless penance. I shall have to replenish my lost strength before I can endeavour to search for the true path. A fatigued mind and a weak physique are barriers to any work. Keep your body fit and mind cheerful. Be neither luxurious nor apathetic. Do not lend your body and mind either to excessive relaxation or to much repression. In that case only, they will keep strong, fit for any work and able to proceed in search of the true path. As the string of a stringed instrument is ripped by hard pulling, so the body and the mind give in to excessive physical torture. As a string, if loosened, does not give rise to any music, so also the body and the mind given much ease and indolence become averse to any work. It is, therefore, wiser to choose the middle course than to follow the two extremes.'

From that day onward, his disciples observed that Siddhartha left aside all the rigid observances and obligations of the religion of an ascetic and walked like a mendicant along the village-roads to beg his daily living. He gladly wore the new cloth given by anybody and ate fresh sweets offered by any man. His disciples did not like that. They believed that to become a Yogi, 'one would pass through tests like burning fire round one in the sweltering summer, dipping the body in water throughout the chilly 'winter-night, raising hands upwards at times or hanging down from the branch of a tree with head downward. To get the result of penance, one should take only one plum throughout the whole day, and afterwards, only one wood-apple leaf, till one is used to absolute starvation. So, one night they left Siddhartha alone in that forest and led their steps towards Varanashi in search of a greater ascetic than he.

That part of the forest of Urail where Siddhartha was left alone was very desolate. A thick team of 'Sal' trees rendered the place shady. People seldom visited that place. Only the rustlings of the dried leaves caused by the movement of some dear and a few squirrels were there to suggest a living world.

Skirting this lonely and lifeless part of the forest, the narrow path leading to the village ended on the bank of the river Anjana. Just on the bank of the river stood a massive and ancient banyan tree. People worshipped that tree as the holy seat of unknown gods. It was learnt from the women-folk of the locality crossing the river at dawn for the purpose of worshipping that holy tree with the offerings of flowers and fruits that they saw a human figure wearing a saffron cloth sitting under the tree and vanishing immediately on their approach. Sometimes, the wood-cutters returning from their day's work beheld a god-like figure sitting with a bright halo round him! People believed that some god resided there! But nobody save only Punna saw the god vividly This Punna in her infancy was picked up from the foot of that tree by Sujata, the married daughter of the village Mukhiya while she was coming to worship the holy tree. Till that time, she was brought up as one of the members of the family in the house of the Mukhiya. She was now ten years of age. Sujata had no son, so she brought her up as her own daughter. She also took a vow that if she begot a male child, she would offer one earthen-lamp filled with 'ghee' each day throughout the year and worship the god of that holy tree to her heart's content on the eve of the full-moon day of the next year.

Her god however blessed her with a lovely son and that was why Punna came there down every evening to place that promised lamp at the foot of that holy tree. But she did not come across any god. Sometimes, that figure would fade out like a shadow; at other times, she would find the god sitting after she had returned placing the earthen lamp at the foot of that tree.

Recently, during these winter-months, she came across that spiritual figure like a shadow through a thin film of mist. She told this matter to Sujata only and to none else. Since that day, Sujata instructed Punna to take two fruits with her along with that lamp for that god. She further told her that if their god perchance appeared before her and talked to her, she would pray to Him to bless her father, her mother, her brother and her grandfather with good health and herself with a loving husband in due time.

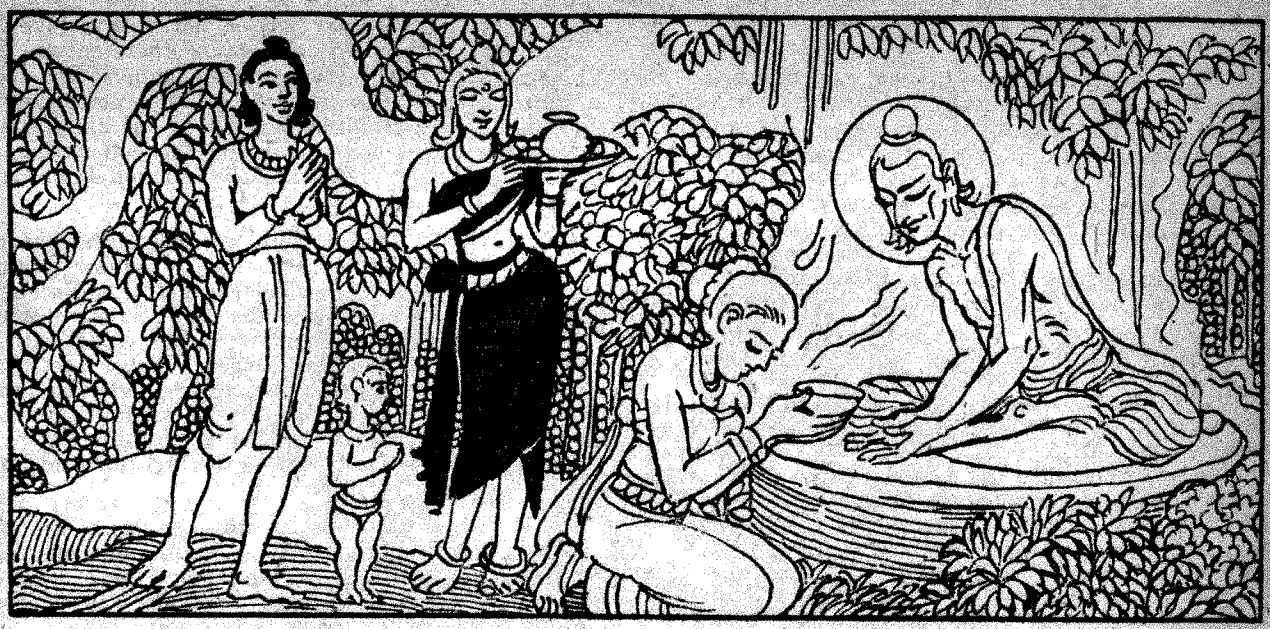
In this way, Sujata used to send two fruits every day through Punna as her humble offerings to their god. But neither she nor Punna could ever know that every evening Siddhartha used to rest under that holy banyan tree.

That was the last day of the year; the day following was the full-moon day of the new year. So, on that day, Punna arrived at the foot of that tree earlier than previous days and began to arrange five earthen-lamps and five fruits on the marble altar surrounding the trunk of the tree, for her father, mother, younger brother, grandfather and herself. The golden rays of the setting sun shone on the tree. The river Anjana flowed with a murmur with streaks of liquid silver on the sun-burnt bed of sands. On the other side of the river lay a vast sheet of paddy field, and in their midst small villages skirted with orchards and groves. Their thatched roofs, mud-built walls, and at a further distance a row of hillocks looked like a sheet of grey cloud. The village-path ran straight along the bank like a thin white border on a green cloth. The peasant-women passed along that path with stacks of hay on their heads—wrapped in red cloths and wearing silver bangles; some had their babies asleep in the pouches slung from their shoulders. A gust of cool breeze from the river flew past their faces. A kite forming whirls in the air gently perched on the leafy branch of some tree.

The day was approaching dusk. A hard of black-skinned buffaloes, strode along the sand bed, and on one of them was seated the herdsman with a long, stout stick. Every evening he used to lead Punna home on the back of a buffalo. That day too he was coming, and he shouted from a long distance —'Oh Punna, have you finished?' The herdsman was named Swasti. Hearing him shout. Punna lighted the earthen lamps quickly and hastened to the direction from which the shout came.

In the meantime, the moon of the first fortnight was rising in the east like a golden sickle. Punna and Swasti moved homeward along the river-bed on the back of a buffalo. The tiny flames of the earthen-lamps at the foot of that holy tree on the elevated bank were flickering in the wind. In that distant light, both Punna and Swasti clearly observed that their god wearing saffron cloth sat on the altar.

Leaving Punna at the doorway of their home, Swasti went away. Sujata at that time was busy arranging the utensils meant for worship after fastening the cattle in the shed and patting her son to sleep. On entering the room, Punna told her mother, 'I am lucky, mother, to see our god clearly today; Swasti also has seen him. You can also see



him if you can reach there quite early next day. But, mother, I forget to ask anything of him.'

Sujata jokingly enquired—'What would you ask of him, Punna, if you did not forget? Surely you would want Swasti as your husband, wouldn't you?'

But Punna had already slipped away from that place. She was already deeply in slumber beside her younger brother when Sujata entered her bed-room after tidying up her household for the next day.

Sujata, however, could not sleep the whole night. She roused Punna long before dawn. Punna burnt a lamp in one corner of the cowshed and began to milk the cows. The cool breeze of the dawn made the creatures shiver. They became as comforted as Punna patted their backs caressingly and called them by their names.

Sujata fired an oven in one corner of the yard and went to bathe. Punna finished her milking, poured the milk into a clean bowl, brought it to boil. Sujata put on a clean cloth and asked Punna 'pluck some flowers from the garden; I am attending to the milk.'

The flower-garden stretched by the side of their house. All the plants were in bloom. Punna strung a garland with some of the flowers, placed a quantity of oil and vermilion on the palm of a banyan leaf and called to her mother, 'Let us hurry up, mother, or it will be dawn and we shall miss the god.'

Pouring the boiled milk in a fresh earthen pot, Sujata handed it to Punna saying. 'You carry this milk, and I will carry this pallet and Manua ' Manua was the name of her son.

The village path was faintly visible in that misty haze of the early dawn. Punna led the way carrying that milk-bowl and raising a jingling sound in her anklets. Sujata followed her with that pallet in one hand and holding her baby-son in another. She was also a bit frightened to go with Punna alone. So, coming by the house of Swasti, she asked Punna to call him out. But, Swasti was ahead of any summon; at the sound of the foot-steps of Punna, he immediately got out with a club and a light.

The three villagers strode through the paddy-fields. The stars were awake in the sky. It was still some time to dawn; yet smoke from the burnt cow-dungs accumulated during the whole night were lifting like a grey curtain. The calls of patridges and other birds were forecasting the advent of dawn. A chaffinch flew across the meadow with a whistling sound. The thrushes began to hop down chirping beneath the mango-trees. Blowing out the light, Swasti came to stand on the bank of the river along with Sujata and Punna. From that place, Sujat observed that the human figure resting on the alta under that holy banyan tree, had illumined half o the grey sky of the dawn above the forest with th crimson tinge of his ochre-coloured cloth he wore

Sujata and Punna worshipped Siddhartha t their heart's content and left the place with hi blessings. Swasti could not offer him anything. So weaving a mat of 'mutha' grass with earnest skil and care he brought it to Siddhartha. Siddhartha did not yet arrive. Swasti spread his humble offer ing on the altar and bowing down to Siddhartha in his mind crossed the river.

It was nearing evening. Siddhartha took his bath in the water of Anjana and sat on that mat offered by Swasti. The sweet fragrance of 'mutha' gras moistened with water pleased his mind. His eye seemed to penetrate till the extreme end of the world in that clear transparent rays of the full moon.

Sitting on the mat Siddhartha took a solemn vow, 'Whether I live or die, I must realise the end of all sufferings; I must not leave this seat until I acquire Divine Wisdom and attain Spiritual Emancipation.'

Then, the throne of the Satan of passions, six in number — that rule and control this mortal world, that whisper ill-thoughts, ugly words and evil deeds into one's ears and mind shook violently. With a furious face livid with rage, the Satan himself rushed to Siddhartha with all his fangs and ferocities.

The evil spirits of passion and temptation were up in arms against the meditation of Siddhartha. Sins and vices, woes and afflictions, were let loose in all directions. They spread a black curtain over the rays of the full-moon, and from within that black curtain the moon looked like a blood-shot eye! And from that eye gushed out only stream of blood in place of moon-beams! The stars blotched by that blood ceased to twinkle.

Grabbing the sky in one hand and trampling the nether-world under a foot, the demon of passions stood in front of Siddhartha in his original form. He was clad in a red-coloured robe dyed as it were in human blood. A sword of lightning was hanging from his waist, a large pendant of blood-coloured ruby was dangling from his crown, from his ears were swinging alluring rings and round his breast

was dancing a wreath of flames strung in a thread of fire!

With all arrogance and defiance in his tone, the demon challenged Siddhartha, 'In vain do you sit in meditation! Worship me—I am Passion Incarnate! There is no one in this world that can conquer me! Go, get away, do not try to challenge me! Be servile to me, I shall offer you the treasures of Indra and let you rule this earth. It is absolutely fruitless to perish by penance. I am the monarch of the three worlds!'

Siddhartha replied, 'Oh Passion Incarnate! For several births am I engaged in meditation to acquire Divine Wisdom. This time, I must attain that Wisdom and leave this seat, or I shall die! This is my solemn vow'

Thrice the demon repeated, 'Go, get away, give up your meditation!' Thrice Siddhartha replied in the negative.

At this, the demon of Passions swelled in a furious wrath and with blood-shot eyes pulled out the sky with a thunderous roar. The blue sky so magnificently studded with the largest gem of the moon and sparkling jewels of numberless stars was torn and tattered like a blue curtain. Then, there was no moon overhead, nor the stars; what remained was only a colossal emptiness and an unfathomed abyss of darkness, as if swooping down agape with frightfully wide jaws. The plains and plateaux seemed to be overshadowed by the black secretion as dark as clotted blood trickling from its dark tongue between the jaws. As soon as the demon looked at that dark, gaping mouth, the two rows of white teeth flashed and rattled in the air like lightnings, and his vassals and vanguards rushed out from that omnivorous gutter of darkness with a deafening roar. The moon and the sun revolved in their hands like two discs of fire. Whirling and swirling in the air and darkening the whole universe, the masquerades of the demon were rushing forth raising a thick cloud of dusts in all directions. They hurled the comets down from that emptiness like brooms of fire! Snatching the trees out of their roots and dragging the mountains off their seats they swung them over their heads and flung them like a ceaseless hail storm in all and every direction. Like millions of wild horses, retinue of the demon swelled and circled around Siddhartha! Lightning flashed from their hoofs, the blazing foams of blood spluttered in streams from their mouths around that 'Bodhi' tree and the marble altar.

Each and every tree of the forest with its leaves and blossoms, even the single blade of grass of the forest of Urail, became ablaze; the water of Anjana ran in streams of boiled blood. These indestructible pests of passions sharpening their swords in the flashes of lightning and crawling out of that impregnable darkness plunged and pounced upon Siddharta in millions to overpower him. The sky melted away in their hot breaths, the air became ablaze, the earth looked like a piece of burning coal, revolving in space spreading splinters of fire.

Then the Plague of passions surged out tearing open the nether world with its fangs and claws. Wrapped in an impenetrable darkness of the nether world the Plague forced out bursting into a frantic laugh. Its dust-stained locks of grey hair fluttered in the air like clouds of meteors. Waves of wailing billowed from every direction and the three worlds quaked severely. The mountains were pounded to dust, the rocks were powdered to rubble, the groves and orchards were set on fire, the rivers and seas were dried up. Not a speck of green was seen anywhere but a vast, endless desert of ashes and cinders! Nothing was heard but a continuous rumbling of the boisterous roars of the plague of passions! Nothing could be breathed but a stinky, nauseating odour of brunt flesh of human bodies.

It was the first quarter of the night. The gangs of Plague and Pestilence howled and whined about like hordes of *bloodthirsty hyaenas* and blood-sucking vampires. The sky wheeled frantically overhead, the earth spun violently below like a grinding machine trying as it were to crush Siddhartha in between them! Holding a torch of lightning in his hands, the demon shouted to Siddhartha, 'Fly off, I say; still there is time!' Siddhartha neither paid any heed to that shout nor cared for his warning. 'Kamana' (Desire) the eldest daughter of the demon, came along with her two younger sisters 'Chhala-Kala' (guild and blandishment) to entice Siddhartha in various ways to give up his meditation—sometimes in the human form of Mother Gotami, sometimes in the guise of Yashodhara weeping and begging to Siddhartha with folded palms. They sang and danced in the guise of heavenly fairies to seduce and subjugate Siddhartha, but failed. They turned out to be too insignificant to move him from his seat of solemn decision and concentration!

The demon of passions who frightened and shook the three worlds by his indomitable power, who

subjugated all the Gods and Goddesses of Heaven under his feet was forced to yield to the spiritual strength of Lord Buddha ! He could not touch a single hair of Buddhadeva, nor could he wither a leaf of that Immortal Banyan tree ! How could he have that courage to stand face to face with Lord Buddha even for a moment ! He fled away from that place with all his gangs inside the unimaginable depth of the eternal darkness of the Hell. Only Lord Buddha remained there in his decisive meditation within that pervading, impregnable darkness—alone and unmoved.

By this time, the night was coming to an end. But the world was still shaking occasionally for fear of the demon of passions; the moon was afraid to rise up, and the light of the day to show its face; about that time, Lord Buddha rose up from his seat of meditation ! He had conquered the demon of passions, he had dispelled fear from this earth and Heaven. Now, he had attained Spiritual Emancipation, had acquired Divine Wisdom and had come to realise the end of all human sufferings. With his right hand, he blessed the mortals and with his left, he offered security to the Gods and Goddesses of Heaven. A bright and brilliant halo of rainbow colour encircled his godly figure. And in that marvellous illumination, the earth and Heaven, the air and the sea woke up in an unbounded joy of triumph with new lives and fresh longings. The river Nairanjana glided on with a happy murmur beneath the foot of Lord Buddha sprinkling her holy water on either side.

The Ganges took a bend near Varanashi like a sharp sword. At the foot of the hermitage, the sloping edge of the river Baruna was as hard as rocks. The temple of Sarnath stood just above the bank skirted by the holy groves of the ascetics pleasantly shaded by trees. Here lived those who really practised religious austerities. The deer were not afraid of them and the birds did not fly at their sight. They did not wound any body. At an early hour of the dawn, they only for once came out of their huts and took their bath in the river before anybody else was awoke, and for the rest of the day they remained within. There in that forest, Rishi Debal along with Nalak was staying at the foot of a banyan tree.

It was the month of Ashar. The day lingered longer than usual, and also the rays of the sun. The gongs and conch-shells of evening prayer were ringing in the temple of Sarnath. The golden rays of the long-lived Ashar days were glittering on the tree-tops and the little birds were hopping and twittering on the spot where the sun still shone. Does were gently grazing on the grass. Sitting by the bank alone, Nalak stared silently at the full-brimmed river of the rainy season. A white she-heron repeatedly flew across either bank in indecision, unable to determine the better site for her nest.

The ceaseless current of the rain-fed river influenced Nalak throughout the day and drew his mind towards that forest of Bardhan, towards his village. Sometimes his mind flew across to the peaceful lap of his mother who stayed in their mud-built hut under the shade of that lofty tamarind tree longing for his return, but the next moment it changed. He did not want to leave the Rishi alone in that forest. His mind, too, like that hereon was swinging in the balance of indecision.

In the meantime, Rishi Debal permitted Nalak to return to his mother. He learnt from Debal as well that Lord Buddha was coming to that holy forest ! It was long since he had left his village ho and his mother ! On the other hand, he could give up his earnest desire to rest his eyes up Lord Buddha once for all ! So, he was think alone whether or not to go ! So many boats sai up and down. So many boatmen shouted at h offering to take him home.

Evening was, by this time, drawing near. O one more boat smaller in size and sailing from long distance was approaching his direction. tiny light appeared to him as a tiny earthen la flowing with the streams of the river in a thousa bits of gold and silver. That was the last boat th would pass by him, he knew. Nalak humbly bow to the Rishi in his thought and prayed, 'Oh Lor bless me that I may rest my eyes upon Lo Buddha !'

Within a very short time, the boat touched edge of the river near that holy grove of the h mits. Nalak boarded that boat and sailed for village-home to rest with his mother. It was a lo long time since he last saw his mother. Just abo that time, Lord Buddha stepped in that holy for of Sarnath crossing the river Baruna.

The boat carrying Nalak was sailing through many unknown cities and villages—touching a halting at so many river-ghats and canals—appro ches every evening, discharging passengers at th destinations, and taking new passengers. In this wa that small boat sometimes skidded like an arrow the direction of the favourable morning wind, a sometimes approached gently in the dark nig drawing a continuous thin line of a flickering lig The river fed by the rain water was reaching high levels day by day. At first, only the elevated ban of the river were visible, now with the passing of t days, the plains and meadows beyond the banks, t trees and huts of the villages, even the dome of t distant temple appeared in sight. The swollen riv had inundated the sand-beds.

The boat left Nalak at his village ghat in t month of Sravan. The ceaseless torren of rain had sent the roots of the bambo plants under water along the bank of the rive Places around him were all under water ! All t canals, ponds, pools and ditches were full. Standi on the bank, Nalak observed a small flower broug down by the currents of the river from some u known land stopping at one corner of their riv ghat. The ripples of the water sometimes thrust th flower playfully towards the edge and drew it in the stream in the next moment. Nalak picked up th flower from the water, worshipped Lord Buddh with it in his thoughts and let it flow again in mi stream. After that, he turned back towards his hom drenching in rain. A long, long time ago, when could not recall, Nalak had drifted with Rishi Deb from his mother and his village-home like that tin flower. Again, after a lapse of so many years he w brought down in the same way into the peaceful la of his mother by the unending stream of the mort earth. He longed earnestly for that day when Lo Buddha would sanctify their village by His gracio presence and bless him with eternal happiness.

On his way home, Nalak could see from a di tance their thatched hut and his mother on its muc built verandah listening to a musical hymn chante by a mendicant to the tune of his one-stringe instrument :

"Inscrutable are Thy ways, oh Lord !"

— *Translated by Dilip Kumar Mukherje*

The WRIST-WATCH

By NARENDRA NATH MITRA

JUST as he was leaving for work Asit got involved in an argument with his wife. All he did was to ask his daughter to find out what the time was from the people next door. That started it.

"No, she won't go. Bothering the neighbours all hours of the day. Bring your own watch yourself", said his wife indignantly.

"I didn't ask you to send the watch for repair. You gave it to Saroj. He could have brought it back, couldn't he?" Asit said.

"For your information, I didn't give it away" said Supriti, "If he doesn't have the time, why don't you go and get it. Anything wrong in it?"

Asit said, "Don't start again. It's none of your business when I go, get my watch, it's mine."

"Why of course!" Supriti was sarcastic. "Even if you had bought it with your own money! Have you bought a single thing in all these seven years? If you had then you would have cared".

In her arguments she would often allude to the rich dowry she had brought from her parent's home and the worthlessness of her husband who hasn't been able to add a single piece of household goods so far.

"You got as much as you could out of my poor father. Now why should you care two hoots—"

"All right, all right". Asit quickly came out, it was already getting late. This was not how he usually took leave of his wife. After the meal he usually sat at ease on the cot chewing the pan his wife brought him indulging in a brief tete-a-tete. But this day started with a wrong note.

He missed the bus for a second. Asit winced as he thought of the greeting he would get from the new manager. He was very particular about punctuality. All this for that watch his friend forgot to return—he thought in great annoyance. Supriti was right after all—how could one get out in time unless one had a watch? What kind of a man was this friend of his any way? He insisted on having the watch fixed, and conveniently forgot to give it back. How very thoughtless of him!

That was Saroj for him. He was angry with his friend.

When he reached office, precariously hanging by the handle of the next bus it was already a quarter after ten. The attendance register was sent to the manager's room. Asit walked in submissively.

The manager looked up. "Well Mr. Banerjee?" he said.

"It's the watch, Sir. I can hardly keep time without it".

"Why, what's wrong with it?"

"Gave it to a friend for repair, he hasn't given it back", said Asit.

"Maybe he has sent it to Switzerland. See that this doesn't happen again", he turned to his files.

But he had said enough to spoil the day. As he went back to work the thought of his irresponsible friend, Saroj was uppermost in his mind. It was two months since he took that watch, why couldn't he show himself once during all this time?

The watch had stopped one day. Asit gave it a good shake, but it showed no signs of working. He flung it inside a drawer and tried to forget all about it.

But Supriti kept on reminding him that it should be sent for repair. Asit was lazy by nature and his wife knew it well. If it came to a question of shopping or getting anything done, it was next to impossible to make him move. It was here that their family friend Saroj came in as a great help. Fixing a harmonium took him barely a couple of weeks.

Supriti held Saroj in great esteem. "He is a man of many qualities", she would often remark to her husband.

"Ah well", Asit would smile, "he is very handsome". As if that was the real point.

Like Asit his friend was in his early thirties. He was tall, fair and good looking. His features were sharp. Asit on the contrary was dark and short, though not exactly ugly. He always found this difference in looks amusing and he never failed to tease his wife for her preference. By temperament Saroj was gay, witty and sociable, he possessed the very qualities his friend lacked.

Supriti always took advantage of his willingness to help.

That day Saroj had dropped in for a visit. Supriti handed him the watch. "Will you see what's wrong, Saroj babu?"

Saroj asked his friend, "What happened to your watch?"

Asit took it easy. "It works—sometimes it stops, just as it pleases".

"Sounds exactly like my household", Saroj tried to be gay. But Asit felt sad. He knew how hard up Saroj was. He lost his job of a salesman for joining a strike. That was the end of his career. He thought business would bring him luck. But on the contrary he lost whatever small capital he had in the course of a year. He could be called a jack of all trades now but without a regular job.

He said sympathetically, "I told you so many times that you should look for a job—"

"Once you've tasted freedom you wouldn't like to be in chains." Saroj attempted to be humorous. After a careful examination of the interior of the watch he declared, "Looks like the hair spring is damaged, it's beyond my comprehension."

Supriti complained about her husband's apathy. "I've been asking him to get it done, but he wouldn't listen."

Asit said, "Of course I listen but when I think of my empty pocket there's no other way than to pretend to be deaf. Last year only oiling cost me ten bucks. Can a poor man afford such a white elephant. My father-in-law did not think of the maintenance when he dumped it on me". Asit glanced slyly at his wife. Supriti was a little on the bulky side, though she had a pleasing demeanour on the whole.

"Did you listen to him? Supriti said in mock anger. Saroj laughed. "He meant the wrist watch, not you. All right, I'll take care of this, Asit. I'll send it to a reliable repair shop they won't steal or do a bad job. The small shops are not to be trusted."

Supriti was surprised. "What can they possibly steal?"

"Why, the jewels, the only things capable of being stolen", Saroj smiled at her. Supriti blushed for no reason. Then after a while she said, "Don't send it to those cheats then. Take it to some one you know. Your friend would keep it inside the drawer till eternity."

Saroj clasped the band round his wrist. "All right, I take the charge", he said.

That was two months back. Saroj had not turned up since in spite of repeated reminders. In the meantime how can a clerk in a merchant's office do without his wrist watch? Asit was annoyed to the extreme.

Supriti was pestering him day in and day out "It belongs to you after all. Go, get it yourself. It's not such a great distance either".

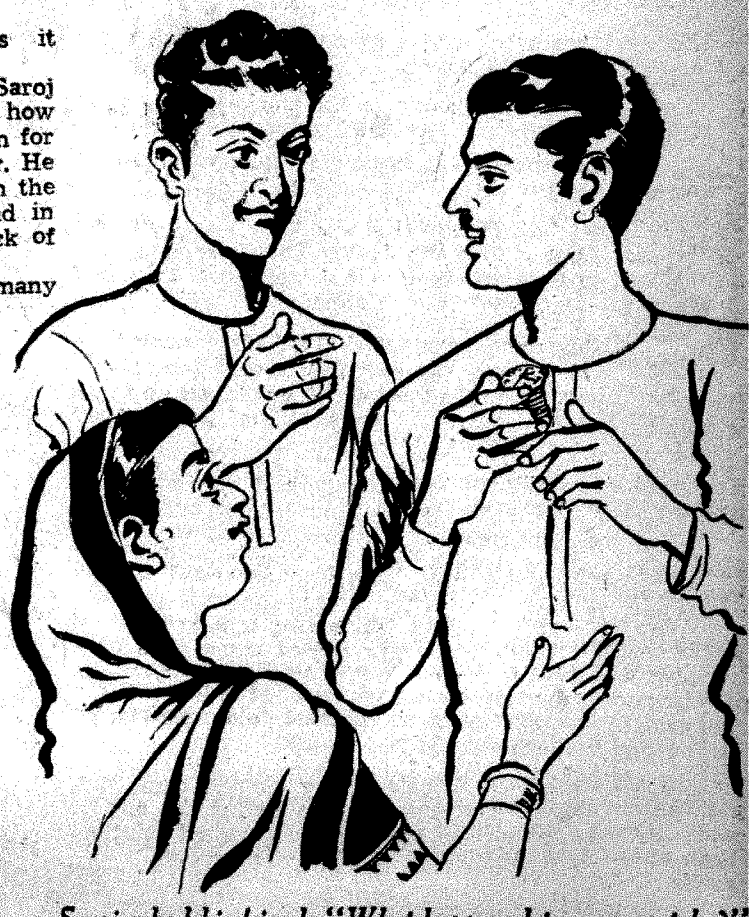
One Saturday after office Asit decided to spend his afternoon in persuit of his lost treasure. Before he set out for the suburbs he thought it would be wise to drop in at Vijaya Cabin, the favourite haunt of his friend.

The owner of the tea shop was their common friend. Saroj usually made it a practice to drop in there for a free cup of tea and gossip.

Asit saw the owner presiding morosely over an almost empty room.

"How are you Kalipada?"

Kalipada was not having a good time it seemed



Saroj asked his friend, "What happened to your watch ?"

"..... took my costly pen for repair and just disappeared".

Business was slack and a new waiter had run away with 37 rupees 13 annas.

"Don't trust any one in the world—that's what I say" Kalipada philosophised.

Asit expressed his sincere sympathy. Then he enquired about the whereabouts of Saroj.

"Don't talk of him. He is a fine man, doesn't bother about paying his dues. Then he took my costly pen for repair and just disappeared. That pen is gone, I tell you", said Kalipada.

At this announcement Asit's heart missed a beat. "Why do you say so?" He asked anxiously. "Why? Because that's the line he has taken up these days? Hope he hasn't taken anything from you? Care for a cup of tea ?"

Asit declined it with thanks and hurried out of the shop on the pretext of some urgent business to see to.

Should he take the train from Sealdah? He did a brief mental calculation. Finally he took the bus. After an hour's journey which cost him exactly six annas he arrived at Saroj's rented house in a narrow lane in Uttarpara.

At the door of a dilapidated old one-storied house he knocked.

"Who is it?" A pale young woman came out, she hesitated for a moment then pulled the end of her old soiled sari on her head and smiled faintly.

"Oh it's you, please come in".

'Is Saroj in?" demanded Asit.

"He'll be back shortly", said Nirmala. "Why don't you come in?"

Asit walked into the small room. A wooden cot covered three fourths of it. A bedding lay rolled in a corner. Nirmala spread a mat. "How is everyone? Is Supriti well ?"

Asit answered curtly, "Yes".

Suddenly a boy came rushing to him. He edged close to Asit and said, "Uncle, what have you brought for me to-day, candy or biscuits?"

He used to bring something for this charming little son of his friend. But today he was hardly in a mood to bring gifts. Nirmala scolded her son "Habul, for shame. What a greedy boy. Don't you ever have candy or biscuits ?"

Habul was on the point of crying. "No, I never have them. You never give me anything. You know uncle, mommy takes medicines in bottles but she doesn't give me that, never".

Nirmala hid a smile. "Keep your mouth shut, naughty boy. Go and play."

Habul went quietly back to his corner and got busy with his broken pieces of toys, a bit of card board, a torn mat, part of a slate. His mother watched him play, then she focussed her attention on the guest.

"Let me make you a cup of tea", she proposed.

"Please don't bother. Let Saroj come, the tea can wait till then. Could I ask you something?"

Nirmala tried to force a smile.

"Of course".

"Saroj took my watch for repair. I haven't heard from him since. Has the watch been repaired?" asked Asit.

"To tell you the truth, I haven't seen that watch, so I couldn't say", replied Nirmala. Her gesture of friendliness increased his anger. "Oh yes you know, but only act innocent"—he said to himself.

It wasn't too long before Saroj made his entrance—haggard and unshaven, he looked ill in his cheap and dirty dress.

When he saw Asit he was taken aback. "Hello, how come you're here? Lost your way?" He tried to be jovial.

"Since you don't give us the pleasure of your company any more, what else could I do? Even when we write you keep mum. What's the matter with you?" said Asit.

"Can't help" Saroj smiled as he tried to defend himself.

"Unfortunately there is no post-card in the house, and when I'm walking near the post office there's no money in the pocket".

Without much ado Asit came to the point. "What happened to my watch? Has it been fixed?"

His friend paused before he could answer. "No. As a matter of fact it is still at the repair shop, where I'd given it for regulating". "Enough of regulating", Asit was impatient, "I think I've had enough. Can I please have my watch back?"

"Well a couple of days more and it should be ready".

"A couple of days? I want it to-day. Come, take me to whatever repair shop it is in. Its taking awfully long to regulate a watch".

Saroj apologised, "It's my fault, really. My wife was sick; she had to be taken to the hospital. I had

no time to enquire. The sickness meant so much money".

"Aha, perhaps my watch has been a contribution to it?" Asit was determined to be unkind.

Saroj was suddenly left without a word. He looked guilty.

"For shame, for shame", Asit went on, "who could have believed you to be such a sneak. Why didn't you come to me for help. I would have begged from others. You know I've done that for you. Is this how you repay such services? I've never seen such ungratefulness in my life".

Nirmala fixed her gaze at the floor, her husband's humiliation kept her dumb, only Habul did not understand what was going on. He looked up at Asit, in innocent surprise. Heedless of the pain he was inflicting on them Asit went on, "Give me the address of the pawn shop. I'll buy it back. It was a gift, did you know that?"

"Your watch has not been pawned", Saroj kept saying. "I'll get it myself and give it to you". Asit said "I don't trust a word of what you say, you swindler, robber, cheat". He flung the ugliest words he knew and then came out burning in anger, leaving the couple silent as stone.

Asit was walking towards the bus-stop when he heard a little boy call "Uncle, uncle".

It was Habul. Barefooted, without a shirt, he somehow looked like a miniature version of his father.

Asit made faces at him. "What, you son of a thief, what do you want now, candy?"

Undaunted, Habul came up to him, "Uncle, did father take away your watch? Is that why you are cross".

"Yes he did."

"I've brought it, uncle".

"Is that so?" Asit cheered up in an instant. "So he had the watch in the house all this time. Now after I've opened my mind he is scared. He is afraid I might report it to the police. So to save face he sends it back. Let me have it", he said.

Habul opened his closed fist. "Take mine, and don't shout at father. Promise, uncle". It was a cheap toy; a tiny, green, Japanese wrist-watch. "Mother bought me this".

Asit stared at the lovely face of the child. He spoke softly "All right Habul, I promise".

Then he quickly walked away towards the main road, holding the toy watch in his hand. He had to catch the bus. He looked at it, then put it fondly in his pocket.

— Translated by Enakshi Chatterjee

Asit made faces at him, "What, you son of a thief, do you now want candy?"

THE WASP

By KAMAKSHIPRASAD CHATTOPADHYAYA

IT was a relentless day of Baisakh. The whole firmament seemed stricken with terrible fever. The earth looked desiccated like over-burnt bricks. There was not even a damned corner to shelter from the deadly fire. I had to be out on work of inspection right in the morning. Canals were being dug in the neighbouring places of Burdwan and the responsibility of supervision fell on me. The places I had to visit were not connected by roads, properly so called. My hope lay in an old and worn-out jeep, a noble legacy of the second world war. It was impeccably coated with dust. Its hood was in tatters. When it rushed ahead through the undulating open meadow the tattered pieces beat violently against the wind making strange and funny noise like a frightened bird in a cage. Springs were all gone from the seat only the leather cover remained with innumerable patches. But I have noticed that if you ride a jeep over an undulating land as if by some magic your capacity to bear shocks and shakes increases immensely. You could then easily dissociate yourself from your physical entity and observe with a sense of amusement how this strange improvisation lightly played with your body.

Still you could not force out of your mind this unforgiving cruel day of Baisakh. The leafless dusty trees, the pale warm sky, the strong gale that often raises a cloud of dust—all these had a strange fascination. Instinctively you would be seized with a desire to drive eternally through these skeletons of trees, grassless meadow and infinite expanse of sand. Your sunglasses would help. Their pale green colour would cast a wonderful spell over you.

I inspected the work of construction of the concrete bed of the canal stemming out the river Banka, noted the progress of the lock-gate near *Sadarghat* and took a look at the old elevated road, built alongside the left bank of Damodar for catching flood water. My eyes fell upon the sandy bed of the dried-up river, void as a desert, gasping helplessly in the scorching heat of summer. I saw something more. I saw the bare backs of day-labourers—black as ebony, a rickety bus loaded from end to end, stark naked crowd of children reduced to skin and bone by hunger, and, just for a moment, I caught sight of a newly-wed bride in red *sari* by the side of a pond surrounded by tall palms. She looked around her furtively and then took a bite from a green mango.

My precious jeep then rushed towards the Burdwan station raising a thick trail of dust behind it. I must be back to Calcutta by the train that would leave at two. I reached the station at one, bathed in red dust from head to foot. How thirsty I was! Every pore of my body was crying for a drop of water. My face betrayed an intensely thirsty look and my whole being revolted for a drop of water. The thought of water occupied every inch of my heart—the transparent greenish water in autumn rivers, water in ponds at the fag end of the monsoon when lotuses bloom, the deep blue water of the sea at Puri and even the water in a cold earthen jar—oh, the thought of water of every description came crowding to my mind.

In this state of mind I entered the refreshment room and washed hands and face with water that would reach boiling point in no time. I then emptied two glasses of iced-water. The meal was laid before me, but I could not swallow even a

morsel. That painful thirst was still there. The breeze of the swiftly moving electric fan seemed absolutely unbearable and I preferred to loiter on the hot railway platform. And there was not much time left for the train to arrive. I would be off in a moment from this terrible hell. I was travelling light. My kit consisted of a handbag, a camera and a small hold-all. My *chaprasi* was smoking a *biri* as he kept watch over my kit. As soon as he saw me he put it out in no time by rubbing the burning end against the palm of his hand. Then regaining his composure he informed me that the train was running late by half an hour.

The platform was crowded and all the benches were occupied. I placed my hold-all on the ground and sat upon it. Suddenly I took off my pair of spectacles, ostensibly for no reason, and then placed it again on the nose. I lighted a cigarette, took a puff or two at it and then threw it away. A young shoe-shine picked up the stump eagerly and went at once towards the other end of the platform puffing out tobacco smoke as he went.

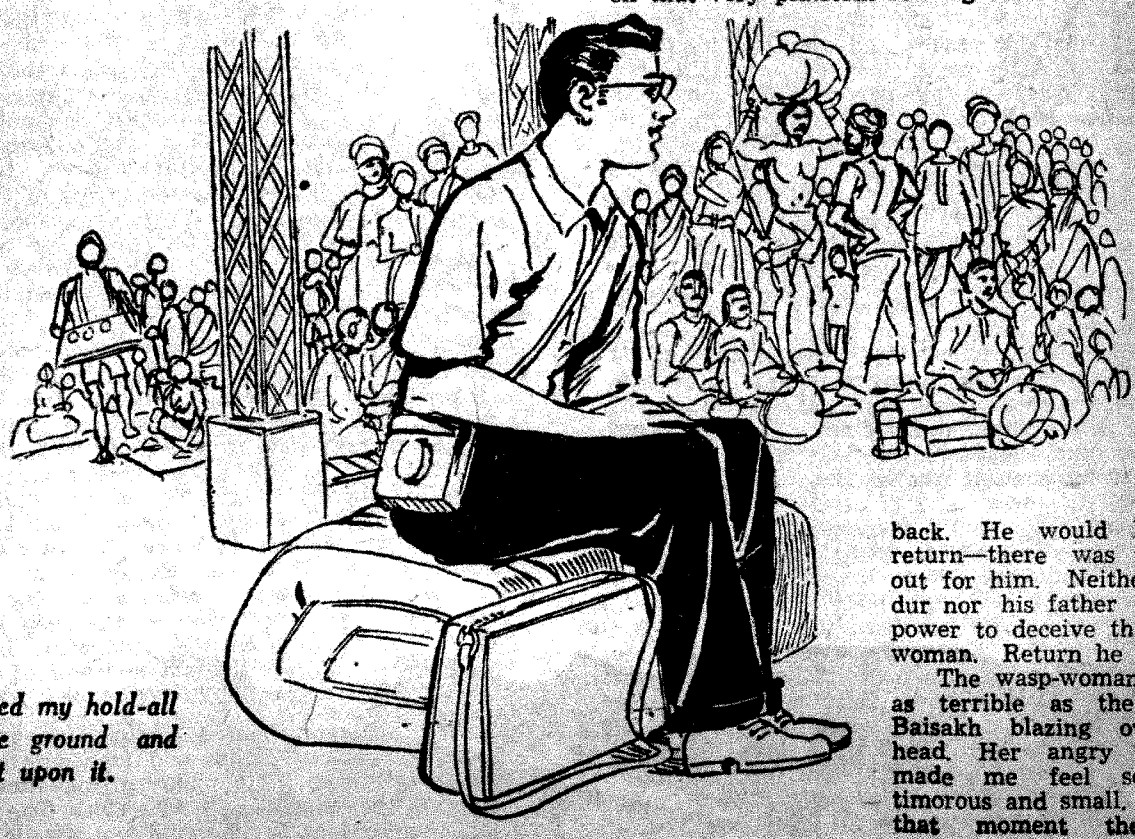
It was a passenger train and was already late by half an hour. No doubt its arrival at Calcutta would be further delayed on the way and I wouldn't be back to my den before 7 p.m. By then the sun would set and the charming evening breeze of Calcutta would begin to blow from the south. Garlands of *bel* would be selling in the street and the tap water would be cool again. Perhaps I was lost in a reversi as I thought of the pleasant prospect of a bath in cold water. Or, was I napping ?

I started on hearing an uproar a few yards away from me. I noticed that a crowd had gathered round a young woman. Her features told me that she was from the hills. The woman said something in an excited voice and the mob around her commented as they liked.

What was the matter ? I never knew how at one moment I myself had mingled with that curious and gaping crowd.

Just as my eyes fell upon that woman I instinctively thought of a wasp. She was flat-nosed and chub-faced as all hill people are. In anger and excitement, and possibly on account of the blazing heat of summer, her face was burning. She had a well-knit body. She was a perfect specimen of health and her waist was wonderfully thin. The end of her green *sari*, somewhat soiled and crumpled was tightly drawn round her waist. Possibly the extreme thinness of her waist reminded me of a wasp—she had a wasp-waist. Was that all? Oh, no! Something else was there—her arrogant and fiery looks and stinging words also aided my imagination.

A girl, barely seven years old, stood by her side perhaps her daughter. She looked utterly confounded and cast her naive glances upon the faces that surrounded them. The woman held a letter—a dirty piece of paper in her hand. She explained to the crowd that Bahadur had asked her to come down from Nepal with her daughter. She had suffered a lot of trouble before she could reach the place. But how irresponsible Bahadur was ! He had left Burdwan for Calcutta to work as a motor driver there. She had not the wherewithal to return to Nepal—not even a farthing. Let Bahadur go to hell—how could she get out of this predicament now ? How could she return to Nepal with her daughter ? Some one from the crowd, plump and podgy, offered her shelter in his house till Bahadur came or was found out. He said that he would help them to return to Nepal if he could not find out Bahadur's whereabouts. To be candid, the man repelled me even at first sight and when I found that the wasp-woman reacted sharply against his proposal I felt that my diagnosis was not wrong. She told him straight away that she was no cheap whore and the man at once melted into the crowd. By now the crowd had almost closed in upon her, but as soon as they had a taste of the fire she could spit at will they made a wide berth for her. I had no doubt the wasp-woman could easily size up a person. She kept muttering in an angry undertone that she would wait on that very platform so long as Bahadur was not back. He would have to return—there was no way out for him. Neither Bahadur nor his father had the power to deceive that wasp-woman. Return he must.



I placed my hold-all on the ground and sat upon it.

The wasp-woman looked as terrible as the sun of Baisakh blazing over my head. Her angry outburst made me feel somewhat timorous and small. Just at that moment the train

arrived and as I slipped into a second class compartment I heaved a sigh of relief.

The compartment was empty when I entered. I deposited my meagre belongings at one corner and then placing the hold-all on one side of the padded seat I reclined on it. At once I was assailed by the thought if a cauldron of boiling oil would be more comfortable or painful than this fiery surrounding when I was startled by the heavy footsteps of someone coming in. He was a military officer, clad in khaki trousers and bush-coat. He was huge of build and not less than six feet six inches in height. From what I could see of his muscles he seemed to be an exceptionally strong man. A revolver was hanging from his leather belt. He sat down on the bench facing me as noisily as he had entered and then spoke to me in English with a rather amazing smartness. "It is atrocious", he said, "damned hot, you see, and the train is late by half an hour! The drivers should get their due—they should be whipped".

I could not reply at once but responded with a strange gurgling voice. It certaintly meant that I did not come across anything so atrocious ever in my life and that the remedy for such atrocity lay in the proper use of rods. But, for some reason which I could never divine, my thirst suddenly became too acute to bear. A lemonade vendor was, just at that moment, passing by our compartment. I bought a bottle of iced lemonade and was about to empty the bottle.

The sitting volcano erupted again, "It's foolish to drink such filthy water—very foolish indeed".

In spite of his terrible voice and frightening look I was able to raise the bottle of lemonade to my lips. At once the man-mountain shouted to an icecream vendor and bought four pieces, wrapped in paper. He sent them all, one by one, down the throat with an amazing quickness. The train started.

The train stopped at every station Immediately after it steamed off a station another was in sight. At each station my worthy companion bought all sorts of titbits and snacks and went on munching continuously. After some time he seemed to feel very hot and began to take off his clothes one piece after another. It began with his hat Then he untied his leather belt with his revolver. The bush-coat, trousers, stockings and the pair of boots—all were taken off in turn. Only the underpant and the sleeveless vest remained. When he had thus denuded himself he released a roar of relief. It was a marvellous sight. I could not remember if I ever came across such a huge man with taut muscles on every inch of his body.

Suddenly my fellow-traveller looked at me through the corner of his eye and thought something. He jumped up noisily and tied again the leather belt with the revolver round his girth. Then he paced majestically up and down the floor of the compartment for some time. It was obvious that he took me for nothing more important than a fly or a mosquito at its last gasp and untied the belt as quickly as he had worn it. He then placed the ornament on the upper berth.

I wore an expression on my face that would tell any one that I was dead already and that *rigor mortis* had started. I shut my eyes and lay motionless like a piece of wood. There was a to-and-fro motion as the train rushed along. The thought of evening breeze and the pleasant cold shower appeared, disappeared and reappeared in my mind. A sense of languidness slowly overcome me. Perhaps I fell asleep.

How long I was in this state of stupor I do not know. At some moment I felt that the train was not moving and my sleepiness at once left me. I sat up. The sun was nearing the western fringe of the horizon and the wind was no longer so warm. The train stood in the midst of a vast meadow as the line was not clear. Our compartment was filled with the soft warm smell of grass around us. I looked out and all on a sudden my eyes caught sight of a small hive of wasps on a date-palm by my window. Numerous wasps went in and out of the window and you could hear their subdued humming.

At once I was reminded of the wasp-woman I saw at the Burdwan station. Just then the engine whistled and the train began to move. A wasp flew into our compartment wafted by the odorous breeze that pervaded the whole meadow and sat quietly upon the leather case of the revolver.

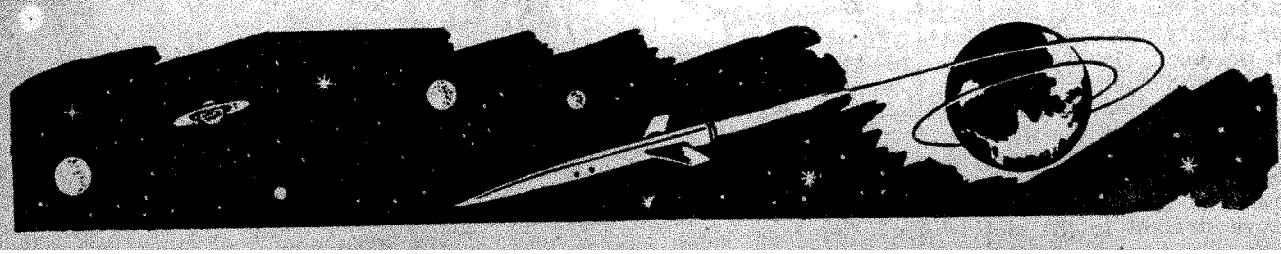
I was assailed by a strange feeling of pity as I looked at the wasp and in a while I was napping again. In that state of half-consciousness I reflected whether the wasps suffer pangs of separation when they are away from their kins. Could our fellow wasp ever conceive that it would never unite with its kith and kin humming round the hive on the date-palm we had left behind? Has the wasp a mind such as we humans have? The thought lulled me into sleep again.

The sun had set when I awoke. The train was entering the platform of the Howrah station. The whole place was illumined by electric lights and the charming breeze was blowing. The military officer —my fellow passenger—stood up and got into his bush-coat again. He then stretched his arm towards the revolver that was on the upper berth.

Suddenly I was reminded of the wasp. I looked closely and discovered that it was still sitting on the revolver case as quietly as before.

The gentleman in uniform was livid with rage as he saw it. "Blast you", he shouted and in a moment brushed it down on the floor and then trampled it to death under his heavy boot. He then got off as noisily as he had come in.

—Translated by B. M. Das Gupta



From THE DIARY OF A Journalist

By TUSHAR KANTI GHOSH, W. B. C. S.

AT last, I have received reports from all concerned. I was waiting for Labanya's letter. My waiting for her has been rewarded, as you will find that her letter has given the most likeable report.

The most commonplace report is, however, of myself. I thought without wasting the day like other days in vain work or leisure I would read some books of Rabindranath and some critical studies. But—I could get up from bed not before 8 o'clock when the sunrays had fallen straight on my face. The usual cup of tea and shaving took me to 10 o'clock and then I was ready. For whom? Please do not ask because I have no answer. I should have got up much earlier. 'He who sleeps has his fate sleeping, too.' I could dispense with shaving without any harm. The cup of tea, shaving, attending office—all this is the usual routine, which could have been shortened on the day. But I could not. Pardon me, please. Then, I brought out the 'Sanchayita' and really and sincerely begun to recite some of my best favourite poems. Suddenly the Deputy babu entered the room loudly, gave a slap on my back, closed the book, brought out a pack of cards and lighting a cigarette settled on the sofa. Almost immediately came two other friends from nowhere. During the whole morning, noon and afternoon we were in the land of cards. Suddenly it flashed on us that Mrs. Bose would stage a dance drama of Rabindranath at the club. We got up and drove straight to the club. When I returned home, it was past midnight. So the day of all days passed. I know you will think that my doom is near at hand. I do not deny. But I am really sorry, believe me.

From Santiniketan Manikana Banerji has sent a short report: . . When I came here on the previous day I got all the information. Everything was pre-planned. Girls had completed their rehearsal of 'Tasher Desh' and 'Dakghar' There was not much to worry about music. It was a certainty that many famous singers would arrive from Calcutta, after completing their Radio engagements. The invitation sent to the Vice-chancellor had been gladly accepted and he would preside over the function. So everything was O.K. People from Akashbani, Calcutta had arrived already—they would tape-record the entire function. Nine conch shells had been kept ready; decorations below the trees had been complete. Extra seats had been provided in the Guest House and China Bhavan. So, right from dawn, the celebrations commenced and proceeded according to the programme, without any deviation. The conch shells were blown by nine well-dressed girls, then there were the incantation, music, dance, drama and speeches. When the girls had been passing barefooted, with their hair locks flowing uncared for, I was suddenly mistaken and I thought that they were going to stage one of the dramas of Rabindranath. Later I found that it was not so—on the day they fly about in that manner, like sweet Muses incarnate. Leaves from the Chhatim tree dropped down, the dry wind tossed some sand, and the celebration came to a close. There were sounds of many cars passing

way. The night regained its calm atmosphere. I also ook leave and came away'. This is the report of Manikana. You will perhaps say that this is the nevitable end of a day of celebration. All will agree hat unless the end is cruel, the tragedy does not ecome a success. But still one feels sad.

Manikana had sent reports like a real journalist. also got information about the celebrations of alcutta from her letter. She began with the reports f Jorasanko. The flowers and sandal, the conch shells nd august assemblage of foreign and local dignitaies, Rabindra sangeet, dance and drama—nothing as wanting. She had jotted down a bit of her sore nind at the later portion of her letter: "Everything as very nice, indeed. But,—the southern verandah f the house remained mute. One could not discern he shadow of the cloud there—lost amongst the crowd f thousands of people. The water-carrier did not gain pass along the lane in the front, carrying his vater-bag. The holiday noons did not again make heir lone appearances before the gloomy boy."

Thereafter Manikana had written about the arious functions that took place here and there—at Mahajati Sadan, at Ashutosh Building, at Rabindaadan etc. etc. She closed her inimitable description with an unusual information. "Now, to tell the most iptodate news. You will perhaps like it, because very often I heard you saying that your critics were your best friends. Those 'best friends' — have formed an association—'Nabya Kalikata Sanskrit Sangha' they have celebrated 25th Baisakh this year in a novel way. You will perhaps remember that these young men joined some time ago in criticising Saratchandra and Bankimchandra. That Sarat Chandra was unreal, that Bankim could not go beyond the boundary of 19th Century—these were some of their propositions. Now they have selected Rabindranath as their target. These angry young men are good students of the University. They are not indifferent to Bengali literature and its future. To summarise their viewpoints—they say. we should now increase the carrying capacity of our Bengali literature by giving Rabindranath a distant chair with the other classiasts like Shakespeare, Valmiki etc. They accept with gratitude the sweetness, thought and serenity of Rabindra literature, but they want to stop there, saying that as Rabindranath did not pose the problems of a modern life of the middle-class, of the down trodden, to the best of his undoubtable ability, they would not seek solutions in him regarding those burning problems. They say, we have no longer any time to give company to a man in his solitude, we can not afford to proceed at a snail's pace in order to catch up with the fast world around us. They further say —if Rabindranath still occupies the major space of our literature like an ancient banyan tree, spreading out his branches and leaves and roots all over our life, then where is the hope for future Bengali literature and culture to thrive and prosper? They say, we shall present Rabindranath's romantic poetry-books to the newly-wed people, but for the normal adults, there is no further need of the shadow of the cloud, of the smell of the rain, and of the beckon of the flower. In the latter part of their speeches however, politics inevitably makes it appearance. They say, the border of our country is now threatened, the soil of our land is today rent with the cries of the oppressed and down-trodden and our glory is now only in the past. They say, we should take this solemn vow on this 25th Baisakh that we must not show disrespect to Rabindranath; whenever we shall be in doubt, or difficulty, we shall refer to Rabindranath. In our literary pursuits, they say, let Rabindranath, therefore, remain like Valmiki and Shakespeare as a trusted lexicon, but let us not follow him like fools in our day-to-day pursuits".

Here ends Manikana's report. From Bombay a

Gradually many girls gathered there.

report has arrived that they built an enormous building named 'Rabindra Smarani' at a cost of twentyfive lakhs of rupees and that on the opening ceremony on 25th Baisakh, they spent a little over thirteen thousand rupees. I have not yet received any information from Delhi. I presume there has been no dearth of pomp there also. From foreign lands, some reports have arrived. The Bengalis and other people of India living abroad had almost everywhere made the function a neat success by staging dance and drama of Rabindranath and reciting his music and poems.

So—I come to the end of my journalism to you. As promised earlier, I am closing this with Labanya's letter. I dare not change even a word of hers.

"My dear—

I have come to the Shilabati barrage rest-house with my husband. The wayward, hilly rivulet is flowing down, crossing the pebbles, splashing the water in the process, and singing with a tinge of monsoon murmur. My bungalow, with its red tiled shed, is over-looking the rivulet from a hill-top. They will bring down the thirst-quenching water through the canals curved out of the barren, unfertile soil on to the doors of the peasants—this is the vow of my husband and other Bhagiraths; and in order to fulfil the vow, my husband had long been off in his jeep early in the morning, perhaps in search of the source of that Bhagirathi. In the distance I can see the hillock partly shading the blazing sun from the fields. The breeze has also become wayward — it is clasping me with all its power. In the murmur of the rivulet I am hearing as if the river, the *sal* and the *palas* forest are beckoning at me to join them. Disregarding the objections of my servant, I started for them, alone. I slightly hurt my feet against the uneven rocks. The pathway was my guide and it took me to the small, Santhali hamlet. On both sides small *palas* trees had been spreading out their rather big leaves. It was the Saldhaka village. I learnt the name of the village by asking a small boy who was tending cattle. He was not taken aback on seeing me. I entered the middle of the village. Young boys and girls were playing by the wayside with pebbles. A black hen accompanied by many young chickens was finding out food particles from inside the earth by means of her legs. I went forward along the road. Santhali girls were taking water from a public well. They had not the veils on their head, they had no disposition to get ashamed. They looked at me in curiosity a silk-clad fair woman in their midst ! I could not decide how to begin the conversation, when one of them came to my rescue. She said, in her native, sweet style, "Where will you go ?" I said I came for a walk in their village. She asked where my residence was. I told her my town. Gradually many girls gathered there. I went with them and entered into somebody's house. A girl gave me a seat. I chatted with them. They laughed and gave replies to my querries. I asked them what they did from morning till night. 'What else shall we do—we bring water, we bring fuel, we work in the field' —they said. Their children did not go to school. Some of them tended cattle, some just sat idle. The youths went to canal for work, some to their cultivation. There was no school in the village, and nobody cared for books or study. It was growing dark I got up. They laughed out together in a chorus. I would never be able to laugh in that way. I resumed my return journey to my bungalow. The little village of the tribals remained in the back. After some time I reached the bungalow, to the relief of the servants. I looked back at the village. Darkness had descended there. My mind also was covered with darkness. I did not forget that the day was 25th Baisakh. I thought I would go that unknown village amidst *sal* and *mahua* trees and would tell the boys and the girls about Rabindranath, would sing Rabindra Sangeet. But, I had to come back disappointed. Terrible and impregnable darkness was on the other side of the rivulet. Who was there to give light to those blind people, to inject life into those dead bodies ?

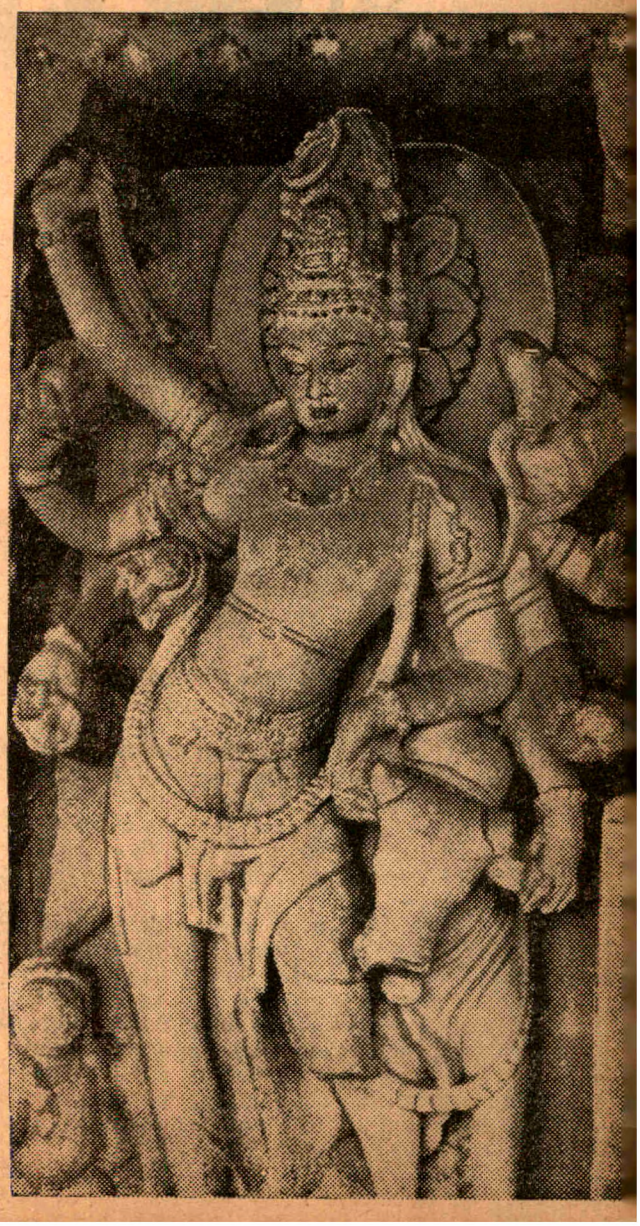
I took a chair in the open, looked at the Great Bear in the clear sky, and thought — what message was brought to those people by so many birth-days of Rabindranath ?

No more to-day. If you can, please do not let others know of this letter.

Yours—
Banya"

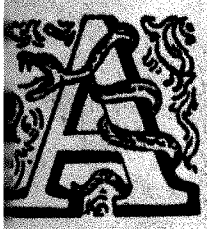
I have not kept the request of Labanya. But here my letter also is closed. You will be hurt on going through some portions of this letter, I know, but I must do the duty with which you yourself entrusted me. I would only pray—if you can, please relieve me of this journalism from the next year.

✱



THE UNEQUAL MATCH

By DHIRENDRA NARAYAN ROY



S I was casually looking through the advertisement columns of the daily I became much amused by a rather intriguing insertion, and laughed aloud to myself. The insertion was in the matrimonial column and the advertiser wanted a suitable bride. Information regarding the groom stated hat the candidate was aged only forty-five, had lready three sons and four daughters and it was nly for bringing them up that he was going to narry, and for that purpose needed rather an lderly bride, but he had no objection to any young irl who however would get the first preference. here was no question of dowry — education of the ride was immaterial. Applications to be sent to uch and such address.

My colleague and class-mate, Bankim, fondly alled Bakkeswar, was present by my side at the ime. He was curious to know the cause of my aughter. I read out to him that portion of the anted column. He was very prompt with a remark:

"How do you believe it,—have you lost your ead? The groom is surely twenty years older than eclared — he must be about sixty-five — almost he age for the Domesday Book. At least he must e fifty-five. Forty-five is incredible.

We were enjoying ourselves with jokes and aughters over this topic when Arjun Sen, the nuch-talked-of hunter, entered the room. He had een my guest since a couple of days back. He too oined us without, however, knowing the subject nd then paused for a while and enquired about it. When he was apprised of the text of the advertisement, he too laughed, but under his luxuriant noustache. He appeared to sneeze at the idea and nade a wise comment:

"Oh, a young wife for an old fool? That's unny but examples are not rare. Just as in the world of the wild animals — it is quite common in human society. There is no difference altogether."

"But, how do you say so?

"Then follow me, and soon you will see."

"Yes, I know you have a repertoire of hunting tales up in your sleeves. I am ready to listen, if of course you can avoid giving a long introduction."

A strong wind was blowing at high speed outside the room. Inside was going our preparations for a proper atmosphere for an engaging story.

Arjun Sen made no preface to his story and came to it straightway:

It has been my experience through what I have seen and gone that, like tigers, bears also pounce upon offenders in a frontal attack if they get them and chew them to pieces. In the North Cachar Hills, you can find innumerable stone quarries which were made for the purpose of lime. Those quarries lie unused for a considerable period of time and then become full of jungles and excellent resorts of the bears. One day, I made for one such quarry. My ever-faithful Valtu was with me.

My guide, Tankanath, gave me cautious indications in advance:

"Well, Sahib, be on strict watch. The female bear is a man-eater and relishes nothing better than human flesh. She is of gigantic proportions and weight and has a ferocious modus operendi. Very often she invades the rice fields and if a prey is spotted, she knocks him down and has a sumptuous feast."

"How can it be? Indian bears are known to be vegetarians. They do not like meats."

Tankanath nodded a dissent, and said:

"That was also our information, but how can I believe it even after seeing the contrary with my own eyes?

Valtu was silent all through. Now he thought

he should say something to prove his importance. So he put forward his learned opinion:

"I think it is a Siberian bear. Somehow it had lost its way and, forlorn, passed through the Tibetan valley and come down to this area. These bears are mostly carnivorous.

"But, experience so far is something different to what I hear now. So, I cannot fully rely on it till I see it."

Tankanath showed me the way and leading me on to the abode of the she-bear began to describe some of the horrible events of this dreadful animal:

"This is a female bear, Sahib. She has a demon-like body and her savage attack is terrible. Her method is to watch for a single cultivator working in the field near the edge of the forest — and when one is thus spotted, she rushes out and knocks him down by slashing him over the thighs and hips, after which she stands with her two forepaws on the body, ripping open the flesh with her teeth. Curiously enough, she nearly always tries to eat the face and if the body lies face downwards, she will turn him over in order to make her grisly meal."

This man-eater bear must be living somewhere in one of these lime-quarries — local people were telling me.

Tankanath assured me that he had seen the she-bear with his own eyes and he very well knew her habitual haunts. He was indeed a precious guide and an able companion. Soon he led us by a circuitous way, which though rather embarrassing, was very convenient for our purpose, for, it took us very near the spot believed to the lair of the bear. Tankanath was very much animated to find his direction so effective.

We had climbed the hill from behind. The lair was on the left side and in front of us were found

some stone chips and blocks scattered here and there over-grown in places with shrubs. We crept to hide ourselves behind a thicket. On my attempt to reconnoitre the place, my eyes were attracted to the almost dismal sight that lay ahead. In front there was a huge cave with gaping jaws and by its outer wall, leaning against a rock, like an old lady reclining in an easy chair, sat the bear with her two hind legs spread out in front of her, while she was busy chewing some fresh meat held in her forepaws. Her chin was smeered with the saliva that came out from the corners of her mouth. He whole attitude and her immense figure wer sufficient to convince me of her choice of foo and the information which Tankanath was eagerly apprising me of so long was not at a incorrect.

But it was not the time, however, for cogit tions and my 500 Express bullet through the brai put an end to the old lady's depredations.

At the sound of the shot, a somewhat lou reply was heard within the cave. I was sure tha the male bear was inside and his figure too mus be like his consort's. So, I kept myself fully read

But the next moment something scuttled ou of the cave opposite which the female bear wa sitting and presently ran down the slope of th hill, and then taken by some sort of curiosity, th beast retraced its steps towards us. Coming to th spot where the female bear lay prostrate, the beas came to realise that something untoward happened It was a bear — probably nervous at the sight o

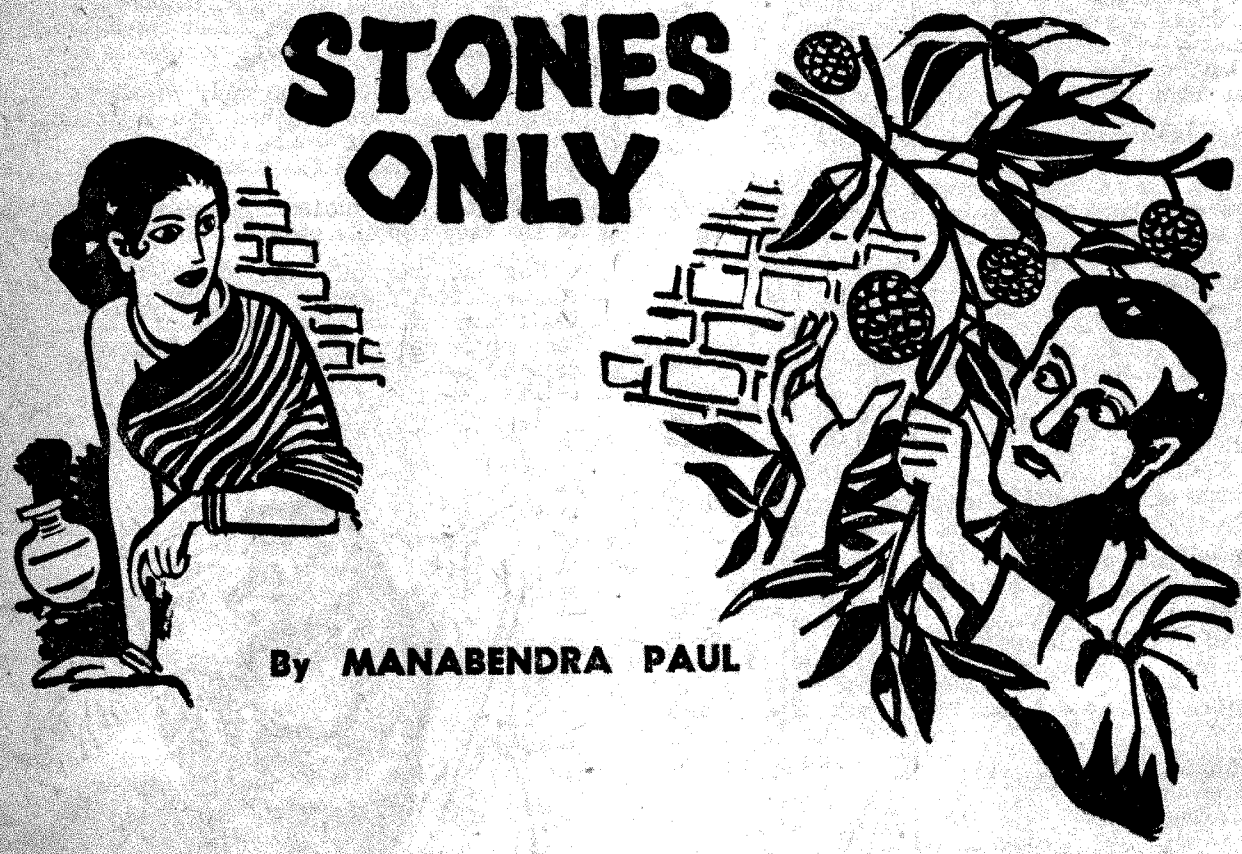
Her whole attitude and her immense figure were sufficient to convince me of her choice of food . . .

what happened. And then the natural inquisitive ness goaded it to stop and examine all around Moving like a border sentinel, the animal stood on his hind legs and placing one of the forelegs on the forehead, he began his scrutiny of the surroundings. Thus he exposed the white spot o his bosom and I took a second to get him down by my second bullet. I waited there for a short while Valtu was no less forward for he too had experiences of fighting a bear. He stepped forward and took up a few stone chips to throw at the cave — but there was hardly any further response.

I moved on slowly with measured steps and on examining found that the male bear was rather an old one, a small and lean bear-personality who had been living a worried life under the despotic tutelage of his voluptuous wife. Today, he had been doubly relieved of his wife and life by a sing stroke.

You follow now, what I said about these things being common both in the human world and amongst the wild beasts.

STONES ONLY



By MANABENDRA PAUL

WHAT a hilly country! You see stones all around, stones everywhere. The land is hard and ragged, with plenty of ups and downs; you have to walk over crunching gravel and grit, never on smooth pathways. Look ahead near and far, your eyes encounter only hills and hillocks and mounds. In the distance the range of Pareshnath hills stretch along the horizon, its blueblack outline fading into the smiling bright blue of the sky above.

And this place happens to be so near green, softsoiled Bengal! This is place for a change indeed, specially for us, the delicate people of Bengal, and so many come here to enjoy it during vacations. The place is known as Pathrol, which means stony. The nearest hill is Patharda.

There is a small river nearby, rather a zigzag rivulet, very turbulent and noisy, with a strong current, although the water is only kneedeep, running through plenty of boulders.

This year the changers were scarce, and we were lucky to get a small house close to the river. Hence for strolling I had not to go very far, the riverside was my limit. I went there every morning and evening and sat upon a big slab of stone and looked for whatever was in sight. People frequently coming and going across the river, specially on market days; local goalas with shiny jetblack bodies carrying big pitchers of milk hanging on bamboo yokes over the shoulders; strong and healthy Santhal girls with flower-adorned heads and scantly covered bodies carrying varieties of saleable domestic stuff; almost naked cowherds driving the cattle with sticks in hand, unkempt and rugged as the land itself.

One day I was silently enjoying the sunset behind the hills, sitting upon the selected slab of stone. The surrounding was lovely and lonely, the atmosphere serene, there was no disturbing sound except the murmur of the rippling river flowing over boulders.

I was rather in a lofty mood, when suddenly I was disturbed by an eager call from behind — "Hallo Mr. Goorgay!" I was startled and turned round to see who was calling. An unknown old gentleman was rapidly coming to me with outstretched hands calling myself by an unknown name. Not a very pleasing person, — he was an emaciated man with grey and black unshaven beard covering the chin, a thick pair of shell-rimmed glasses on his nose through which he was staring at me, wearing a threadbare long coat although it was only October, hurriedly approaching me with a stout stick in his hand.

He came closer with a joyous smile and blurted out — "Here you are Mr. Goorgay; I knew that you are sure to come back. But you should have come to me straight. Well, well —".

And then he stopped abruptly, his smile disappearing. He adjusted his glasses closer and stooped down to observe my face closely, then mildly said with a sigh—"I am sorry. Excuse me".

I got up from my seat and out of courtesy folded my hands in an attitude of namaskar. But he immediately caught hold of my hands and amiably

apologised, saying—"I made a terrible mistake. But I hope you did not mind?"

I said—"No, no, that is quite all right. Rather it give me an opportunity for introduction. I am a newcome here".

The gentleman seemed much pleased. His awkwardness was gone, and shaking my hands he said eagerly—"Then you are welcome to my place, let us have a pleasant evening. It is very near, you see that tower of my house. Please come".

I was hesitating, but he began to pull my hand eagerly, so I had to follow him reluctantly.

Behind some tall Eucalyptus trees there appeared a towerlike structure over a dilapidated house. It was a desolate place near the Christian burial ground. I had no idea that somebody lived in that forsaken place.

We entered into the outer room of the house. There was a small table upon which a hurricane lantern was dimly burning. The room was very untidy and unclean. There were two broken chairs, two broken almirahs wide open for want of shutters, filled with heaps of litter and disintegrating books. A clock on the wall was loudly ticking. An old picture of crucified Christ was hanging close to it.

The old man made the light brighter by raising the wick and asked me politely—"Please take your seat".

I had to sit cautiously on a chair with shaky legs. He took the other chair and sat in front of me.

—"How to address you? May I know your name?"

Humbly I replied—"Manik Basu",
—"Wherefrom?"
—"From Calcutta".

—"But where are you staying?"
—"Very near". I showed him the place.
—"Ah, then you are our nextdoor neighbour. Very good. Excellent".

I sat silently, and he took a pinch of snuff enthusiastically.

After a while he put a question suddenly—"Manik Babu did you say"? and when I said "Yes", he began to muse and tapped the table with his fingers. Then he spoke out—"Manik, that means a rare gem, isn't it? But what is the significance of this name?"

I was amused. What significance can there be in a name! I simply told in reply — "How many people can justify their names?"

"Quite so, quite so"—he said, repeatedly shaking his head.

—"Yet there are some people who try to succeed in justifying their names, knowingly or unknowingly. For instance, there was one Jnanesh Babu who devoted his whole life in quest of knowledge and was a great scholar. He even died with a book in his hand, heart failure it was".

—"But such instances are very rare".

The old man bent over the table with some excitement and said—"I can quote more instances. Take the name Ratneswar, a grandiose word, that means possesser of diamonds. This kind of name should not go in vain, what?"

A funny idea indeed! I asked in jest, "was he really a possessor of diamonds, this Ratneswar?"

He was about to say something when a youthful girl appeared at the back door and called sweetly and anxiously — "Uncle!"

The gentleman abruptly checked himself like a car suddenly braked while in speed. He looked as if a culprit is caught redhanded.

The girl remained standing where she was, frowning at me as at an unwelcome intruder. And then she went away.

The man remained dumb for a while, then said in a husky voice—"Mr. Bose, our discussion is postponed for the present. She came to give me notice. So you should now go".

Next day while wandering about the place aimlessly, I came round from the sandy riverside to a boundary wall broken down at places. There I noticed several trees of custard-apple which overhung their branches from inside the compound, with ripe and tempting fruits hanging from them, and within my easy reach. I leapt up to catch hold of a good sized specimen, thereby giving the branches a violent shake. Just then I heard a female voice from inside—"Who is there?"

Startled, I looked through a gap in the wall and was nonplussed to meet the same young girl of yesterday, who also saw me there.....I had no notion that it was the back side of their same house, and that the old man's niece would be there just at the moment drawing water from the well, and find me. Much abashed I slipped away then and there.

The same evening a bare-bodied local boy came to my room with a plate covered by handkerchief and put it on my table. I removed the handkerchief and saw to my wonder four ripe fruits of custard-apple of good size on the plates, with a folded piece of paper. I unfolded it and read this note—

"I am terribly sorry for what happened this afternoon. Will you kindly pardon me? Also if you don't mind, I request you to come to our house to-

The girl remained standing where she was frowning at me as at an unwelcome intruder.

morrow, which is Sunday, just in the evening, when I will wait for you. Please come. Namaste. Anjali".

The handwriting was neat, without a single spelling mistake.

I was astonished but pleased. I told the boy that it's all right.

Next day I went there just in the evening as directed. Anjali was waiting for me in the same outer room. I could now observe her closely. A plain unassuming young girl with a healthy wellbuilt figure. Not a striking beauty, but she had an unusual feminine grace and sweetness in the intelligent face, that made her attractive.

She told me with a bashful smile—"Before I say anything, I want to know whether you have pardoned me for yesterday's fault".

I said—"It was not your fault but mine. There can be no question of any pardon. But I did not misunderstand you".

She said with relief—"Oh then thank you, thank you very much".

—"Now tell me why you have called me here"

—"Yes, I must finish quickly before Uncle returns".

—"Where is he now?"

—"Gone to pray in the church. Now kindly listen".

With a cautious eye towards the door she told her sorrowful tale without unnecessary elaboration. I listened with rapt attention. She told everything in a gentle and sweet voice and there was deep pathos in it mixed with anxious foreboding.

After finishing her story she immediately got up and said—"Now you should depart, as uncle may come any moment now". She escorted me up to the latchdoor. I said—"Well, good bye".

She did not return my greeting, but said with a pent up emotion in her voice—"Please try to save my uncle from utter disaster. He is being cheated all along, and yet does not see it. All his money is gone, I don't know what fate awaits us". Her voice was almost choked with tears.

Lying on my bed at night I pondered over the whole situation that was disclosed by Anjali. She had left nothing hazy.

For several years they are living in this place. The uncle has no children and Anjali being an orphan he has adopted her. His wife is a worthless maniac, so Anjali looks after everything. Her uncle has some cash money and some property of paddy fields on the other side of the river. They could have lived quite happily with this asset, but the old man is running after some will-o-the-wisp, he dreams of getting tremendously rich, and has started acting like a child.

Ten years ago a Santhal cultivator came to him and showed him a big pebble from inside his cloth asking mysteriously—"Look at this Babu, can you tell me what thing is this?"

Babu was then reading Andrews' autobiography. He took it in hand and said unmindfully—"It is stone".

—"Only stone? Look closely".

—"Well, a brighter looking pebble. What else?"

The Santhal said in a hushed voice—"You see, it is a very costly stone. Pay me only two scores of rupees and keep it".

He refused and drove the man away. But after the man had disappeared, her uncle started regretting. Suppose it was a raw diamond! What a bad luck, he carelessly missed the prize! Only for forty rupees he could have secured it, and now it is out of his reach. His head began to reel.

Now he was convinced that real diamond are sometimes to be found out among stray riverside stones. They are now blasting the hillside with dynamite about five miles away, why? There may be some diamond mine. He heard stories of emeralds being found and thrown away as useless green beryl. For that matter, the famous Kohinoor was found in the bed of some remote Krishna river.

"But don't take him to be lunatic".

He conducted thorough search for the Santhal fellow but in vain. The matter would have ended there, but by the nature of his eager enquiry all the local Santhal folk came to know the weak point of this crazy gentleman. Since then those people frequently come to him with some unusual looking stone or pebble in their hands and tell him stealthily—"Keep this Babu, a very rare stone. Take it to Calcutta and get it tested". Atonce his mind is shaken, for it may prove to be a diamond or something like it. Once he has unfortunately made a blunder, he won't do it again. He therefore buys the stone paying considerable amount of money for it. Not only that, he even pays to people who give him information.

After narrating all this, Anjali said with pathetic eyes—"Thus my uncle is being repeatedly robbed and cheated and yet his credulity is not shaken. He talks of such stones with everybody. That is why he also invited you here the other day. He talks like this to the new changers that come, some of whom laugh at him and some think him mad. I, therefore, wanted to warn you from beforehand and ask for your help. For none will understand him, they will judge him by his outer behaviour. He only sticks to his fond belief, and you know that one whose staunch belief is shattered is to be much pitied. He believes in all this because he believes in himself. If that is broken, it may kill him. But don't take him to be a lunatic".

With tears in her eyes she at last appealed to me—"It is my earnest request, please try to point out his mistakes as gently as possible. You being a cul-

tured man from Calcutta, he might listen to you".

I had assured her that I will try.

And then thanking me profusely she asked me to depart.

For the following two days I met none of them. On the third day I came across the old gentleman in the riverside. He immediately came to me and caught my hand saying—"I longed to see you but missed you. Where had you been these days?"

I said—"I had been going to other directions".

—"Oh, that's why. You see, it is my duty to enquire about you, as you are a guest here. We are permanent dwellers, and you are only a short time changer, you will forget everything when you go away, except what dealings you get here. How many changers have remembered us? I should say none. But I believe only Mr. Goorgay is an exception, he remembers us and is sure to come back some day".

Again that Mr. Goorgay! I asked—"I heard his name from you once before. I wonder who he may be".

He at once became grave, thought something, and said with some hesitation—"Well, I will tell you everything. When you have become our friend, I should not hide anything from you. Just come along with me to our house. My niece is now absent, so we can talk freely".

I did not feel encouraged, but for courtesy had to follow him.

We went together into the same room. Anjali being absent, the lantern was not lit. He himself lit it and sat beside me.

And then he began to say—"I have got a rare opportunity for letting you know the secret, as there is nobody to overhear. I will have to be quick about it, otherwise if Anjali comes along she may be annoyed".

I said—"If it is something about your private family affairs, I don't think it advisable to—".

He instantly stopped me saying—"No no, none of that, it is entirely personal, my own affair. Only Anjali does not support me. All my pet ambition she takes to be moonshine".

I asked—"Where is Anjali gone?"

He said—"She has gone to the padre for some music lesson, may come back in half an hour. Now listen".

He took a pinch of snuff.

—"You see, the whole gist of the Bible may be condensed into a single word of five letters—FAITH. That should be the mainstay of our life. Your religion also teaches the same thing—"By faith only you can attain, not by any argument". Hence I believe in believing. And since you are a friend, I will tell you about it unreservedly. It is for you to judge whether I am running after truth or after wild goose."

I felt somewhat uneasy and remained staring behind him at the enlarged black shadow of the man on the wall.

— "Well now, Ratneswar happens to be my own name, and I think it must have some inherent significance. I have got a clue on that line and I am striving after that for the last ten years. It has been revealed to me that amongst the hillside and riverside stones and pebbles are hidden pure diamonds that can be found—yes, the rare real stuff, and I want to find them. Although the hint has come to me very late, yet I may live long enough to succeed. Do you believe it ?"

I felt awkward, but he was eagerly stretching his neck to hear my opinion. So I said—"One who can prop one's life upon faith and hope, which is the highest sentiment of human dignity, is never frustrated or defeated. "But"—he interrupted me by saying — "Very nicely said, a very well-spoken word. And so also was the opinion of Mr. Goorgay. But he had a restless nature, being younger than you. He had some reasons for it. Generally the non-Bengalis think less and run about more. But let that be. I should now inform you that I have spent a good deal of money to collect precious stones, and what I got in return is not very insignificant. Wait, I will show you."

He went inside making a hurried noise of his slippers outside the window. The darkness became darker. Nothing was visible except the long stems of Eucalyptus trees looking like stalwart giants standing on guard. Chill wind was blowing from the side of the burial ground reminding the biting oncoming winter of the hills.

I had not to wait long. The hurried noise of the slippers was heard again. The gentleman came back with a wrapped up bundle from which, he brought out a rusty tin box. After looking with suspicious eyes on all sides, he carefully opened the tin. It contained more than a hundred pebbles of bright stone glittering in the light.

With a smile of ecstasy he said — 'Look at these, although none of them are diamonds. But they are surely very costly stones. Here is one called beryl, this is a red-lead, this one a black stone with white tint. This is Hakik, an Arabian variety. I once saw a black diamond and have already spent two hundred rupees for it. Now, what do you say ?"

I took out a peculiar stone and asked — "What is this called ?"

— "It is of the gamate variety."

— "And this !"

— "That may be Pokhraj. Mark the blue tint."

While speaking, Ratneswar suddenly looked towards the window and cried out — "Who's there ?" I also looked and saw a huge black head suddenly disappear.

It contained more than a hundred pebbles.

Ratneswar leapt up and shrieked "My gun! my gun!"

Both of us lurched through the window, but none was in sight outside.

Ratneswar said — "The fellow has escaped."

I asked — "Do you know who is the fellow ?"

He said — "Of course I know. He is Tikla Majhi, a Santhal. Lives across the river. He is after me since last year, although I repeatedly told him that the thing is not with me. But he thinks it is concealed here, hence he often raids the house. Anjali once saw him like this through the window and fainted."

I wanted to know why, and he told me the story.

"In July last year some Santhal came to inform me that Tikla Majhi has kept a precious stone in his hut that burns at night. He demanded a lot of money to show me the house.

"Mr. Goorgay was here at that time, being appointed Engineer for boring, and lodged at my place as paying guest. Hearing about the stone he atonce jumped up and said — Come on, let us raid the place together. Mr. Goorgay took my gun with him.

"This unexpected raid at this place unnerved the people. Mr. Goorgay forcibly entered the thatched mud house that was clean and tidy, with his shoes on. He had not to search for the stone—it was placed on a recess in the wall, religiously wrapped in a red cloth strewn with flowers, and smeared with vermilion and oil. Tikla was asked, for what price he would part with the stone. Tikla said with wonder in his eyes that it is their family deity, there can be no question of selling it at any price. It is their God that burns like fire. Thus refused, Goorgay snatched out the stone from its shelter, and after cleaning it put in his pocket. The womenfolk of the house began to weep. Tikla fell down on his feet and remonstrated, but Mr. Goorgay kicked him away and ran out of the house. Tikla was following but Goorgay raised the gun and fired a shot to frighten him, the shot hitting a crow that instantly fell down dead from a tree. So the people were checked and Goorgay came away. The wail and cry of the womenfolk could be heard from a distance.

"Since then Tikla is after me because he thinks the stone is with me. But actually it is with Mr. Goorgay who took it to Calcutta to test its value. It may be a real diamond, and he has promised to come back with it. He is an honest and amiable person and I know that he will keep his word. Only because he is perhaps somehow engaged, he can't make time and is delaying."

As my leave expired my sojourn was at last over. Before departing, I met Anjali alone. I was really sorry for her, so told her—"I am sorry I could do nothing to help you although I tried. But if you want to save your uncle's life and yours, I think you should leave this place, or else get back the stone from Goorgay."

Anjali was startled to hear me mentioning Goorgay's name. With astonishment she said — "Diamond you say !"

— "Yes, the object that was snatched away from Tikla's house by Goorgay. I have heard all about from your uncle".

She smiled and said — "Oh, but it was a stone only."

— "How do you know ? Did you see it yourself ?"

— "No but Mr. Goorgay assured me that it was nothing but a stone. If you think the Santhal will be satisfied in getting it back, I will certainly ask him to return it. He will surely do that, if I only ask him."

Very unwittingly I uttered the words — "Do you think he will ever come back here ? That he will return ?"

Her face flushed crimson up to the ears, and she hissed out with firm conviction—"Yes, he will, he said so, he will not betray."

I was stunned dumb. Whence this flow of spontaneous and unearthly undercurrent of so much trust and faith in this remote corner of our hardened earth ! Without any rhyme or reason, any doubt or discernments, any psychological complex, — simply this childlike faith and trust !

I did not talk any further but came away with bent head. I could not for the life of me, try to disillusion these people.

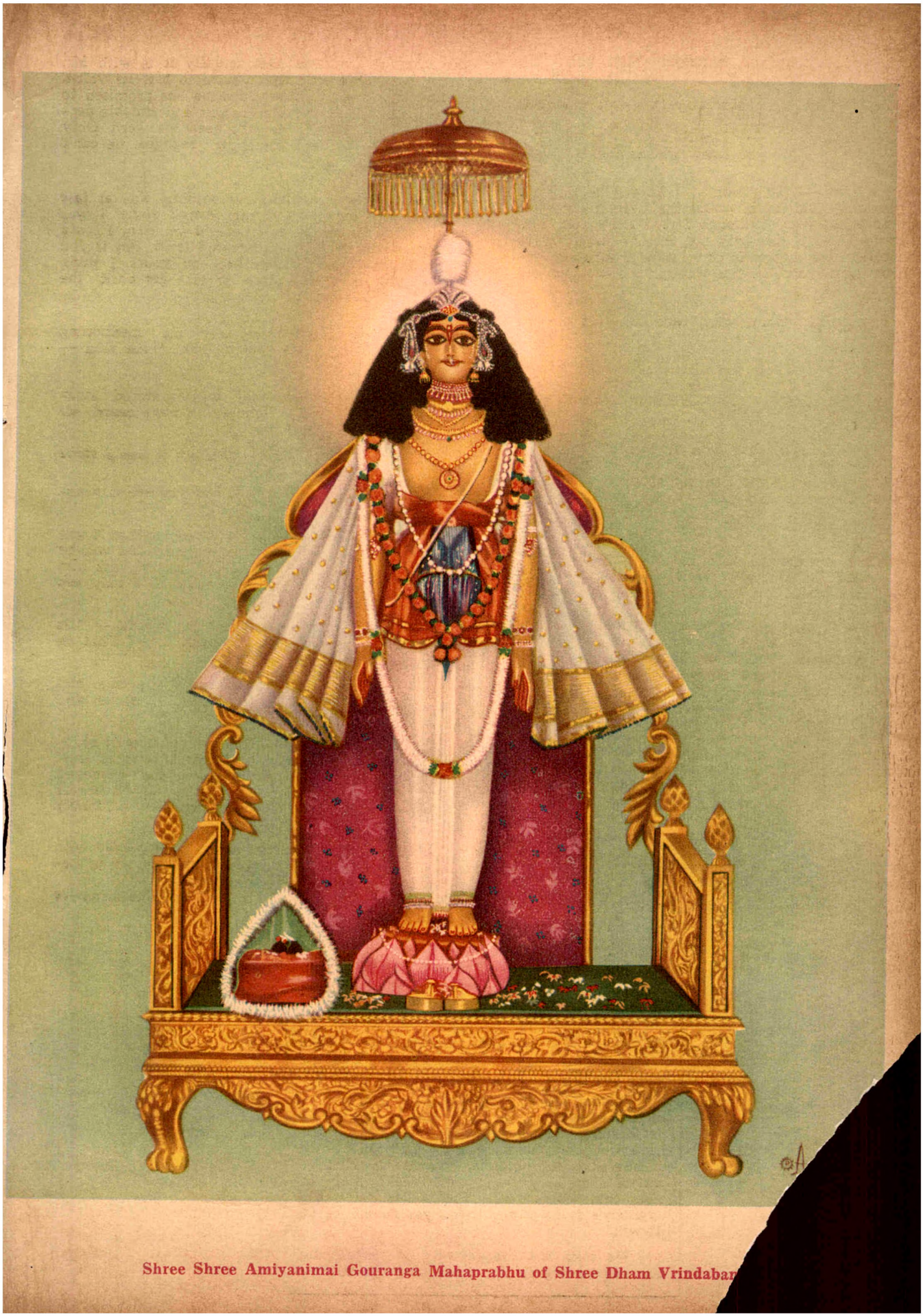
— *Translated by Dr. Pasupati Bhattacharjee*

REGRET

In our Puja Number, Amrita Bazar Patrika, Calcutta, 1962, we published an article from the pen of Shri Projesh Banerji, under the title of "Devadasis of Uttar Pradesh."

Certain views were stated by the author in this article which have been alleged as defamatory and baseless and, we are informed, have wounded the feelings of Jogi community of Bharadwaj colony of Allahabad in particular and of India in general. We make it quite clear that we had no intention of wounding anybody's feelings and there was no malice or ill-will.

We take this opportunity of expressing our sincere regrets for publishing the article.



Shree Shree Amiyanimai Gouranga Mahaprabhu of Shree Dham Vrindaban

PUNISHMENT

A Story from Punjab

By BALWANT SINGH

IT was a small village, consisting mostly of mud houses, with the exception of one or two prosperous looking *pucca* ones. The village was, in fact, like any other village in the Punjab —a small pond, the familiar babul, reh and wild plum trees filling the landscape, the watering wheel somnolently making music under the dense *peepul* tree. As in other villages, here also the village belles thronged the wells in the morning; the old men whiled away the torpid afternoons playing chess or a game of dice and in the evening the village youths came out to play *kabbadi*. The placid nights rang with the recitation of Warisali Shah's *Heer*, and the spirited passage-at-arms between Heer and the quazi. The village belles strong-limbed and vivacious, the youths hefty and outspoken.

The evening had descended over the village.

Having nothing in the house to cook, Jeet Kaur tied a pice in the end of her *dopatta* and went out to buy some dal. She had hardly walked a few steps when she abruptly stopped in her tracks. Blocking her way, Phumman Singh was sitting on a cot under the peepul tree, twirling his moustache, a wooden mallet resting by his side.

Jeet Kaur knew that Phumman Singh would never miss the opportunity of teasing her. She gave up the idea of going to the shop and instead decided to pluck some leafy *sag* from the nearby field; thereby she would also save the pice for her younger brother, Chanan. Poor child, the whole afternoon he had cried his heart out for a few lemon drops.

The shadows of the sugarcanes and the accacia trees had lengthened. Lifting her *salwar*, Jeet Kaur picked her way through the knee-high thorny bushes. Near the jamun tree she came across a few wild berry bushes and stopped to pick a few wild berries for Chanan. She was angered at the thought that Phumman Singh teased her day in and day out. Why didn't he tease Sumitra who was no way less beautiful than she? He knew that even if he dared cast a glance at Sumitra, her three stalwart brothers would chop him to pieces. And then she remembered her own fifteen year old brother who had died three years ago. One afternoon, after taking his meal he had gone to the well where he had eaten a melon. By evening he had developed symptoms of cholera and died of the disease. Her brother was a fine youth, taller and sturdier than all the other youths of the village. His chest was broad like a millstone, his neck long and thick, and

he had powerful hands. He excelled all at *Kabbadi* and bending the wrist. Once while playing *kabbadi* he had broken his adversary's collar-bone with one stroke of his palm. His memory brought tears to Jeet Kaur's eyes. Had he been living would Phumman Singh dare tease her? Only the other day the scoundrel had pulled away the *dopatta* from her head. The brazen faced fellow! All because the fellow was the village headman's son and they were under debt to his father. After her mother's death calamities visited the family in droves. First her father died and then her brother. Now she had no one to lean upon except her aged grand-father whom she addressed as Bapu. Or, there was Chanan, her brother—a mere child of six, the last vestige of her parent's hope. And as if the cup of her misery was not full, more troubles followed: A succession of poor crops put them under the headman's debt. The land had to be mortgaged and Bapu was too old to cope with the family's predicament. And to cap it all, that ruffian, Phumman Singh, followed her like a shadow all the time.

Jeet Kaur tingled with rage. She had developed a strong aversion for all men. "And there's Tara Singh!" she said to herself. "Without a care in the world. He has only his old mother to look after who is already on her last legs. A sizeable plot of land, a nice kuchcha house, three bullocks, a buffalo, not to speak of the cow—what more does he want? A carefree life has made him strong as a bull. And how shameless! He has nothing better to do than twirl his moustache and tease the village girls. I say, all men are brutes, scoundrels dyed in the blackest hue! Whenever I go to the well with the pitcher, he is always there, singing in a thick voice:

'O sweet one, carry a small pitcher,
Or, you'll twist your slender waist,
O, Lachchi, my sweet one!'

You steal the sag from my field every day, don't you ?

"Bapu thinks I should marry him. What an idea! Who would care to marry such a ruffian. Ofcourse, he does not try to be fresh with girls like Phumman Singh. So what? Does a decent man ever sing bawdy songs within the hearing of girls?"

Alas! If only *Wahguru*, the Almighty had given her the strength she would have put each one of these cocky youths in his proper place!

She stopped. In a vegetable patch, adjacent to the sugarcane field, mustard plants swayed in all their yellow and green glory. She looked around. The Persian wheel was working. A bullock was tied near it. The cattle shed seemed to be empty.

Making sure that no one was about, Jeet Kaur sat down on her haunches and started plucking the tender shoots of the mustard plants. Hearing a sound she quickly raised her head. Brandishing a spade, Tara Singh was rushing towards her, shouting abuses. A shiver ran through her body. She quickly threw the stalks on the ground, and putting on an innocent expression, she started walking in the other direction. But Tara Singh was already there. He picked up the mustard stalks, looked at them for an instant, and then in one mighty leap he was upon her. Jeet Kaur broke into a run. "Jeeto, you are trying to be clever with me?" he said firmly holding her by the wrist. "You steal the *sag* from my field every day, don't you? I've been keeping a watch. Today I've caught you".

"Let go of my hand". Jeeto started crying. "I've never come to your field before". She struggled to wrench her hand from his grip.

"Aha, ha, how you lie!" Taru said gritting his teeth. "Today I'll give you a taste of my beating".

He dragged her to the cattle shed. Kicking open the door, he pushed her in. She narrowly escaped dashing against the buffalo. One of her glass bangles broke.

"Look, what you have done to my bangle!" Jeeto said crying. "I had bought it at the village fair".

Taru saw blood oozing from her wrist where a piece of glass had pierced the flesh. Taru had never meant to be so hard on her.

"Jeeto, are you hurt?" he said advancing. "Let me....."

"Stand off, you black-faced ruffian! You are a rogue. A scoundrel"

Taru was subdued at this cascade of abuses. He wanted to tease her, just for the fun of it, as he enjoyed teasing girls. He never realised that the matter would go that far. He regretted his mulish behaviour.

Jeeto stood weeping by the wall. Taru scratched his neck, not knowing what to do. Then he came out and closing the door proceeded towards the field.

Soon he was back with a bundle of mustard stalks. Jeeto looked at him from a corner of her eyes. Her long eye lashes were moist with tears.

"Jeeto, here take this bundle and go home". He dumped the bundle at her feet.

Jeeto spilled over with rage. Picking up the bundle she dashed it against Taru's face. The stalks scattered on the floor, some pieces clinging to Taru's incipient beard.

Without a word, Taru started gathering the stalks. Jeeto came out of the shed. Taru overtook her in quick strides and walked by her side. She was about to jump over a runnel when her foot got stuck in the mud. As she pulled out her foot her

"The village headman and his men were again here," Bapu said in a low voice.

slipper came loose and remained embedded in the soft mud. Taru retrieved the slipper. "Wait, I'll wash it for you".

Puffing out her cheeks, Jeeto archly sat down on a stone slab. Taru was overwhelmed by a desire to make an overture of peace, and he decided he would first wash the mustard stalks. "Jeeto", he said in a soft voice. "My buffalo has outlived its age. It now yields only three seers of milk. What use is such a buffalo? I've another buffalo in view. The animal is rather costly, but it's worth its price. You know, I'm fond of buffalos. I've saved a hundred and fifty rupees for the buffalo. Oh, what a difficult time I had scraping together this huge amount? But buy the buffalo I must. What's the use of keeping an animal which is nothing but a bundle of bones. A buffalo....."

As Taru droned on he suddenly realised that he was talking through his head. Without looking at Jeeto he finished washing the mustard stalks and tying them in a neat bundle he started cleaning up Jeeto's slippers.

"Jeeto", he said. "You know Varyam Singh, of course. He's very wicked. One day I found him twisting Chanan's ears. When I asked him the reason he started looking sideways and then said that the boy had stolen a melon from his field. Poor, child, how scared he looked. I caught Varyam by the neck and walloped him right and proper. 'Don't dare bully the child again!' I warned him. Do you know whose brother he is.....?"

Taru glanced at Jeeto from the corner of his eye. Still looking sullen she was scrubbing her feather-white feet with a pebble. Taru placed the slippers by her side, and put the bundle of *sag* in her lap. Getting into her slippers, Jeeto got up haughtily and walked off towards her house.

It was getting dark and she decided to take the shortest route home through the fields. Finding the fields flooded she took off the slippers and was about to wade through the water when Taru stepped forwrad and holding her hand said, "Better walk on the abutment. There are prickly bushes in the fields. Here, lean on my shoulder".

"I'll stand it no more!" Jeeto said pushing away his hand, "you menfolk are an evil minded lot. I've nothing to do with you".

Taru tried to plead his innocence. "I warn you," she exploded. "Don't try to touch me or, I'll break your hands".

Amused, Taru looked at her small, delicate hands and then at his own—big, rugged and dirty. A smile flit across his face.

Cut to the quick, Jeeto struck him on the face with her slipper.

"Jeeto!" Taru roared, livid with rage. They stood still for a moment, looking at each other. Then Jeeto pulled up her *salwar* and got into the water.

A nail sticking loosely from the slipper had grazed against Taru's forehead drawing blood. Heedless of the trickling blood he walked ahead of Jeeto, clearing the path of the prickly bushes with his spade. As Jeeto reached the other end of the field she momentarily looked at his blood stained *kurta* and walked away in the direction of her house.

She opened the door. An earthern lamp was burning in a corner. Bapu was chopping millet fodder while Chanan sat near the lamp making paper flowers. "Sister, is here, at last", he said looking up and got busy with the flowers. Bapu cast a quick glance at her and lowered his head.

Jeeto collected some cotton stalks from a corner and breaking them into small twigs she shoved them into the hearth. Placing cowdung cakes on the twigs she lighted up the hearth. Putting the mustard stalks in an earthern pot she placed it on the hearth.

"The village headman and his men were again here", Bapu said in a low voice. Jeeto's hands stopped working. She knew what was coming.

While eating his food Bapu told her that if they did not pay the headman his money by day after tomorrow he would have them ejected from their house and take possession of it.

When Bapu returned in the afternoon their fate was writ large on his sad wrinkled face. He had not been able to arrange for the money. He had been able to raise only eighty-two rupees by selling the last piece of ornament belonging to Jeeto's mother and he did not know where to get the rest of the money. No doubt, they could sell off their buffalos but that would have meant starvation; they lived on the sale of milk and ghee.

After finishing her daily chores Jeeto came out of the house and stood in the open. The headman had not yet come. But she knew he was sure to turn up. And tomorrow? She shuddered at the bleak prospects. When the headman would proceed to throw out their things people would stand around and watch the fun.

A storm rose and the sky was overcast with dark clouds.

Jeeto proceeded toward the *gurdwara*, the Sikh temple. It was an old building, in which three rooms had been set apart for travellers. It also boasted of a small garden.

The Sikh priest, who was friendly with Bapu, lived in the *gurdwara*. He used to narrate episodes from the lives of the Sikh saints, telling her of the sacrifices they had made to uphold the dignity of their religion. Jeeto's heart would be filled with veneration for the saints. The priest, Jeeto learnt, was away to the next village. She took a bath at the temple well, bowed before the Granth Saheb, the Holy Book, and lying in obeisance before the portrait of Baba Guru Nanak, broke into sobs, praying that her family may be saved from the impending calamity. Then she picked some yasmin flowers, and made them into a garland for Chanan.

Suddenly the rain came down in a heavy shower. It seemed the downpour would never cease. After a long wait the rain stopped but still there was no sign of the priest. Tying the garland round her bun of hair Jeeto proceeded towards the village.

The sky was still overcast adding to the gloom of the descending evening. As she neared her house, she saw the headman and a constable emerging from the door. Her feet froze to the ground. Tomorrow.....Yes, tomorrow they would auction away their house to the beat of the drum. Her mind became numb. She could not gather courage to enter the house and face her grandfather who, she realised would be in a terrible plight. She walked away in a daze, not knowing where her feet were carrying her. At last, tired she slumped down by the edge of a field.

A few stars had appeared in the sky. In the gathering dusk one could see the cattle slowly returning to the village through the fields. In the nearby pond the frogs had started croaking and the bushes were filled with shrill cries of crickets. A few vultures dozed in the branches.

Through the dusk Jeeto could see Taru's hut and the Persian wheel dimly outlined against the sky. She was deeply moved as she thought of Taru's well and the happenings of the previous evening flit across her mind. In the swift medley of images, her slippering Taru, his repentance which he showed by clearing the way for her through the prickly bushes and his bleeding forehead stood out vividly. Despite his many faults, Taru was perhaps not so bad at heart. She wished she could unburden her mind to some one. But in the whole village she could think of no one who would care to sympathise with her.

Taru's well—what a pleasant spot it was! The music of the Persian wheel punctuated by the jingle of bells round the bullock's necks were sufficient to cast a spell on any one. The tall *shreh* trees swayed in the breeze. A white mare stood gazing in the green field, and a little away in the sugarcane field the dogs were busy with their antics.

Threading her way through the shrubs Jeeto reached the well. A pleasant smell was oozing from the wet grass. Her eyes searched for Taru but he was not there. Hesitatingly, she knocked at the door of the mud house.

"Who's there ?" It was a gruff voice.

Silence.

"I say, who's there? Why don't you come in ? The door is not bolted".

Jeeto slowly pushed open the door. Taru was sitting on a low wicker stool leisurely sucking a sugarcane. He jumped up on seeing Jeeto. "Come in Jeeto. What brings you here?"

Jeeto stood confused, not knowing what to say. "I was passing by", she stammered. "I thought I would drop in for a minute to see your mother".

"My mother? But she rarely comes to the well. And if at all, she comes in the day. She must be at home now. She stays there most of the time".

Jeeto turned to go. "Jeeto, please sit down". Taru got up and pushed the stool towards her. "Please sit down, now that you are here. I mean, if you are in no hurry. Take some mustard stalks with you for cooking. Take some sugarcane for Chanan. Sugarcane this year is very sweet".

Jeeto sat down in a corner on the stool.

"We had a fine shower", Taru said sitting down on the mat by her side. "A cool breeze is blowing. Will you have some *sherbet*, I've got some excellent *gur* to make *sherbet* with. No? Then take the gur with you. Use it for *sherbet* tomorrow".

Jeeto imperceptibly nodded her head in assent.

"I had asked Chanan to take sugarcane. But he never turned up. Send him down to me. He knows the way. And you know, I've some wild plums growing here. Red, ripe and juicy. Very sweet plums. I don't allow others to pluck them. They are for Chanan. I know he's very fond of them. Remember, when we were his age we used to go out together in search of plums".

"Taru, this year you have an excellent sugarcane crop. Better than other years", Jeeto said changing the subject.

"Yes, it's all due to the blessings of the *Wahguru*. He's kind on me".

Jeeto became silent.

"May I bring some sugarcane for you?"

"No, Taru, I'm in no mood for sugarcane".

They were silent for a while.

"Jeeto, why are you so quiet today?" Taru said breaking the silence. "Is something worrying your mind?"

Jeeto's eyes filled with tears. "No, Taru, I'm allright". Taru did not see the tears in her eyes but he did not miss the tremulous note in her voice.

His eyes shone with anger. "Has Phumman Singh again been at his game?" he asked in a brittle voice. "Tell me, Jeeto. Do you see that *kirpan* hanging over there? I've sharpened it today. I know Phumman Singh, the rascal that he is. His death is hovering over him. The *kirpan* is thirsting for his blood."

"No, Taru", Jeeto said raising her hand. "It's not Phumman Singh, this time. I'll not hide anything from you. The fact is....."

Somebody flung open the door. Taru became alert like a panther and his hand fell on the handle of an axe lying by his side. Alarmed, Jeeto looked toward the door.

"Is my sister here?" Chanan's head appeared in the door.

"I'm here, my pet. Come in".

Chanan came in bouncing and sat down in his sister's lap. "I've found you atlast", he said. "I looked for you everywhere. Then it occurred to me that you must have gone to Taru's well to get some wild plums for me".

Jeeto pushed away a lock of hair from Chanan's forehead. "Aren't you afraid of the dark?"

"Me? oh no".

"Tiger cubs know no fear", Taru said.

Chanan looked at Taru. "You promised to give me sugarcane. Where is it? I must have a lot of it".

"Yes, have as much as you like".

Chanan was about to get out of his sister's lap, when he suddenly stopped. "Guess what?" he said blithely. "I know a secret. But I won't tell you". He took his mouth near his sister's ear. "Sister, give me a pice. You promised me a pice, didn't you?"

"Not now, my pet. You can have it when we are back home".

"But I must have it now".

"Be a good boy, Chanan. I don't have any money on me".

"Then ask Taru to give me a pice".

"He doesn't have it, either".

"Oh no, he has lot of money. Today when you were away, he came to our house. He counted out a lot of rupees and gave them to Bapu".

"Chanan!" Jeeto looked at her kid brother in surprise. But there was no stopping Chanan.

"But Bapu did a very wrong thing", Chanan said. "He gave away all the rupees to the headman."

Jeeto could not believe her ears. "Has someone been telling you stories".

"I saw the money myself", Chanan almost shouted. "Now tell me, may I ask Taru for a pice?"

Jeeto started looking in the air, as if the atmosphere had cleared up after a heavy storm, dissolving her worries. She was so absorbed in herself that she did not even know that Taru had given Chanan a pice, and that he had gone out of the hut and was now standing by the buffalo.

She suddenly came out of her reverie and thought of Taru. He was the only person whom she could count upon as a friend. In the course of his conversation, he had not even dropped a hint about what he had done for her. And imagine, she had called him evil-minded!

Taru was still standing near the buffalo with his back towards the hut. Jeeto's eyes filled with tears. "Look at me, Taru!"

"Jeeto why do you cry?" Taru said in a tremulous voice. "I've always looked for an opportunity to be of some service to you. I'm sorry for my behaviour that day".

Jeeto placed her hand on Taru's forehead and felt the spot where the nail had grazed his skin. "Taru, I must go now. I'll come someother time".

She went into the hut and putting on the slippers turned to go. She found Taru was standing in the door blocking the way.

"Jeeto", he said in a gruff voice. "Today evil thoughts have again possessed my mind. I am due for another punishment you must punish me, Jeeto".

Shyly Jeeto advanced toward him. She removed the garland from her hair and put it round his neck.

Taru opened the door for her. Chanan ran ahead of her, carrying a bundle of sugarcane. Taking away the bundle from him she lifted him in her arms.

"Sister, I like Taru. You also like him, don't you?"

Jeeto's face turned red. "Yes, I like him.....I mean, he is a good man". She said hiding her embarrassment.

Taru's coarse voice in her ears:

"O Sweet one, carry a small pitcher,
Or, you'll twist your slender waist,
O Lachchi, my sweet one!"

(Translated from Hindi by JAI RATAN)

"Oh, no, he has lot of money. Today when you were away, he came to our house. He counted out a lot of rupees and gave them to Bapu."

MYSTERY AT CARNIVAL LAKE

by W. T. BRANNON

DETECTIVE Jim Burgess ran to the window and looked out. Tires were still screaming as the two-tone convertible jolted to a stop at the curb in front of police headquarters. The driver leaned on the horn.

"What happened ?" asked Detective Tom Wall.

"I don't know, but that guy nearly tore up the pavement getting here. We'll go see."

Followed by his partner, Burgess sprinted for the front door. By the time they reached the sidewalk, there was a raucous din from the horn.

"Take it easy," Burgess shouted as he jerked the door open.

The driver was a man of about thirty with dark, badly rumpled curly hair. He was nude except for a shirt tied around his waist and a pair of untied sports shoes.

He kept his elbow on the horn as if blowing it were his only mission in life.

Burgess grabbed his arm and the noise ceased. "What's the matter ?" the detective demanded.

The man didn't answer but turned slowly, as if movement pained him, and pointed to the back seat.

Tom Wall had the rear door open. "There's a girl back here !" he exclaimed.

Burgess took one look and said : "Get a stretcher, Tom."

While his partner raced back into the police building, Burgess bent over the girl. She wasn't pretty now, but she was young and dark haired and she had once been beautiful. She was wedged on the floor, between the two seats, in a jackknife kneeling position, her head twisted around and resting on an outflung arm.

Blood trickled from her left ear and nostrils, and the dark hair was matted. The thin dress, her only garment, was pulled tight around her waist. A bloody froth had washed away the lipstick and her eyes were closed.

Two uniformed officers came with the stretcher and lifted the girl, wheeling her into the police emergency room.

"I called for the Doc and a rescue squad," Wall said.

Burgess nodded, then motioned to the driver of the convertible who had been watching with anguished eyes. The young man clambered out, hugging his shirt about him, and walked listlessly into the station with the detective.

Wall and the uniformed men had the girl stretched out now and were trying to revive her with artificial respiration. Her head was battered, her skull looked like it had been crushed; nasty bruises marked other parts of her body.

Burgess watched a moment, strode to a locker and found a slicker. He helped the young man into it.

"Now, how did this happen ?" he asked.

There was no answer. The man's eyes were fixed on the girl.

"I asked you a question," Burgess said, tapping him on the shoulder. "What's the matter, can't you talk ?"

The other shook his head.

"Are you a mute ?"

Again the man shook his head. He pointed to his mouth.

"All right, open," Burgess said.

He opened his mouth and Burgess peered in. What he could see was raw and bloody.

"Well, we've got to get the story somehow," Burgess said. "Any suggestions ?"

But the other man wasn't listening; all his concentration was on the efforts to revive the girl. Burgess grabbed his arm and repeated the question.

The man nodded and pointed to the pencil in the detective's breast pocket. He raised his hands and made motions as if to write.

"All right," said Burgess. "I'll get some paper and ask you questions and you write the answers. Is that what you're trying to say ?"

The man nodded vigorously.

Burgess handed him a pad and pencil. "What's your name and how old are you ?"

"Robert Freeman, 29", he wrote.

"What about the girl?"

"Martha Quane, 21."

Where do you live ?"

"Both live on Earle Street."

Before the detective could speak again, Freeman gestured impatiently and scribbled again on the pad :

"Don't talk. Get help for Martha."

"We're doing everything we can," Burgess said. "A doctor's on the way and here comes the rescue squad now."

Freeman jerked his head towards the door as it opened. He watched with avid interest as firemen hurried into the room with their rescue equipment. Freeman let the pad dangle at his side, his gaze on the firemen as they began working over the girl.

Burgess turned back to Freeman. "There's nothing more we can do. Now, tell me what this is all about."

"Wait," Freeman wrote, and there was pleading in his eyes. "I can't think. She's my girl. We're engaged."

"Okay." Burgess joined Freeman in watching the efforts of the firemen. He could tell from their expressions that they weren't having any luck.

They were ready to give up when the Medical Examiner arrived. Dr. George Allison was middle-aged, on the portly side and usually good natured. To the police and to thousands of patients, he was known as Doc.

Doc Allison hadn't taken the Medical Examiner's post because he needed more work; he had plenty already. But as everybody in the town knew, he had an almost insatiable curiosity. He liked to pry, especially into what made people tick. Those who didn't understand him had dubbed him a busybody.

Long before he had taken on an official status his curiosity had led him to delve into local crimes and he had helped the police to solve some baffling mysteries.

Now, he nodded curtly to Burgess and Wall, yanked open his medical kit and bent over the prostrate girl, quickly making certain routine tests. He couldn't find a pulse and his stethoscope failed to pick up a heartbeat.

Finally, Doc straightened and turned to the detectives. "No use," he said. "She's dead."

"Beaten to death, Doc ?" Burgess asked.

"Can't tell you till after an autopsy. Don't think so. Think she was strangled."

Freeman stared at Doc Allison and anguish clouded his features. As the full impact of the doctor's words sunk in, he buried his face in his hands. Burgess waited as he wept softly.

Finally, the detective put a gentle hand on his shoulder.

"You've got to pull yourself together and tell us what happened," he said. "She's been murdered and there's no time to lose if we are to catch the killer."

CHAPTER—II

DOC Allison ordered the body of Martha Quane removed to the morgue adjoining the autopsy room in the basement of the police building. As the shrouded figure was wheeled towards the elevator, Robert Freeman stared after it with glazed eyes, tears streaming down his cheeks.

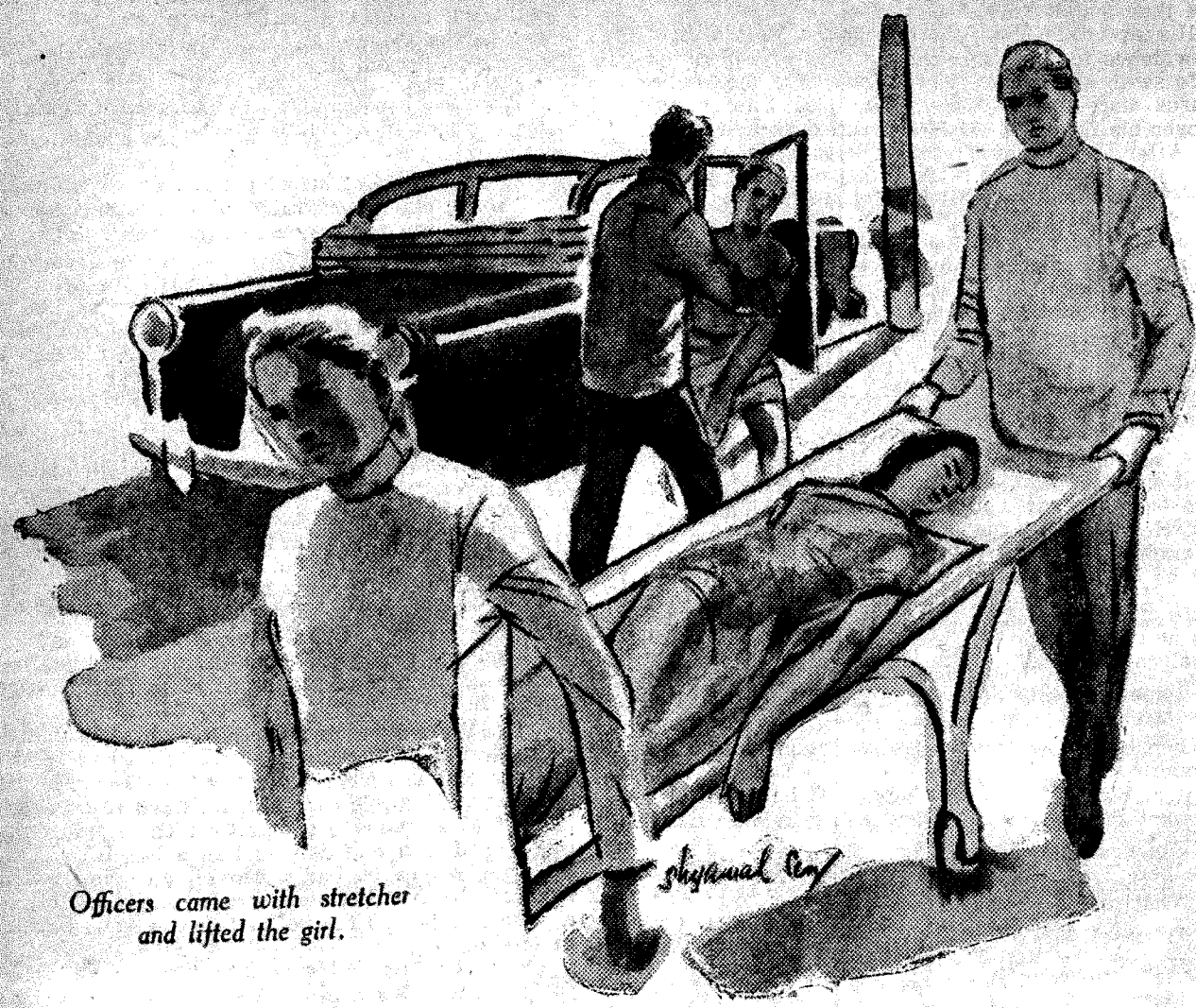
Burgess caught him gently by the arm and steered him towards an office. "We can talk better in here." He motioned to Tom Wall and Doc Allison.

Inside the office, Burgess indicated a chair and Freeman sat down. Doc Allison and Wall found other chairs.

"Now, you can write better," Burgess said. "Let's get the whole story."

Freeman sighed and began writing : "Martha's a secretary for a company downtown. I work for the Ace Packing Company. Research department. Martha lives at 1612 Earle Street. I live at 433 Earle Street —"

"All right," Burgess interrupted impatiently. "What happened ?"



Officers came with stretcher and lifted the girl.

Freeman gritted his teeth and gripped the pen-cil. He wrote in jerky sentences, often in answer to questions from Burgess, Tom Wall or Doc Allison. Eventually, they pieced together the story :

Bob and Martha had been out late—later than usual. They were driving along Disston Avenue when suddenly another car came up beside them. Two men were in the front seat and the driver kept crowding his car closer.

"I thought they were holdup men,", Freeman wrote. "I decided to stop."

A tall, broad shouldered man who had sat with the driver leaped out and crowded into the front seat beside Martha. He had a gun and he levelled it as he hunched back against the front door.

"Follow that car," he ordered, gesturing with the weapon. And as Martha looked as if she would scream: "Take it easy, baby. This gun's loaded."

The other car, which looked like a Frazer, pulled away and Freeman followed. He kept pace as the other car turned into Haines Road, went a few blocks and turned off into a side road.

Finally, the old car pulled off the road onto a grassy plot among some trees. Freeman had been there before. He knew that the site was a recreation area around Carnival Lake, a favourite outing place for picnickers and swimmers.

The other man climbed out of the old Frazer. He was shorter and of husky build. Both men appeared to be around thirty. But because of the darkness, Freeman didn't get a good look at their features.

The tall man ordered them out of the car and his companion grabbed the girl. Freeman, staring into the business end of a revolver, watched helplessly as Martha, one hand clamped over her mouth and an arm about her neck, was dragged out of sight among the trees.

Freeman's captor reached into the old car and brought out a bottle. "Drink this," he ordered.

"I refused," Freeman wrote, "but he put the gun in my ribs and said he would pull the trigger. So I drank." He shuddered. "I only took a few sips and handed the bottle back. It tasted like acid."

In the darkness, he couldn't read the label, but it was about the size and shape of a wine bottle.

The tall man then searched Freeman and took his wallet, containing seventy-six dollars. The man pocketed the wallet and picked up the bottle again. Threatened with the gun, Freeman drank again.

"It burned my mouth and throat," he wrote. "That's why I can't talk."

Apparently satisfied, his captor then ordered Freeman to take off his clothes and jump in the lake "He kept pointing the gun at me and playing with the trigger. So I undressed and got in the water."

At that point, there was no beach, but a level shore and a sheer drop to the surface. The lake in that section was more than ten feet deep and he

had to keep swimming and treading water for more than a half hour.

His captor stayed on shore, near the water's edge, and watched to make sure that he didn't come out or try to swim away. Once when he tried to slip away towards more shallow water, a warning shot whistled over his head and slashed into the water behind him. After that, he didn't try to get away.

Occasionally, he could see the flame of a match flare up as his captor lighted a cigarette. Freeman's gaze swept the dark surroundings but he could see nothing but the dark outline of the hulking man on the shore and the trees and shrubs beyond. He heard no sound of a struggle or an outcry from Martha.

"It began to turn light and they got scared," Freeman continued. "Anyway, this guy who was watching me left and in a few minutes, I could hear the sound of a car engine."

A squealing of tires told him that the car had pulled out onto the road and was racing away. He swam to the water's edge and clambered onto the bank. He ran to his car and stepped into his shoes and grabbed up the shirt to hold around his middle. Then he began a frantic search for the girl.

He cried out to her, but there was no response. Then he realized that the acid had burned his throat so that no sound came out.

"I ran in circles for a while," he wrote, "looking under trees and behind bushes."

Then he calmed down some and made a more systematic search. He finally found her huddled in a clump of bushes. She was badly battered, unconscious and bloody.

"I picked her up and put her in the car and drove here," Freeman concluded.

"What time were you stopped?" Burgess asked.

"It was 4:35 a.m."

"How do you know?"

"Martha had just looked at her watch. She said it was late and we'd better be going home."

"What about the guns?" Burgess asked. "What kind were they?"

"I don't know much about guns. The big guy had a revolver. I think the other one had an automatic."

"Okay." Burgess said and turned to Dr. Allison. "You want to make an examination, Doc?"

"Yes" Doc Allison already had his bag open. He removed a cylindrical metal object with a long hose.

Freeman watched him with frightened eyes. His mouth worked in a frustrated effort to talk.

"Just take it easy," said Doc Allison. "This isn't as bad as it looks. Your throat's raw and it might hurt a little bit, but it's absolutely necessary that we pump your stomach to get the acid out."

Freeman shuddered and gulped distastefully, but at Doc Allison's urging submitted willingly.

Doc took a specimen of the stomach contents, sqinted at it, then hurried to the door. "I'm going to the lab," he said. "Be back in a minute."

Burgess put flame to a cigarette. "I'd offer you one, but doubt if you could smoke it," he told Freeman.

The young man nodded gratefully.

Only a few minutes had elapsed before Doc Allison was back. He was visibly excited, almost breathless.

"Quick," he said. "There's no time to lose. You've got to get this boy to a hospital right away."

Freeman looked up in alarm.

"You analyze everything already, Doc?" Burgess inquired as he rose and took Freeman's arm.

"No, that's being done now. But I saw enough. He's got to be treated fast or —" He left the sentence hanging.

Freeman was shuddering now and his step was unsteady as Burgess and Tom Wall, each grasping an arm, led him to a police car. They helped him into the back seat and Doc Allison climbed in with him, grasping a pulse.

"Step on it!" Doc said, his voice urgent.

A tall, broad shouldered man who had sat with the driver leaped out.....

CHAPTER—III

AT the hospital, Freeman was rushed into the emergency room, where Doc Allison held a whispered conference with the house physician. The patient's throat was swabbed, something was injected into his arm and intravenous feeding was started.

"All we can do is hope for the best," said Doc. "There's nothing more we can do here."

He led the way to the police car, clambered into the back.

"We'll drop you off at headquarters, Doc." Burgess said.

"You will not! Aren't you going out there to have a look around Carnival Lake?"

"Sure. But I thought you would want to analyze what you pumped out of Freeman's stomach."

"The technicians can do that." Doc Allison eyed Burgess suspiciously and bristled. "Are you trying to brush me off?"

Burgess grinned.

Tom Wall drove to the Carnival Lake recreation area which was about five minutes from police headquarters. The three got out and began prowling around. Doc Allison noted that it was 8.15 a.m.

"Here's her purse," Tom Wall called. The purse was white leather and it gaped open, some of the contents spilled on the ground.

Burgess poked around in it, disregarding the lipstick, compact and other articles usually carried by a woman. There was a plastic card case, with a Social Security card identifying Martha Quane.

"If these guys were robbers," Burgess said, puzzled, "why didn't they take these?" In his hand he held a rhinestone necklace, with earrings to match. "They look new, like they've never been worn."

"Maybe," said Wall, "they were interested only in cash."

"Maybe," Burgess agreed, unconvinced. "That girl was pretty and she must have put up a terrific struggle."

"Yeah, but where? I don't see any scuff marks."

"I don't either. But these weeds and grass are tough."

Doc Allison, meanwhile, had found a hollow tree and looked in. Inside was a bottle—the approximate size and shape of a quart wine bottle. He lifted it out gingerly holding it by the neck so that possible fingerprints wouldn't be spoiled.

The bottle contained a common brand of household ammonia and about four inches of the liquid was missing. There was foam on top of the remainder.

Doc found the two detectives and exhibited the bottle. "This is probably what Freeman had to drink," he said. Then he frowned. "It's still foaming. I wonder how long foam lasts after a bottle of ammonia is stirred up?"

"I don't know," said Burgess. "That's strictly your department, Doc."

Doc Allison grunted. "I suppose it isn't important, but when I have time, I intend to find out."

The detectives smiled. That was one thing about Doc Allison—he had an insatiable curiosity.

They returned to headquarters, where the ammonia bottle and purse were turned over to technicians. "Check 'em for prints," Burgess said. He gestured to Wall and Doc Allison. "Let's go take a look at that car."

Freeman's coat, trousers, socks and shorts had been tossed on the back seat. The girl's shoes and undergarments were in a crumpled heap on the front seat.

Burgess opened the glove compartment and looked in. In addition to a pair of pliers and other articles that didn't interest him, he found a white jewel box. It was empty, but there was a card inside and it was inscribed:

"To my honey, Martha, on her twenty-first birthday, with all my love. Bob."

"They look new, like they've never been worn."

"That's certainly a hell of a way for a birthday celebration to end," said Burgess. "This must be the box the necklace and earrings came in."

They went back into the station where an anguished man of middle age was waiting. He introduced himself as Ralph Quane, Martha's father.

"You saw the boy?" Burgess asked.

He nodded and his face clouded.

"I know it's tough on you, Mr. Quane," Burgess said, "but we'd like to ask you some questions. We're going to find this killer."

"I appreciate that," Quane said, his voice

choked. Then he regained his composure. "I'll tell you anything I can."

"Suppose you tell us about your daughter and her romance."

She had been engaged to marry Freeman, Quane said. The only thing that had held up the wedding was lack of money. Freeman had wanted to be married, but Martha wanted to wait until they had a stake.

"When was the last time you saw her?" Burgess asked.

"Last night about eleven o'clolck when she came back home for a compact she had forgotten."

"You know where she was going then?"

"Yes, she said that Bob was taking her to the Town House for dinner and dancing. Last night was a sort of special occasion—they were celebrating Martha's twenty-first birthday and—". The father choked up again and Burgess waited.

"Do you know where they went earlier in the evening?" he asked.

"Yes, Bob took her to a movie."

"How long had Martha been engaged to Bob?"

"About a year."

"Did she have any other boy friends?" Burgess asked. "Any suitors before she met Bob?"

"Yes, she was a rather popular girl and she had several boy friends before she became engaged to Bob."

"Were any of them jealous of him?"

"Yes, I think so. Bob is older than Martha's regular crowd. They resented it when he came into the picture."

"Can you give me their names?" Burgess asked eagerly.

"You'd better talk to her mother. She knew a lot more about Martha's personal affairs than I did."

"We'll go to see her," said Burgess, "but we'll wait and give her a little time to get over the shock."

"Yes," said Quane, "that would be better."

After he had gone, Doc Allison got up. "I'm going to the morgue and see how the autopsy is coming along."

The technician came in with the purse and ammonia bottle and set them on Burgess's desk.

"A lot of prints," he said, "but they're all so blurred they're worthless."

Burgess nodded. "I expected that. Thanks." He studied the ammonia bottle, then turned to Tom Wall: "I want you to contact the manufacturer of this ammonia by long distance. Get a list of the whole-salers, then of every store in town that sells this brand. Maybe we can find out who bought this bottle."

"Okay," said Tom, "but that may be a big order. Practically every housewife in town uses household ammonia".

"Yeah, I know. But this brand may not sell so well. It's worth a try."

Tom went to his desk and picked up the phone. While he was talking, Burgess made rapid notes on a big pad on his desk—cryptic sentences, abbreviated words that were intelligible only to him. In numerous places, he made big question marks. On another sheet ,he drew long, crude lines and when he had finished, he had what looked like an unfinished map.

Tom Wall hung up and turned to Burgess. "The manufacturer's district sales manager has the list of local stores selling that brand. He's reading it over the phone now to one of the girls."

"All right, when she has the list, I want it distributed to precincts, with instructions for men on every beat to ask the store clerks to try to remember who has bought that brand of ammonia in the last two days. You can do some of the footwork, too."

Tom groaned. "Maybe the bottle was bought a week or a month ago."

"Maybe, but I have a hunch it wasn't."

Doc Allison came back in the office. "The post mortem is almost complete."

"What's the verdict, Doc?" Burgess asked. "A sex attack?"

"No. And no ammonia in her stomach. But practically everything else happened to her. She was beaten on the face and on the body. Her arms were twisted and two of her fingers were broken. Her skull was fractured and she was strangled. Whoever did that hated the girl. He was no stickup man. It was a brutal crime of vengeance."

CHAPTER—IV

THE copyist handed Tom Wall the copies of the list of stores selling the ammonia and he carried them outside to the sergeant, to whom he repeated Jim Burgess' instructions about checkups in all precincts. He shoved a copy in his pocket and stopped at Burgess' door to say, "I'm on my way."

Burgess crushed out his cigarette and spoke to the medical examiner. "Doc, I'm going out to see Mrs. Quane. Want to come along?"

"If you insist," Allison said, reaching for his hat.

The mother was still weeping softly when Burgess and the doctor arrived at the home on Earle Street. She dried her eyes and stared at Burgess for a moment as he apologized for intruding on her grief.

"It was that Dan Karl. I always told Martha he was no good—"

"Who is Dan Karl?" Burgess asked.

"He was her boy friend before she met Bob Freeman. He wanted to marry her. He threatened to break up her engagement. He said she'd be sorry if she married Bob."

"Tell us more about him," Burgess invited.

"Martha met him about three years ago at a dance. He's tall and broad shouldered and he appealed to her at first. But there were other things about him she didn't like."

"What were they?"

"He has a bad disposition at times and a very hot temper. And he drinks too much. Anyway, she tried to quit seeing him, but he was very persistent. She finally had to tell him not to come around and not to call her."

"Do you know if she has seen him since she started going with Bob Freeman?"

"Yes, a few times. He came to the house one night when he was very drunk. He made a horrible scene. He threatened her and said her marriage to Bob would never be a success."

"Do you know if she had heard from him lately?"

"No, but she may have. She—she didn't want to worry. me—" The mother broke off, sobbing again. Burgess waited. Doc Allison turned his head and cleared his throat. Finally, Mrs. Quane was composed again.

"We won't bother you any more than we have to," Burgess said. "Just a couple more questions. How old is this fellow?"

"He's twenty-four but he looks older. Maybe because he's so big and partly because he drinks so much."

"Does he have a job?"

"Yes, he does something at a chemical plant, though I don't know exactly what."

Doc Allison leaned forward. "Did you say he works at a chemical plant?"

"Yes, the Acme Chemical Company."

"Do you know if the plant makes household ammonia?"

"Why yes, I believe so."

Doc nodded, said nothing.

"What about other boy friends?" Burgess asked. "Those she went out with more than once."

Mrs. Quane considered this a moment, then supplied three names.

"Who were her closest girl friends."

"She was close with only one, Georgia Ross. She lives in the next block."

Burgess closed up his notebook. "Thank you very much, Mrs. Quane. I hope we won't have to disturb you any more".

When they were in the car again, Doc Allison said: "Where to now? You going to pick up this Dan Karl?"

"Not yet. I want to see how Bob Freeman is getting along".

It was past noon when they arrived at the hospital. Freeman had responded to treatment and his voice had been restored to the extent that he could talk in a hoarse whisper. He was refreshed by a nap induced by the sedatives, but the horror of the early morning ordeal was still mirrored in his face.

"Do you remember any more about the two men?" Burgess asked.

"It was too dark to see their features", Freeman replied. "But I do remember they both wore Panama hats and the tall one had on dark glasses."

"You don't know if they had been following you during the evening?"

"If they did, I didn't notice them."

"Where did you go last night? Suppose you give us your entire itinerary. Maybe we can find somebody who saw them."

Freeman said they had changed their plans and hadn't gone to the Town House, after all. They had stopped at another place, the Dutch Pantry, for dinner, then, because it was such a beautiful night, they had decided to go for a ride in the country. About 3:45, they had stopped at the Silver Castle for hamburgers and Cokes. Then they had started riding again. Martha had just looked at her watch and said it was 4:35 and they'd better be getting home when the two men in the old car approached.

"You know what time it was when you were forced to jump in the lake?" Burgess asked.

"About five o'clock."

"And you were in the water about half an hour?"

"Yes".

"Then you spent another half an hour looking for the girl?"

"Yes, that's right. And it took me about five minutes to drive to the police station."

Burgess made some entries in his notebook. "I just want to get the whole picture," he explained.

Doc Allison had brought the ammonia bottle. "Is this what they made you drink from?"

"I can't tell just from looking at it. It was too dark to see the label." Freeman put his left hand around the bottle. "It sure does feel like the same bottle."

"Did you ever hear of a man who was trying to force his attentions on Martha?" Burgess asked.

"Yes, Martha told me about him. But she didn't think too much of it. He had made some threats, but she thought it was mostly bluff."

"Was he one of the men who stopped you this morning?"

"I don't know," Freeman said. "I never met him."

The mother broke off, sobbing again.

"Did Martha give any indication that she recognized either of the men?"

"I didn't give it any thought at the time. But now that I think back, maybe she did. I know she was scared to death."

"If you saw him would you recognize him."

"I'm not sure. I wouldn't want to accuse the wrong man. But I surely hope you find him."

"I think we will," Doc Allison said. "In fact, I'm practically certain of it."

As they left the hospital, Doc said: "I want to stop at that store down the street. Got a little shopping to do."

Burgess waited until he came out, carrying a heavy bundle. "You must be thirsty, Doc," Burgess said, as he heard the gurgling of liquid.

"Well, I'm not going to drink this, "Doc said. "I picked up four bottles of ammonia. I want to drop them off at the lab."

While he was giving instructions to a technician.

Burgess stopped in his office and found a message from Tom Wall. He had canvassed a dozen stores with no luck; he said he would keep trying.

Doc came back and the two men were off again. "I want to talk to Georgia Ross," said Burgess.

They found the girl at home. Red rings around her eyes told them she had been weeping.

"Tell us about Dan Karl," Burgess invited.

She said he had annoyed Martha a great deal more than her parents knew about. "Martha didn't want to worry her folks. That's why she didn't tell them about the letter."

"What letter?"

"He wrote her a couple of days ago. It was a crazy, maudlin thing—about her twenty-first birthday, which she wouldn't share with him, and about his shattered dreams."

"Did he threaten her?" Burgess asked eagerly.

"I don't know whether you can call it a threat or not. He ended up by saying she would be to blame for anything that happened that night."

"Do you know what happened to the letter?"

"Yes, she burned it. She didn't want her folks to see it."

"Too bad," Burgess said regretfully. "Did she show it to her fiance?"

"No. She was afraid of what he might do. Bob is very strong. One of his hobbies is weight lifting. He is always practising some feat of strength. He spe ds a lot of time in the gym."

"Do you know why they had postponed their marriage?"

"Yes. They didn't have anything saved and Martha wanted to have a little money ahead before they tried to set up a home. This was strictly her idea, though. Bob was ready to marry on a shoestring."

After they had left the girl, Burgess said: "Now, I think it's time we had a little talk with Dan Karl."

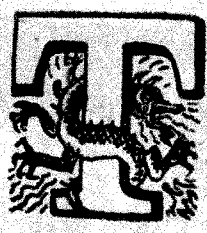
They drove to the Acme Chemical Company, a sprawling plant in an industrial section. The personnel manager referred to a card file, then dialled a number on the plant telephone system. He carried on a brief conversation hung up and turned to Burgess.

"Dan Karl is not here today," he said. "He hasn't been at work for the past two days."

"Did he call up?"

"No. He's absent without leave. His foreman tried to call him and got no answer."

CHAPTER—V



THE manager of a third-rate hotel on a shabby street admitted Burgess and Doc Allison to Dan Karl's room. The shades were drawn and the hotel official switched on a light. The room was a shambles. A chair had been overturned, the faded rug was rumpled, shoes, socks and a man's shirt were scattered on the floor. A man's coat had been thrown across the overturned chair. On an old dresser were two empty whisky bottles. A third, almost empty, rested on a bedside table beside an ashtray overflowing with cigarette butts.

A figure was sprawled across the bed. He was a husky, broad shouldered man, wearing wrinkled trousers and bare from the waist up. His mouth was open and he was snoring loudly.

Burgess stared down at him. His hair was dishevelled and heavy stubble covered his face. He might have been thirty, he might have been fifty. He stirred and made a reckless swing with one arm when Burgess shook him. He kept on snoring.

Doc Allison found water and a towel. He bent over, applied the wet cloth. The sleeping man opened his eyes, squinted at his visitors, then sat up unsteadily and stared at them, his features distorted in a baleful glare.

"Whaddaya want?"

Burgess showed his badge. "Police".

"Go away. I want to sleep".

"After you've answered some questions," Burgess said. "Why didn't you go to work yesterday and today?"

Karl's lips curled up in a snarl. "They got cops checkin' up on why I don't work?"

"Yes, especially when you didn't report after Martha Quane was murdered."

Karl sat up with a start. "What did you say?"

"I said Martha Quane was murdered and you didn't go to work. That's going to take some explaining, mister."

"Martha murdered? Is this a joke?"

"It's no joke. I think you'd better get on your clothes and come along with us."

Karl stood up, took an unsteady step, then grabbed up the whisky bottle. Before Burgess could stop him, he took a long pull. "Hair of the dog," he explained, then walked over to the untidy dresser and found a comb. With the wet towel he swabbed his face and neck.

On the way to headquarter, Karl stared out, anguish on his features. He was led into Burgess' office where he slumped into a chair. "How'd it happen?" he asked. "Who killed her? Why?"

"Maybe we better start at the beginning," said Burgesss, "Where were you yesterday? What did you do last night? Why didn't you go to work for two days?"

Karl stood up, his fists clenched. "You mean you think I killed her?"

"Take it easy," Burgess said calmly. "Nobody's accused you — yet. Suppose you answer my questions."

Karl opened his mouth as if to make an angry retort, then sank into the chair again. "Oh, hell," he said. "I might as well tell you."

"Go ahead."

'She was my girl. I was nuts about her. We were going to be married. Then this jerk came along and she gave me the air. I'm not blaming her. He's pretty and he's polished and he's older than I am. I guess that's enough to sweep a young girl off her feet."

Burgess waited while Karl nervously lighted a cigarette.

"She was twenty-one yesterday. That's when we were going to get married. But she had brushed me off completely She wouldn't even talk to me — she didn't even want me to call her up on the phone. But I was still crazy about her.

"I couldn't sleep, thinking about it. So yesterday morning, I went out and got some liquor. Instead of going to work, I stayed in my room and tied one on."

Karl grinned crookedly. "I guess you've already checked up on me. I guess you know when I tie one on, it's a real knot. I get drunk and I don't

"Get your filthy hands off me!"

give a damn about anything." He spread his hands. "That's what I was doing — and that's all I was doing."

"Can you prove you were in your room at 4:30 this morning?"

"I can't prove a thing. You'll have to take my word for it."

"Your word may be good," Burgess admitted, "but we'll need more than that. Maybe you better think of something."

"I don't know what it would be."

"I don't either," said Burgess, "but it better be good." He pressed a buzzer on his desk and a uniformed officer came in. Burgess nodded towards Karl. "A new guest."

"Get your filthy hands off me!" Karl screamed as the officer advanced. He stood up, doubled up big fists and glared belligerently at the uniformed man.

"We're going to be nice to you — if you let us," Burgess said. "So you can have it either way you want. You can go quietly to a cell under your own power or we can throw you in."

"What are you locking me up for?" Karl demanded.

"To give you an opportunity to think. Maybe you can come up with an alibi."

"I can't. I told you that."

"Well, there's one other way. Are you willing to take a lie test?"

"Why should I? I didn't do anything."

"Then we'll have to hold you."

"Okay. Where's the clink?"

Burgess and Doc Allison watched as the officer led him away. "What do you think, Doc?" Burgess asked.

Before he could answer, the phone rang. It was Tom Wall. "I found a woman who sold a bottle of that ammonia to a man yesterday," he said. "I told her you'd want to talk to her."

"I will — tomorrow. Right now, I'm going home and try to grab a few winks. Doc and I are going to make a little trip starting at midnight. Want to come along?"

"Sure. I'm going to stop by the hospital a moment, then I'll go home. Where'll I meet you?"

"Be here at 11:30."

Tom was waiting when Burgess and Doc Allison reached headquarters at 11.30 that night. "Where are you going?"

"Over the route Freeman and the girl took last night. Maybe somebody saw them. More important, maybe somebody saw a car following them."

At midnight, they pulled away from the Dutch Pantry, where a waiter recalled serving Freeman and the girl. But he hadn't noticed anybody suspicious around them.

Burgess drove at a normal pace, following the itinerary Freeman had given him. At a filling station where Freeman said they had stopped for gas, the attendant remembered them. "Mainly," he said, "because the guy wanted a dollar's worth of gas. Most people say fill it up or ask for five or ten gallons."

"Did you see another car?" Burgess asked. "An old Frazer with two men in it?"

"No. It was late and I didn't see any other cars at all."

Burgess kept to the timetable and arrived at the Silver Castle, an all-night hamburger stand, at 3:42. Here he found several people who had seen Freeman come in. "He stopped to talk to another fellow before he came in and got two hamburgers and two Cokes."

"Did you recognize the man?" Burgess asked eagerly.

"Yes. His name is Sam Banas. He runs a poolroom down the street."

"You know where we can find him?"

"He may still be there. He closes at two, but he usually hangs around for an hour or two to do his book work and clean up the place."

Burgess drove to the poolroom and banged on the door. A door somewhere in the rear opened and a shaft of light was visible through the dirty glass door front. A man came across the room and peered through the clouded glass.

"What do you want?" he demanded.

"Police." Burgess displayed his badge.

Reluctantly, the man opened up and grudgingly admitted he was Sam Banas. "I'm clean," he said. "I close at two like I'm s'posed to."

Patiently, Burgess explained his mission. "I don't remember whether I saw Freeman or not," Banas said.

"We know you did. We want to know what you talked about."

"It wasn't illegal, so it's none of your business."

"We could," Burgess said, still patient, "take you in and ask you at headquarters."

"Oh, all right," Banas said. "It wasn't nothing much. He was broke and I let him take five bucks. That's all."

As they drove away, Doc Allison said: "Did you notice that guy is tall and husky and about thirty years old?"

"Yeah, I noticed," Burgess said. "Maybe we better check up on what kind of car he drives when we got back to the station."

They continued the trip, arriving at Carnival Lake a little before five. They got out and walked to the water's edge, then wandered around killing time until six. It took them five minutes to drive to the police station.

While Burgess was studying the notes he had made on the trip, Doc Allison went into the laboratory. When he came back, he had some figures written on a piece of paper.

"The technicians took four inches off the top of those three bottles of ammonia," he said, "and shook 'em up good. The foam was gone from the last one in two hours and eighteen minutes."

Burgess made a note. "You think that means anything, Doc?"

"I'm not sure, but it may lead us to the killer."

CHAPTER—VI

IT was past eight o'clock when Dan Karl was brought from his cell to Burgess' office. Though his chin stubble had grown some, he looked better. His belligerence of the day before had vanished.

"I've thought it over," he said, "and I'll take the lie test. I didn't do it, so what have I got to lose?"

"It may not be necessary," said Burgess. "You work for a chemical company where they make household ammonia, don't you?"

"Sure. I handle the stuff all the time."

"Ever drink any?"

"Do I look like I've got holes in my head?"

Burgess ignored this. "Well, what would happen if you forced somebody else to drink it?"

"But this is something the law will have to handle. You're free to go at any time."

"Thanks." Karl glanced at the clock. "Too late to go to work now, but maybe I ought to get cleaned up and square things with the boss."

As they watched him leave, Doc Allison said: "He's sort of rough, but I think he might have been a good man for Martha Quane."

Burgess nodded. "Let's go."

When they arrived at the hospital, Bob Freeman was propped up in bed smoking a cigarette. He waved cheerily.

"Feeling better?" Burgess asked.

"Yes. The acid burns are healing nicely."

"As you knew they would," said Doc.

"What do you mean?"

"You work in the research department at the Ace Packing Company," said Burgess. "That makes you a chemist, doesn't it?"

..... and she broke the engagement.

"If he drank much, it would burn his guts up." Karl turned to Doc Allison. "You ought to know that."

"I do," Doc admitted, "and that's why we're not going to hold you. We've got somebody else in mind."

"I wasn't worried", Karl said. "I knew I was innocent. But I might not be long if I could get my hands on the louse that killed my girl."

"I think I know how you feel," said Burgess.

"I'm an apprentice chemist — just learning."

"Low pay?"

"It isn't good, but —"

"Then why are you always broke?"

"I'm not that broke." Freeman smiled. "At least, I wasn't until those guys took my wallet."

"Let's quit stalling, Freeman," said Burgess. "We know your wallet didn't have much money in it — if you had a wallet."

Freeman bristled. "I told you —"

"Yeah, I know what you told us. If you had all

that money, why did you borrow five dollars from Sam Banas?"

"Sam Banas? I never heard of the man."

"Too late for a denial now," said Burgess. "You want to tell us all about it?"

"I've told you all I know."

"No, you haven't. But I think I can guess. Want to hear it?"

Freeman was sullenly silent.

"All right, here's what happened. Martha Quane wanted to save money so you could get married. But you didn't save. Maybe you were gambling in Sam Banas' pool room. She didn't know until last night that you were dead broke. She had been looking forward to the evening at the Town House. You couldn't take her because you didn't have any money, so you compromised on the Dutch Pantry.

"You hurried her out of there and she was disappointed. Maybe you quarrelled then. You smoothed things over and took her for a ride. But after you bought gas, you didn't have enough even for hamburgers. Martha probably demanded an accounting. Maybe she wanted to know what had happened to the money you were supposed to be saving to get married. You couldn't give her a good answer.

"She realized then that if she married you, she probably would have to go on working and maybe even have to help support you. Her eyes were opened suddenly and she broke the engagement. You flew into a rage and began beating her. She fought back but she was no match for your superior strength. Maybe you intended to kill her, maybe not.

"She was unconscious, perhaps dead, when you stopped at the hamburger stand. You bought hamburgers and Cokes for two for an alibi. But you didn't have any money and had to borrow from Sam Banas. There's only one reason a character like Banas would let you have five dollars — you spent all your spare money in his place."

Burgess paused. "Is that right so far?"

Freeman's mouth curled. "It's your story, not mine."

"All right, I'll give you the rest of it. You discovered Martha was dead and you had to think up a good story. Maybe you had the ammonia in the car or maybe you went back home for it. You had to kill time some way. You didn't spend all that time at Carnival Lake."

"You don't know what you're talking about."

"I think I do We were there this morning. In fact, we went everywhere you said you did at approximately the same time. We were on Disston Avenue at 4:35, but we weren't hampered by darkness, because it was after dawn and we could see everything.

"We turned off at Haines Road and drove to Carnival Lake. We got there before five and the sun was coming up. That's how we know you weren't there at that time."

"I could have been mistaken about the time—"

"We thought of that, too. But we did find out you were at the Silver Castle to buy hamburgers at 3:45. You stopped a few minutes to borrow money from Sam Banas. You waited a few more minutes while the hamburgers were cooked and wrapped. By this time, it would be around four o'clock. Assuming you gulped the hamburgers in fifteen minutes, it would still take you until around 4:30 to reach Disston Avenue. And it wasn't dark.

"You were on Disston all right. You were at Carnival Lake, too. You went there to get your shirt wet and swish ammonia around in your mouth. Then you drove to the police station with that wild story. But you made a couple of mistakes and we knew almost from the start that you were not telling the truth."

Freeman was beginning to wilt. "What mistakes?"

"For instance, why did you wedge the girl in the back seat when it would have been so much easier to put her in the front? The reason is obvious: You had killed her before you went to the lake and you had to put her there so she wouldn't be seen.

"There was another big hole in your story. If you had swallowed so much ammonia — four inches were missing from the bottle — you probably would have been having convulsions. As soon as Doc pumped your stomach, he knew you hadn't actually swallowed any. That made us suspicious, but it was actually the time element that tripped you.

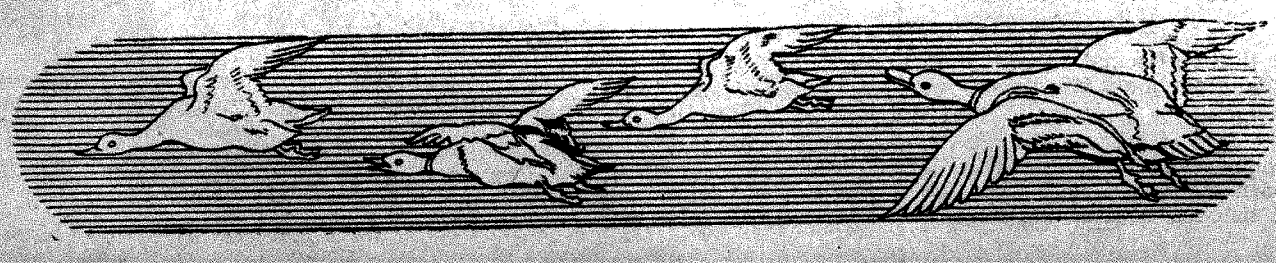
Doc discovered that particular discrepancy. You told us you were forced to drink the ammonia before five o'clock. We found the bottle almost three and a half hours later and there was still foam on the top. Doc didn't believe the foam would last that long and he made an experiment. Even though the test bottles were stirred up a lot more than a bottle would have been from just drinking out of it, the foam subsided in two hours and eighteen minutes. We were sure then that it was around six o'clock you put the bottle to your lips."

"All right," said Freeman, "what's the rest of it?"

"You bought the ammonia because you knew that Dan Karl worked in a plant where it's manufactured. You thought he would be blamed — and he almost was. But he didn't buy ammonia and you did. Tom found where you bought it and he brought the woman to the hospital last night. She took a look at you from the corridor and positively identified you as the man she sold it to."

Freeman was silent.

"Too bad you didn't finish your chemistry training and learn about foam," said Doc Allison.



Rebati

FROM AN ORIYA STORY by FAKIR SENAPATI

Fakir Mohan Senapati was a versatile author in Oriya. He is acclaimed as the father of short story writing in the language. His works comprising short stories, novels, autobiography etc. are treated as modern classics in Oriya literature and they are still avidly read by thousands in Orissa. "Rebati" was published in 1898 and is believed to be the first short story to be published in Oriya.

THE house at the far end of the village had four rooms, two in a row, with doors in front and at the back, and a thatched shed for paddy-husking attached to the wall of the courtyard. The room near the main entrance was a sort of waiting hall for callers and also for tenants who came to pay their rents. Shyambandhu Mohanty was the zamindar's clerk in the village. Patpur was the name of the village, which was in the Harispur Pargana in Cuttack district. With a pay of two rupees a month, and a little money that accrued to him for correction of receipts etc. his income came to rupees four a month. He could somehow make both ends meet with this. And why somehow, he managed it rather well. Nobody in the family ever complained. Besides the leafy and other vegetables in the kitchen garden, there were two trees yielding plenty of drumsticks (sajina), and two milch cows bearing calves every year so that a little milk or curd was always there in an earthen pot in his house. The old woman, his mother, prepared cakes of cowdung mixing it with husk; so fuel was no problem. The zamindar had given him three and a half acres of land for cultivation, so paddy was neither more than sufficient nor insufficient for the needs of the family.

Shyambandhu was a straightforward man and the tenants respected and loved him. He collected rents going round from door to door and using the words of endearment. He never extracted a single pie from anybody illegally. Tenants never demanded receipts after paying the rent but he always wrote them out on bits of palm-leaf and fixed them in their thatches. When the zamindar's peon came to the village, Shyambandhu did not leave him without greasing his palm. Shyambandhu's family consisted of four persons—himself and his wife, his old mother and a daughter aged ten, named Rebati.

In the evenings he sat on the verandah and sang, "Oh, the face of an ocean of mercy....." and other devotional songs. Occasionally, he placed a lamp on a wooden stand and read from the **Bhagabata**, and Rebati listened to it sitting near him. She had also picked up many devotional songs which heard sweet in her melodious young voice. When she sang those songs to her father, villagers came to listen. She had learnt a particular song from her father who became extremely happy to hear her sing it. She had to give a recital of it every evening to please her father.

Rebati sang:

"To whom shall I appeal;
Oh Lord, if you don't look up,
the poor will die:
Save me or not,
I've laid my life at Thy feet,
with Your name in my heart.
Without Thee, O Hari, the three-worlds
are deserts,
Soothe my life by a gift of Thy love".

Two years back, the Deputy Inspector of Schools, while on a tour to rural areas had spent a night at Patpur. On the representation of some important persons of the village, the Deputy Inspector had moved the higher authorities for an Upper Primary School there. A school was eventually opened in the village, with a teacher on a pay of rupees four a month which was paid by the Government. It was supplemented by the tuition fees collected from students at the rate of one anna a month from each student. The teacher was elementary trained from the

Cuttack Normal School. His name was Basudeva. Worthy of his name, he was both inherently and outwardly good. He never raised his head to look at anybody while walking through the village. He was about twenty with a beautiful appearance as if curved on a single grain of rice. In his childhood he had infantile epilepsy and his mother had branded his face with the mouth of a heated bottle, and the scar, which rather looked lovely on the face, was still visible. He was an orphan since his boyhood and was brought up by his maternal uncle. Basudeva was Karana by caste and so was Shyambandhu. On festive occasions when any special dishes were prepared in his house, Shyambandhu went to the school and said, "Basu, please come to our house in the evening; your aunt wants you". A kind of relationship had grown between them in the course of these visits. Rebati used to say about him, "Oh, the motherless man. There is nobody to see what he eats". Every evening Basu came to Shyambandhu and sat with him for some time.

"Brother Basu has come", cried out Rebati whenever she saw him coming at a distance. She sang the old songs every evening for Basu who enjoyed them as new ones. Once Shyambandhu heard from Basu that there was a Girls' school at Cuttack where girls learnt the three R's and sewing. Since that day, Shyambandhu desired to educate Rebati and communicated his feeling to Basu.

Basu respected him as his father. He said, "Yes, I was just going to suggest that to you".

They agreed about Rebati's education. Rebati heard it and darted into the house and informed her mother and grandma, "I'll go to school and read".

Her mother said, "All right, you will". Grandmother said, "What do you mean by reading ? You are a girl, what have you to do with reading ? It is enough if you learn to cook properly, to prepare cakes and sweets, to decorate a place with coloured rice powder, to churn the curd".

One evening sitting on a low stool of mango plank wood in the verandah, Shyambandhu was taking his meal. Rebati was also eating from his dishes. The old woman sitting before them ordered her daughter-in-law, "Get some more rice, some *dal*, and a pinch of salt". Then she asked, "Oh, Shyama, will Reba learn to read—but why should a girl read ?"

Shyambandhu said, "Let her read, she wants it. The girls of the Patnaik family of Jhankar can read **Bhagabat**, and sing **Baidahis Bilas** lyrics".

Rebati got annoyed and abused her grandmother in a low, inaudible voice, "You old fogey !" She said to her father, "No, father, I must read."

Shyambandhu assured her, "Yes, yes, you will read."

The matter ended there for the day.

Next day when Basudev gave a copy of the "First Book of Reading" by Sitanath Babu to Rebati, she avidly turned the pages of the book and glanced through it from beginning to end. She was enchanted to see the pictures of elephants, horses, cows etc. Kings are happy because they keep elephants and horses, some are happy because they ride on them, but Rebati was happy just to see their pictures. She ran to her mother and showed her the pictures. She then showed them to grandma who said peevishly, "Yes, yes, you go.....", Rebati retorted, "You get out, you get out."

* * *

It was an auspicious day—the day on which the Goddess of Learning is worshipped. Rebati took a plunging bath and wore a new sari and waited impatiently for Basu who would initiate her in reading the book. Just not to annoy grandma, no arrangement was made to celebrate the occasion. At six o'clock, Basu gave her the first lesson.

The study continued, and everyday Basu taught her in the evening. Within two years she progressed much. She could now read Madhu Rao's lyrics at ease.

One evening while Shyambandhu was taking his meal, the mother and the son had a discussion. It was in the trail of a conversation they had the day before.

Shyambandhu said, "Well mother, wouldn't it be nice ?"

The old woman replied, "Yes, it would be nice, but have you enquired about the caste ?"

"What else had I been enquiring all these days ? He is a Karan—a high caste. May be of a poor family, but of high caste", said Shyambandhu.

His mother quoted a verse. "Wealth and riches do not matter, about the caste first enquire" She asked, "Will he stay in our house ?

"Where shall he go ? After all he has only his uncle and aunt", said Shyambandhu.

Rebati listened to it sitting near him.

Rebati was eating her meal there. She guessed something from this talk, but her manners and behaviour changed completely from that day, She was bashful when Basu taught her before her father. With or without reason she felt like laughing but controlled herself tightening her lips and bending her head low. From now, while Basu taught her, she read silently or simply made a sound, "Hum, Hum" and ran into the house after the lesson was over laughing within her tightened lips. Every evening she expectantly looked for somebody at the front door but bolted into the house when Basu came. Grandma began to take exception to her going out of the house.

Two years elapsed. It is ordained by God that nobody should have the same time all through. It was early spring. All on a sudden cholera broke out in the village, and one morning Shyambandhu fell ill.

In the village nobody stirred out of home when there was an epidemic. Everybody believed that the old woman, Cholera, with a basket on her waist, kept herself busy picking up men and women from the road. There was chaos in Shyambanbhu's family. What could the two women do ? The young girl came out of doors and again entered the house all the time crying at the top of her voice. Basudev ran from the schooo the moment he heard about Shyambandhu's attack. Without fear, without care of his own safety, he sat by the side of Shyambandhu and nursed him. In the afternoon Shyambandhu stared at Basu's face and indistinctly uttered, "Rebati is now your responsibility".

Basu cried out loudly. There was a stir in the house. Rebati was rolling on the ground and the villagers said, "Perhaps the end has come". By evening it was all quiet. But what was to be done ? Basu was an inexperienced youth, the other two were women. Bana Sethi, the village washerman, was an experienced man, because during his life time he had disposed of about a hundred such dead bodies. He believed that every body must have to go, either today or tomorrow, but now there was the hope of getting a few pieces of cloth. Tightening the napkin around his waist and lifting the hatchet to his shoulder, he presented himself at Shyambandhu's house. It was the only house of a Karan in the entire village. So, the mother-in-law, the daughter-in-law and Basudev somehow got through the cremation. Passing a feverish night at the burning ghat, they returned home in the morning.

Just after Rebati's mother entered the house, she had began vomitting profusely, and by noon it was known in the village that she was no more.

Time and tide wait for none. As the rustic proverb goes, some have umbrella over their palanquin, while some have whipping in fetters. Any way, three months elapsed. Shyambandhu had two cows but the zamindar's men took them away for defaulted payment. Shyambandhu regarded the zamindar's due as sacred and had no sleep until he had deposited the same in the kutchery of the zamindar. At any rate, the zamindar knew them to be prize cows.

He took back the land given to Shyam. The servant engaged for tilling that land left them on the full moon day in early spring. The bullocks were sold for rupees seventeen and a half. The funerals took more than half the amount. The family pulled on with the balance with great difficulty for a month. Another month went by mortgaging and selling the household utensils. Basu came to the house twice daily and stayed till late in the evening and returned to his own house only when grandma and granddaughter went to bed.

Basu offered money, but both of them refused it. If Basu gave anything in spite of their protests, it was left in the niche untouched. Basu came to know of this and did not give anything thereafter. He took a few small coins from the old woman and purchased daily necessaries, with which they could manage for eight or ten days. The house needed thatching. Basu had purchased two rupees worth of straw but the thatching could not be done because the time was inauspicious.

Every evening the old woman wept. She spent the night on the ground where she fell crying and Rebati slept by her side. She became almost mad and her eye-sight was fast failing. Soon she stopped crying all the time, and begun to abuse Rebati, because she had by now come to the conclusion that Rebati was at the root of all the sufferings. It must be all due to Rebati's learning to read and write. So her son died, her daugher-in-law died, the servant left them, the bullocks were sold, the zamindar took away the cows. Grandma had no doubt about it. Her failing eye-sight was also attributed to Rebati's education. When, she abused her, Rebati could not stand near her and tears streamed down her cheeks. She turned her face to a corner of the room or to the back-door and stood like a statue. Basu also felt guilty because Rebati had read nothing till he began to teach her. But she could say nothing to Basu because without him it was impossible to live. Besides, the final settlement with the zamindar was still pending. The zamindar's men often came and demanded this or that account. Who else, except Basu, could search out the necessary papers from the old records ? When Basu was not present, the old woman expressed her opinion loudly.

Rebati was no longer the dancing doll frisking about in the house. Since the death of her parents nobody had ever seen her at the front door nor heard her voice. For a few days she cried aloud, but now she did not. Her two big eyes were always full of tears and looked like two small blue lilies on water. Her little life and her still little heart were completely shattered. Days and nights had become alike to her. There was no light in the sun and no darkness in the night, the entire world was a vacuum to her. Her parents' images always filled her heart. In her mind's eye she only saw, 'Here mother was sitting, there father was going.' She could not believe that they were dead and would never return. She had no hunger, no sleep but always thought of her parents. Out of fear for grandma, she sat at her meals but rarely got up from the place where she sat. She was reduced to a skeleton. Only when Basu came to their house, she got up and stared at him with her two big eyes and when Basu looked at her she heaved a little sigh and lowered her head. As long as Basu was with her, she stared at him and forgot everything else. She only saw Basudeva, thought of Basudeva, her entire heart was full of Basudeva.

It was the fifth month after Shyambandhu's death and the second month of the summer. Basu came to their house at midday. He never came at this hour. Grandma opened the door with difficulty.

"Grandma," (Basu used to call her grandma all along) "the Deputy Inspector will examine the students of the school at Hariharpur Police Station. Students of other schools will go there. I shall go there tomorrow morning with my pupils. It may take about five days."

Rebati heard this from behind the door and suddenly she sat down on the floor. Fortunately, she was holding the door, otherwise she would have fallen on the floor. Basu purchased rice, salt, oil and vegatables for five days and keeping them on the

courtyard he made an obeisance to grandma and started on his journey.

The old woman advised him, "Well, son, don't expose yourself to sun, take care of your health and keep to your meal time." After saying this she heaved a sigh.

Rebati was looking at him with great concentration but her look was rather different from that of other days. Previously, she lowered her head when Basu stared at her, but today she was looking straight at him. Basu's look was not also like it was on other days when it appeared that though he had great desire to see Rebati thoroughly he could not look at her straight. On that day, their four eyes met and none had the control to turn the eyes away.

The day was out, Basu had gone away and everywhere there was darkness. Rebati was staring out as before but when the old woman called her, she got back to her senses and saw darkness everywhere.

Rebati was counting the days, it was the sixth day. She had not seen the front door since her parents died but today since morning she had come to the front door twice. In the afternoon, as soon as the school boys returned from Hariharpur, the villagers talked among themselves that the Pandit was attacked with cholera under the shade of a banyan tree at Gopalpur while returning from Hariharpur and after only four motions he died at midnight. The villagers mourned him. Boys and girls, mothers and other women cried out loudly. Some said, "Oh, what a beautiful appearance he had!" Some remarked, "How well behaved he was!" Some others observed, "He never cursed a fly while going on the road."

Rebati heard it, grandma heard it. Grandma's voice became choked. She could no longer cry. At last, she got up and said, "Oh, son, you came to a distant place and lost your life due to your own folly," meaning that Basudeva died because he taught lessons to Rebati. Rebati fell on the ground when she heard the news. The day passed and next morning grandma not finding Rebati near her called aloud, "Oh, Rebati," — she abused her, cursed her. She had become frenzied. She did not cry aloud but rebuked Rebati day and night in anger. The neighbours and passers-by heard at all time, "Oh, Rebati, Oh, evil spirit — Oh, witch!"

Their four eyes met . . .

Her eye-sight had completely failed. She groped about the house and at last found Rebati. She called her and getting no reply she touched her body and felt the high temperature she was running. She found Rebati unconscious. She sat there and began to think. What should she do, whom should she call? She searched her little world in her own mind but found none near. Unable to decide anything she muttered in anger, "What's the remedy for that which is your own creation?" meaning that the fever was due to Rebati's learning and what she could do.

The first two days passed, the third and fourth days also passed, even the fifth day; Rebati had become only skin and bone. She could not open her eyes. She gave no response to gradma's call, not even a little sound did she make. It was the sixth day. Rebati had loudly groaned twice or thrice since morning. Grandma went to her and felt her hands and feet. They were icy cold. She only uttered, "Hum, Hum". She was staring with her big eyes and was delirious. Had any Kaviraj seen her at that time, he should have repeated some lines from his text books, "Thirst, temperature, delirium, sure signs of collapse." But grandma became somewhat jubilant. The temperature had gone down. Rebati could now speak which she could not for the last six days. She had opened her eyes which were closed. She wanted a drink of water which she had not taken on her tongue for the last six days. She would certainly get up if only a little food could be thrust into her.

"You better lie down and let me prepare your diet," said grandma and came out of the room.

How could she prepare the diet? She searched everywhere but there was not even a handful of rice in the house. She sighed and sat down for a while. Basu had purchased provisions for five days, and it was ten, eleven day now. If grandma had her eyesight all right, she could have understand. A way could be found out if one sat and thought over it. There were no utensils in the house. She could pick up only a leaking water pot. She started for Hari Shaw's shop with that.

Hari Shaw's house was in the middle of the village. He had no regular grocery but stocked rice, pulse, salt, oil etc. and if by chance some strangers came to the village they purchased these things from him. Occasionally, the villagers also purchased their immediate requirements from him.

Grandma arrived at Hari Shaw's place with the water pot. Hari Shaw could well guess the purpose of her visit by merely seeing that water pot in her hand. When grandma expressed her desire, Hari took the water pot from her and holding it in his own hand began to examine it from different angles. Then he said, "No, no, I haven't got any rice in my store. Moreover, who would give rice on the mortgage of this leaking water pot?" It was not a fact that he had no rice in his house. He was also agreeable to give it but tried to bargain for getting the water pot cheap.

It was a bolt from the blue when she heard that there was no rice. She thought, "What shall I do? The girl has recovered from fever, what shall I feed her?" She sat there for a while. It was dusk. She gazed at Hari and said, "Let me go and see what the girl is doing now." As she was getting up with the

(Continued on page 88)

MY GENIAL HOST

By SHEILA CHAUDHURI

MY host had been most cordial, might one add, almost too much so. It was this completely unexpected consideration on his part that left me so vulnerable. One is unused to kindness.

I was at that time a dramatist. I use the term loosely, there being but one successful production to my name. I had tried most forms of self-expression, a little acting, art, journalism etc., and yet I thought of myself as being neither a dilettante nor extrovert but rather a man of catholic interest.

I am an experienced man, one who is fully cognizant of those pretentious beings who cling to the fringes of the world of literature, misquoting and idealizing one's work. But I am neither that famous nor revolutionary in style to warrant such a parasitic growth. My plays are simple social dramas, such as are pleasing to our Bengali audience. There is nothing of a world-shattering nature about them. And to be quite frank, I myself tend to be a little nondescript.

I had met the man at a party. I had been away from Calcutta for quite a few years and had lost touch with everyone. I am still not quite sure as to why I was invited. It was one of those upper-strata affairs where every second person is a stranger. Being reserved by nature and knowing neither my host nor hostess, I retired to a corner—not too far from the bar—and tried to be as unobstrusive as possible.

Couples wriggled to modern music, glasses clinked with cubes of ice, others sat smoking or making abortive attempts to speak to some important personage who stood surrounded by the usual satellites. It was a mixed gathering. My one-time fellow journalists down from Delhi, film people from Bombay, air-hostesses and society women weighed down by towering coiffures while sporting such a range of international fashion that it became obvious as to who were their escorts. The poor fellows looked so miserable.

One of the ladies invited me to dance with her. I refused with as much grace as possible, shrinking away and lamely waving my untouched drink as an excuse. She flicked a strand of beads in my face and swayed her hips in farewell. Frankly those ultra-modern women frighten me. Later, I heard her recounting the incident to a friend with an enormous posterior. Both appeared delighted that I had behaved in so boorish a manner. A writer apparently can do no wrong.

He introduced himself as Basu. I believe he was the only other Bengali, besides myself, to be there that evening. We drifted together as people do when belonging to the same club or minority factor. Had we been dogs, we would no doubt have wagged our tails. After all the odds were overwhelming.

We agreed that the party was boring, but that the drink was good. At least, they had not yet switched over to local whiskey as is usually the case at those affairs. And after a few more pegs, which made a pleasant blur of everything, I found myself leaning owlishly on his shoulder babbling a great deal of philosophic nonsense while being sober enough to accept a dinner invitation for the follow-

ing day. Afterwards, in retrospect, I blamed the drinks. For I rarely dine out, having a strange aversion to seeing other people eat.

He drove the car—a new Herald—carefully, gently easing it past the worst potholes which showed me that the roads had not improved during my absence. China Town was also much the same, queer little shops, narrow ill-lit streets and an abundance of garishly dressed women patiently waiting for their first customers.

We chose a restaurant which I had been to before and to my relief were able to obtain an empty cabin. He ordered the usual thing, chicken fried rice, mixed chow and prawns, also one or two of the more expensive dishes showing that he was not worried as to the bill. My head was still a little fuzzy from the effects of the night before, but I accepted the cold beer that was set before me. One so rarely has the chance of a free drink.

We spoke of the weather and compared our impressions of the Capital, ending with some rather vulgar jokes. You know the type of thing. But the conversation was somewhat desultory and we were glad to spoon our way through steaming bowls of sharks-fin soup. I have tried, but could not get used to chopsticks. A pity, for using western cutlery for an oriental dish does offend my aesthetic taste.

Basu was a heavily built man who perspired a great deal. The restaurant was old and had not installed air-conditioning, relying on heavy-duty fans and the open windows to provide such ventilation as was possible. His obvious discomfort made me wonder as to why he had not chosen to dine in Park Street, I had observed that a lot of new places had opened. But then, what did I know of the man?

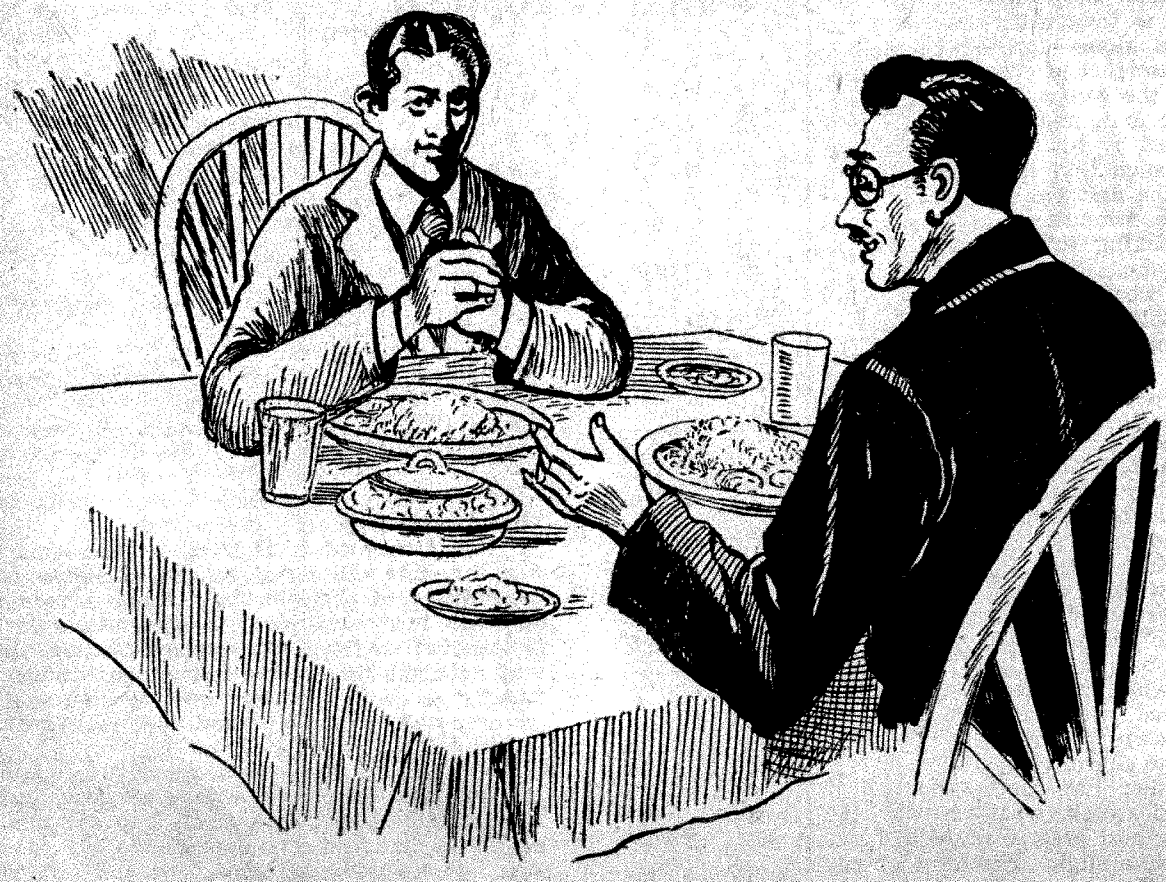
He mentioned one or two of my articles which had recently appeared in our local newspapers, trifles of a political nature. Later, he also casually referred to a drama of mine which had enjoyed a certain renown. I was surprised by his interest. I, in turn, more out of politeness than anything else, ventured one or two remarks as to his mode of income.

He stared at me rather intently for a few minutes, as though weighing something in the balance, then murmured that he was in plastics but was thinking of retiring. My expression no doubt registered my surprise, for he could not have been much senior to my own, which was at that time, forty-three. I also wondered how he was managing to take such a step in those whittling days of super-tax.

He laughed, wiping a remnant of soup from his mouth with a napkin. It appeared that he had found a more profitable line of business which would take him out of Calcutta a great deal. (If only one were a mind-reader). He mentioned his manager as being unreliable. (For one indignant second I thought he was going to offer me a job). And he continued, saying, that under the circumstance he considered it prudent to resign from his present commitments and start afresh.

The rest of the meal was eaten in quiet companionship. The prawns were delicious. I am not unduly curious of my fellow men and know even less as to the world of business and so felt quite satisfied by his explanation. I rather chose to concentrate my attention upon the best cuisine I had eaten in weeks.

You will gather from this that my circumstances were far from stable. That is unfortunately true. After coming back to Calcutta, I had rented a modest flat in an unfashionable quarter of the City—one room with a shared bathroom—spacious enough for a bachelor, yet offensive to my sense of hygiene. Having arranged my few personal effects, I was only too glad to wander forth to re-discover old haunts. I believe I lived on little but my reputation



We spoke of the weather and compared our impressions of the Capital.

Her eyes were doe-like in their softness.....

as a playwright and past laurels. I was always able to persuade someone to stand me a cup of coffee.

It would be, I suppose, about two weeks later that I met Basu again. It was a hot day and he looked as though he had reached boiling point as he hurried along mopping his perspiring brow, the briefcase tucked carefully under his arm, going towards the general direction of the United Bank. He seemed delighted to see me. I on my part felt quite flattered by his continued interest. My personality being such that it usually arouses little response after the first two or three meetings.

He commented upon my health, saying that I was looking tired—I had been suffering from a severe bout of bronchitis—and as to the progress of my work, ending a rather one-sided conversation by absolutely insisting that I should dine with him again on the following Tuesday. This time, however, in the intimacy of his home. He wished, he said, to introduce me to his wife and would brook no refusal.

Having reached him through the cool portals of the Bank, I plunged back into the heat again and was lucky to hail a passing taxi. The solitude of my flat held no pleasure for me that day and so stripping down, I took a shower and engrossed myself in a crime story.

I walked through the overgrowth of an informal garden, following a half-hearted path past a group of banana and palm trees. A family of monkeys gibbered insults from the safety of a high wall, while overhead a multitude of brilliantly feathered birds screeched and chirruped while bedding down for the night. The house was imposing with the charm of age upon it. It had not grown old but rather had mellowed with the passing years. The brickwork, weather-worn, to a subdued hue.

My host greeted me with his customary warmth and yet, a slight constraint of manner as though other affairs pressed for his early attention. His wife was young, surprisingly so, for she could not have been more than eighteen or twenty years. Her eyes were doe-like in their softness, her hair styled in an old-fashioned coil upon the nape of her neck. Her figure was as slender as the unopened bud of a flower. She had indeed captivated me. My eyes, throughout the evening, refused to obey my command but strayed of their own will towards her. If my host observed their partiality, he made no comment but continued to treat me as a very dear friend.

Before I took my leave, he informed me in the tone of one vaguely embarrassed, that he had to leave for Bombay the next evening, on business matters pertaining to his new venture. His wife, unfortunately, would have to remain behind and he wondered—knowing of course that it was a great imposition—as to whether I could drop by a few times to see that all was well.

This strange request should have warned me. For such is not our custom in a respectable Bengali family. A female relation would always be sent for during such an emergency and in any case why did the couple live alone? But I was a little too desirous to comply with his wishes. To see her again, so intimately, was more than I could hope for. He had indeed chosen his victim well.

But O, the irony of fate! At that same time, a film-director who I had spoken to at the party—a decent sort of chap—brought along a very famous actor-producer who said he was interested in one of my plays. After a preliminary reading, the great man coughed, then stared out of the window before turning round and asking me as to whether I would be prepared to make a few changes. Who, in my circumstances, would not?

And so I found myself laboriously adding a larger speech here, a shorter one there, until the actor thundered his chosen role into the ears of the next-door cat and pronounced himself satisfied. I slammed the door upon his back and promptly fell asleep, while her face drifted into my dreams like an unobtainable mirage.

It was on the ninth day that the letter arrived

and having quickly read its purport, I sat in a state of absolute perplexity. She had written to tell me that she missed me. That she would take it kindly if I could visit her. She mentioned both a day and an hour for what she termed, our re-union.

I felt shattered. Was this the innocent citadel which I had thought to take by storm. She writing to me? I pondered over the matter, half-ruefully sensing that something was wrong. I was both impetuous enough to go and yet cautious enough to discuss my dilemma with someone else.

I chose for my confidante an experienced woman of my acquaintance, one who had appealed to me in my younger days. We had ended our relationship with few regrets on either side and had been lucky enough to remain close friends. She was one of the few people who had bothered to keep in touch with me while I was away.

We sat upon her verandah which overlooked the lakes of South Calcutta. Her bearer, a discreet presence in the background, kept our glasses refilled. Her face was of one who had rode most storms and has at last found a safe harbour for her emotions. She listened attentively, although obviously amused by my poetical ravings, so reminiscent of the youth I had been those many years ago. Afterwards, she lit a cigarette and sat staring thoughtfully into the night while she pieced together the broken fragments of my story.

"Is it blackmail?" she said at last. "Is the little one the bait and you the too hungry fish, while the fisherman holds out not a basket but a blank cheque? Or is it simply a matter of....commerce?" She reached over for the letter which lay on the glass top of a small wrought-iron table between us. Her eyes hardened and she shrugged, calmly tearing it into pieces. I sprung up, indignation rendering me speechless, but she patted my hand and forced me to reseat myself. She always had been a domineering woman.

"Do you really wish to know?" She inquired shrewdly. "Is it not better to leave things as they are?"

I sat for many hours, feeling for the first time since my return to Calcutta, relaxed. Later, I renewed that phase of our life which had fallen into disuse. Not, may I add, without a smile of complacence for my triumph over my unknown rival.

Circumstance, however, caught up with me in the end. I was entering the coolness of a popular cafe the other morning, quietly congratulating myself on the successful box-office of my new play, when a familiar figure seated in an alcove caught my attention. It was Basu, still as genial as ever, entertaining a young man whose face had appeared on most cinema hordings in Bengal. With them sat —but could it be she? Her hair was bobbed into the latest style, her legs encased into a pair of striped jeans, she looked a typical hopeful candidate for an acting career and suddenly I burst out laughing. People stared but I could not stop, the whole thing was too funny. I remembered his questions as to my play and to the fact of his observing me talking to that fellow from Bombay. Her rather theatrical simplicity at the house and the subsequent worried tone of the letter. Blackmail? Of course not. The poor girl had only wanted to become an actress

It was much later that I paused to wonder where his obvious wealth had come from. But then, did I really wish to know?

REBATI

(Continued from page 84)

water pot, Hari said, "Give it, give it to me and let me see what is there in my house."

Hari kept the water pot and gave her about two seers of rice, half a seer of pulses and a little salt. Granny reached home after taking rest at several places. Till then she had not brushed her teeth, what to speak of the conditions of her body and mind. After reaching home, she called Rebati. She believed that Rebati was all right. She thought Rebati would draw water from the well and she would cook. When Rebati did not reply she got angry and cried out, "Oh, Rebati, Oh, evil spirit, O witch—". Still there was no reply.

Rebati was collapsing rapidly. She was suffering an intense pain, her body was gradually getting cold. She felt as if her tongue was being drawn inside with great thirst. She wanted to go to a cool place and came out of the room by rolling over the floor but found no relief in that. She came to the back door and sat there on the verandah.

The day was running out and there was a strong breeze. She sat there leaning to the fence. She looked at the garden. She thought, "This plantain sucker was planted by father last year. It has flowered. That guava tree was transplanted by mother two years back on which she had poured water drawing it from the well herself. It is now in bloom." These reminded her of her parents. Her thoughts were incoherent, her mind was unsteady. She could not recall anything clearly. The happy image of her mother did not leave her mind.

It was already evening. Darkness emerged from under the trees and from behind the branches and filled the entire garden till nothing was visible. She looked up at the sky. The evening star was emitting its rays. Rebati gazed at the star without a wink. The size of the star was gradually getting big. It became like a wheel and still increased in size and became brighter. Alas, whose image was there in that star? The soothing, the loving, the happy, the fearless image of her mother was there calling her affectionately to return to her lap. Mother had stretched her two yearning hands towards her. Those rays of light touched her eyes and entered her heart.

In the darkness, there was no other sound except that of respiration. That sound became louder, turned to gasping and ended in an indistinct sound, "Mother, Mother." The garden became calm and quiet.

Grandma reached the place where Rebati was sleeping with much difficulty and found nobody there. Rebati was nowhere, not in the house, nor in the courtyard, nor in the paddy-husking shed. Grandma thought that she was cured of fever and she must be strolling in the garden. Again she uttered the same call, "Oh, Rebati, Oh, evil spirit, O witch—".

She went to the backdoor and groped her way to the verandah which was two cubits high from the ground and a cubit wide.

"Oh, you are sitting here?" But grandma was startled when she touched Rebati's body. She again felt Rebati's body with her hands from top to toe. She held her fingers under her nostrills and suddenly uttered a heart-rending cry. There was a thud under the verandah.

Nobody in the world has ever seen any living being of Shyambandhu Mohanty's house since that day. The neighbours had heard the last voice at night, "Oh, Rebati, Oh, evil spirit, Oh, witch!"

— Translated by K. C. Mitra

FOLK SONGS AND DANCES OF UTTAR PRADESH

By Projesh Banerji

THE intimate life of a people are expressed through its folk songs and folk dances. The flok-dances depend mainly on the themes described in the folk-songs, with the accompaniment of which the folk-dances are enacted.

The folk-songs and like-wise the folk-dances are greatly influenced by natural phenomena; more specially the composers of songs and the artists, being surrounded by nature, merge themselves with their thoughts and actions in the beauty of nature. So in their art, and especially in the songs there are descriptions of natural beauty, human beauty, beauty of the village belles, and their psychological effect on the human mind. Apart from the religious tinge, blind faith and superstition, the psychological aspect of the villagers, as a consequence of all the phases of nature, which is around them, plays a very important role. For example, the beloved looking at the clouds, is reminded of her husband, who has gone abroad, requests him to come back through her songs, and weeps.

Like all other Indian States Uttar Pradesh is a rich storehouse of folk-lores. The words of the songs bear the touch of the simplicity of the rural dialect, and at the same time their meaning is deep. No hard labour towards metrical arrangement is evinced. The compositions are effortless but captivating, sweet and devoid of any sophistication. The songs are overflowed with the spontaneous joy of the yokel, their customs, their thoughts and sentiments, their sorrows, habits and everyday occurrences. There is no mission nor poetic embellishments embedded in classical tunes. But on the other hand the innocence of rustic hearts is dormant under the musical scores.

The villagers sing not for name or fame or money, but being prompted by the inner joy and impulse of the heart. When they are engaged in harvesting, repairing the leaking roof or grinding corn, they sing to get relief from exhaustion and try to express their feelings of the particular moments through the medium of tuneful words.

Regarding the basic technique of the folk-songs, it can be said that the songs range within a span from *'Sa'* to *'Pa'*, and do not go further up, they may come lower down to two notes at the most. The modern sophistication has allowed a longer range for such songs, but the original compositions, even the tunes on the flutes, have a restricted field, though they may seem monotonous or bring boredom to an unaccustomed ear.

Moreover, many classical tunes are based upon folk-tunes, especially the seasonal tunes. Indian classical music and also dancing is folk in content and form. *Kajri* has affinity with *Megh* and *Malhar* is to be sung during the rainy season. Some *Viraha* songs of separation have similarity with the pathetic tune of *Behag*. The attributes of caste, colour, time and season in classical music are to life and nature and are wholly folk in origin. They have a rural growth.

One must not, however, think of folk-music as a spontaneous and formless outpouring of the soul. It has laws and principles which are nonetheless positive, because they are unconsciously obeyed. A folk-song or folk-dance does not simply spring out of the void in response to some emotion. However much an individual folk-singer or folk-dancer may extemporize, he is in the main following certain patterns which have been established by tradition and which he has inherited by oral transmission.

A folk-song differs from an art song, not because it is artless, but because, instead of being the work of one individual, it is the product of many generations of singers who by trial and error have found the mode of expression best suited to the genius of the community. So in talking of folk-music we must distinguish between genuine folk-music and popular music. Folk-music has come down to us from the past, but keeps its freshness and vitality by constant variations to which it has been subjected during the course of oral transmission. Popular music, on the other hand, is the composition of an individual which strikes the popular imagination but only superficially, and being without roots, usually withers away soon after it appears.

Music educators can perform a very valuable service to the culture and well-being of their fellows by recognising the true nature of folk-music and by presenting it as a thing of intrinsic beauty which is worth cultivating for its own sake. Folk-music has its limitations; the best of it is comparable to the work of the great masters.

Unhappily, in most countries considered to be in the van of progress, folk-music has been almost forgotten and has been retained only by those country people who are the least affected by modern civilisation.

The question is, can folk-music act as a social binding force internationally as well as nationally? I think, it can, with the proviso that a person should have a thorough knowledge of the folk-music of his own country before attempting to understand that of other nations. He will then be in a position to appreciate the diversity which makes for unity, and will not merely be cultivating a cosmopolitan taste.

Those who attend the festivals which the International Folk Music Council holds every year in different parts of the world never fail to find that

despite the great diversity of style, there are common themes which run through the dances of countries several thousand miles apart.

Actually it is not surprising because folk-dances the world over originated in the rituals which were once associated with religious beliefs common to all mankind. These beliefs have many different forms of expression but in the main they may all be summed up in man's desire.

Coming to the particular kinds of songs of Uttar Pradesh, the various districts of the State have their own seasonal songs, religious songs and songs of chivalry. Among the seasonal songs the most prevalent and well-known are *Kajri, Saoni, Holi, Phagua, Alha, Viraha, Purvi, Daramasa* etc. *Holi* and *Phagua* are the songs for Spring, *Viraha, Purvi* and *Baramasa* are the types of songs sung all through the year, but particular songs are meant for particular seasons mentioned in the songs themselves. *Kajri, Jhula, Saoni* and *Alha* are songs specially sung during the rainy season. *Alha* is the harbinger of rains and depicts the heroic deeds of the two brave brothers, Alha and Udal. During the drizzles one finds from every country cottage a dim oil lamp burning on the outer verandah and the farmer after his day's toil on the fields, snatching a few moments for his rest with his 'Hukka', stammeringly reciting *Alha* with a loud voice in harmony with the background strain of the buzzing grasshopper.

Then comes the lyrical *Kajri* or *Kajli*, a song mainly of pathos and separation. The *Kajri* songs, like *Jhula* or *Viraha* ones, deal with the sublime love episodes of Radha and Krishna. Though the songs depict the pangs of separation between a lover and the beloved the themes eventually merge into Radha-Krishna narratives. *"Kajri"* comes from the word *"Kajal"* (collyrium, Sanskrit—*"Kajjwal"*), or the black eye-salve used by Indian women. This signifies that when the women suffer from separation from their beloveds the black paint comes down with the flow of tears and they sing this particular song during that period. Though the *Kajri* songs are prevalent throughout the State of Uttar Pradesh, still Mirzapur and Varanasi are famous for such songs. The beloved has left the village for long and is not coming, or he is coming from foreign land, —these are the themes of such songs. The maidens also dance with the accompaniment of such songs.

The particular sentiment is expressed in the following song: "Saavan ki raaat ayee, Badara ghir ghir ayee, Ab Aajaa piya more ghar."

"The night of Sawan has come, the rain-clouds have also spread, my darling, come home."

With the onset of the monsoon the *'Jhula"* season begins, bringing with it much beauty and joy. The cool showers from the east bring relief from the terrible summer heat and the 'Loo' wind. The *"Jhula"* (swing) songs, which the village women sing with much abandon, and dance with the accompaniment of such songs with ecstasy, during the rainy season, express vividly, the joy of this relief. While one group swings high and low, another merrily dancing on the freshly sprinkled earth sings of the vast field springing to new life, of the grass which daily becomes greener, and of corn fields which grow taller with every shower. The *"Jhula"* songs mostly convey the themes of Radha-Krishna "Jhulan", the divine couple swinging, of *"Jhanki"* ceremonies during the *"Janmashtami"* (the auspicious days during the birth day celebrations of Lord Krishna). The "Jhula" songs are prevalent in Mathura and Mirzapur districts.

In every part of the province one comes across the village maidens singing while repairing the leaking roof.

Just after the rains the farmer is very happy and dances singing songs on harvest.

Baramasa songs are sung throughout the year. They have subdivisions, such as "Chhamasa" (six monthly), "Charmasa" (four monthly) etc. They are sung to the accompaniment of Dholak, Kartal and Kansi.

With the birth of the child the village belles sing and dance in the house where the child is born and pray for its long life and prosperity. The songs and dances are commonly known as "Sohar."

Over and above these we have "Kanhaiya", "Lamtera" and "Rasiya", sung by the males and "Matapujan" and "Rachhre" sung by the females. *Shringara* Rasa is the main theme of the songs. A boy attired in Krishna's dress, holding a flute and standing in the common pose of Krishna (Tribhanga), slightly bends on his two sides, and a few male dancers dance around him in a ring and sing Krishna episodes. They sometimes have little sticks in both their hands. This is found in Mathura district.

Exquisite compositions depicting the love and the divine frolics of Shri Krishna can profusely be found in the repertoire of folk-songs. In addition to these there are a number of songs dealing with chivalrous themes. Peasants sing these songs during specific periods of the year after the day's toil. These are prevalent in Bundelkhand escpecially in Jhansi.

There is a special category of songs in Bundelkhand known as "Soura". These songs, prevalent mostly among the peasants, are usually invocations to the mother-earth. This specific thought concept may have evolved from the Vedic period when invocations were prayer songs. Bundelkhandi folk composers addressed the mother earth in a personal manner. One particular poet says that when she puts on *Kajal* and *Sindur* and also wears a yellow robe, the whole humanity looks at her with wonder. The particular song starts with the following line:

"Dharti Mata tene kajar dewe."

But truly speaking these songs should be classed under the category of *"Doha"*, because they are couplets, and for their devotional concepts.

Joys and sorrows of the people have with

(Continued on page 92)

my CRITICS HERE & ABROAD

By Uday Sankar

I HAVE often been asked about my critics, specially press reporters, how they deal with my productions and shows. Whether they understand correctly what I intend to express is the question. But I admit, my critics are a wonderful lot. With regard to my endeavour to express some emotion or theme or any artistic message I am not clear about myself. I do not know what I do and I do not mind if I don't know it. Something comes spontaneously into me, there is an urge and I execute it in whatever way I can. I cannot explain why I exhibit it in a particular manner. So I can never accuse my critics of either any adverse criticism or pat him on the back for an inclination towards encomiums.

Regarding understanding an art element, to my mind, understanding is not so important as feeling. An artistic creation must vibrate within the hearts of the people in order to make it an object of universal appeal. In the case of understanding many barriers come in the way in the shape of highly scientific technicalities, and language difficulties. There may be other obstacles as well, for example, lack of thorough knowledge and study of history, culture, mythology, religion and the like. But there is no man made shackle in the case of psychology of feeling, which is a free gift of nature and through which man of every nationality comes closer and becomes intimate forgetting all feuds and differences.

So an artiste who is sanguine about the artistic quality of his productions, or in other words, about striking the tender chords of sentiments in the human hearts, does not care for any contrary comment. And if there is such a comment he must take it for granted that his production fails in its mission, and he tries to improve thereafter. A true artiste is aware that the human being is endowed with a feeling of appreciation of beauty and, of course, the skill to awaken that feeling depends upon the artiste himself. Critic or no critic, he works hard to create beauty, because he knows that only beauty can move the human feelings.

Now, talking of critics, whose feelings are moved or who proverbially have a keener sense of appreciation of beauty in movements and lines, I must unhesitatingly say that all of them, without any exception, yield to the common blunder of falling a prey to the ravishing nature of beauty. In dealing with the aesthetic aspect of any creation they are unanimous in their opinions.

The critics everywhere are always eager to probe into the depths of the mystery of Indian art and ask questions to quench their thirst regarding it. What I strongly feel is that among the Indian critics there is a drawback of looking into the art of their own country through western eyes. Indian pressmen are not to blame. Not only they, everyone of us is educated in the western and more particularly, in the Anglicised way, so our approach has become foreign. We make this mistake without knowing that it is a mistake. The Western approach to Indian art is excusable in the case of a westerner.

Coming to the most important factor of judging my creations by Indian and western critics, I have often deciphered, though through a sophisticated balanced scale, that the respective approaches are very subtle, but nonetheless interesting. An Indian critic, as he is well versed in, and is a part and parcel of Indian culture, history and mythology, is

vehement about any lapse or misstatement on that score, if by chance he comes across such an omission or commission. Generally he does not lose his energy for the cultural aspect. Owing to the new trends and development in thought in the realm of Indian dancing and due to their swift evolution, the critics here are naturally swept away by their currents and undercurrents. The result is that a change in their outlook towards dancing is evinced. Their judgments are more towards the scientific side than towards the artistic value. They are now anxious for understanding a thing with a complete negation of feeling it. The technical aspect apart from showmanship interests them more. They may try to scrutinise at present the correct exhibition of *Mudras* with their appropriate applications and how far those *Mudras* are able to convey the unspoken language of the dancing item, or which part of it falls strictly under the respective categories of classical schools and which part under folk, and whether it is authentic or otherwise.

SUMMUM BONUM

A western critic would always adhere to the spirit of Indian dancing, to the sublime aspect of the creation, to its total effect and would seldom indulge in the intricacies of colour, decor or crude lights. To him the summum bonum is what it matters. I am not afraid of saying that sometimes they go beyond the conception of the Indian critics in matters of judgment.

A concrete example will clarify this statement of mine. Once it so happened that a young and interesting New York art critic of the "New York Herald Tribune", Mr. Walter Terry, came to see me at my New York hotel. Mr. S. Hurok, my impressario, asked me to go downstairs and meet the critic. Mr. Hurok warned me by saying that Terry was a very influential personality in the art world. I am habitually shy to meet people although I am not shy on the stage. So I showed reluctance, but on the persuasions of the impressario I had to go and meet the newspaperman. The reporter did not impress me at all. He had neither personality nor power of speech. However, Mr. Terry talked for a a few minutes and thereafter went away. While going away he presented me a book. I put it on my dressing table and did not like to go through it then. After lunch I was sitting near the same table and my glances were attracted towards the book, a big album sort of thing. I saw that on the cover of that book it was inscribed "Uday Shankar's Indra Dance". Naturally the title caught my notice and I eagerly turned the pages of the book. I saw to my amazement that on every page a painting design, a pattern has been drawn. I pondered over such madness of the eminent art critic and could eventually disclose the mystery with all admiration for the man.

I started my career as a painter. The background of my imaginations is a conglomeration of designs and patterns of oriental drawings and lines. In my dances also those lines spontaneously creep in and come into play. I execute the patterns of painting by means of movements. My dance movements depict lotuses, flowers, Chakra (wheel), hills, headgear, bows and arrows and series of Alpana designs. My Indra dance is a harmonious mixture of these designs of arrows, bows, flowers, thunder, lightning and the like. Even my group compositions are executions of designs in movements by a number of dancers. The art critic has analytically noticed this charm and novelty and executed the mystery on pieces of papers. I bow down before that scholar's keen perception.

I wonder at the immense scholarship of my critics, the newspapermen of this country and abroad, for the way they sympathetically nourish my creations, in the beautiful language they speak about them, which unfolds before me another type of dancing beauty, a different type but more ravishing, passionate and charming than my own art.

The critics are themselves dance experts, otherwise it becomes difficult for a novice to dissect the beauty, to realise it and then to convey to the common man. I owe my gratitude to my critics.

FOLK SONGS & DANCES OF UTTAR PRADESH

(Continued from page 90)

numerous variations found a place in the repertoire of Bundelkahandi folk-songs. The strain of thought incorporated in the song,

"Umariya Saari Biti Jai,
Baalam ub tak nahin aai,"

is not very difficult to understand. The effects of these songs are specially felt during the spring season when the mind longs to have the company of the beloved.

'Kajaliya' is a distinct variety of the repertoire of Bundelkhandi folk-songs. After the termination of Navaratri, the women-folk assemble and place flat urns filled up with new corns on their heads and sing songs swinging their bodies to and fro. The songs usually start with the catching phrase *"Meri Maiya."*

Another variety known as *"Mamuliya"* with its supplementary species "Suata" are exclusive specimens of ceremonial songs.

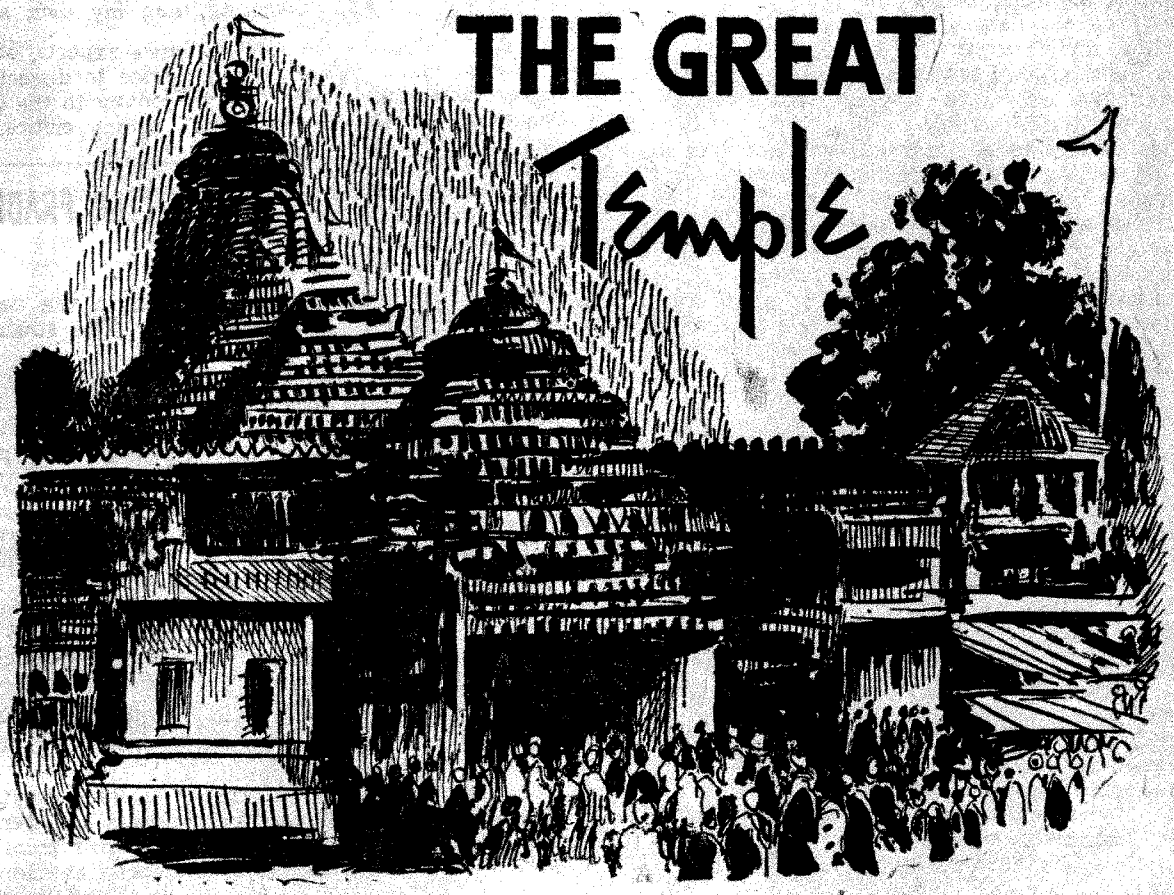
Viraha songs are mistakenly called songs of separation (*"Viraha"*). The word is not derived from the word meaning separation. But from the word "Rahi" (traveller). The villagers traverse long distances, from one place to another, and in order to get relief from exhaustion as a result of walking, and also to pass the time they sing these songs. The songs generally lack the sentiment of separation, and the tremolo sound at the end of every strain brings to memory the regular and measured movement of the palanquin bearers while carrying the heavy load.

The different races of Uttar Pradesh have their separate kinds of Viraha, as *Ahir Viraha* (of milkmen), *Kahar Viraha* (of palanquin bearers), *Dhobi Viraha* (of washermen) etc. Formerly the members of the *K har* caste were originally Palanquin bearers, but with the flow of time and other types of carriages taking place the palanquins lost their use, and by and by the *Kahars* have taken to the task of menial servants. But they still have retained their characteristic tribal *Virahas.*

The *Ahir Virahas* are very rich in ideas, expressions and emotions of bravery, as the race is noted for chivalry. According to the mythological legend they fought against Arjuna, while he was carrying away their daughter Subhadra, the sister of Krishna.

Every race has *Virahas* to be sung in the rainy season. Either they are sung solo or in a chorus. The whole of the province abounds in *Viraha* songs, but the most famous ones belong to Moghulsarai and Sarnath. Sarju Sayar and Chhedi Ahir of Sarnath and Moghulsarai respectively are the most famous *Viraha,* composers. Pieces of Viraha songs, either couplets, or quartrains, are known as *"Latka"*, and *Sulema Ki Latka* are very popular amongst the rural population, *"Sulema"* being the pseudonym of Chhedi Ahir.

THE GREAT Temple



By SHEILA CHATTERJEE

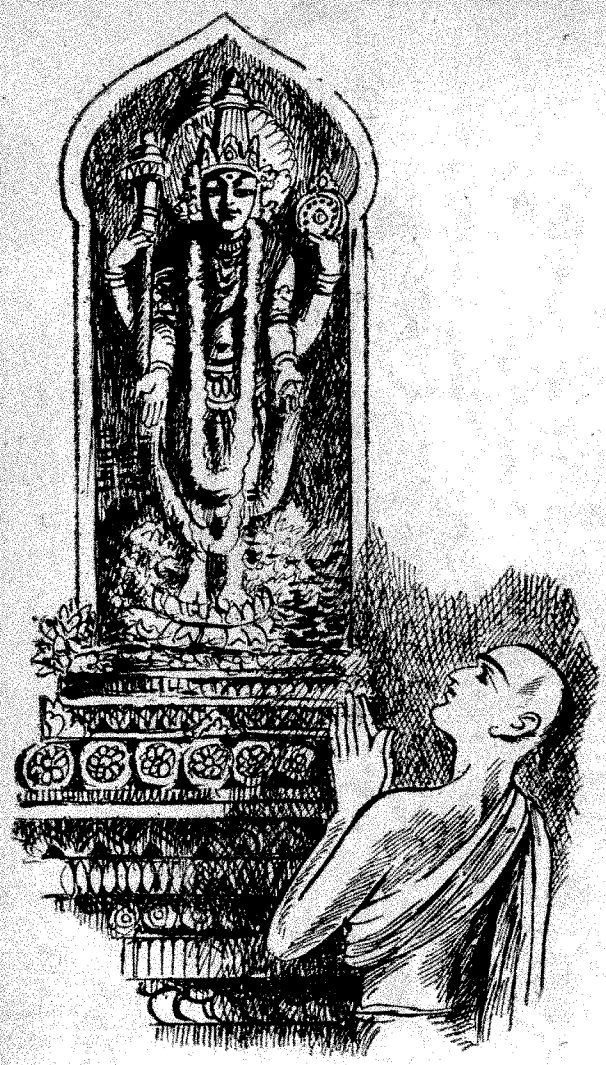
RAMGOVIND was head priest of the Great Temple of Vishnu. He was slim and slightly built, with a gentle timid expression. At twenty three he looked seventeen. His office was hereditary. Of rights he was honoured by all the countless other priests of the Great Temple. Ramgovind was shy and self-effacing. He avoided meeting people, except when he took around pilgrims, whose ancestral names had been written down in the fat record books of his ancestors. They were his responsibility.

It was his honoured duty to open the massive silver gates of the sanctum at hazy dawn.

The moon was still seen, pale in the sky. In the horizon, the darkness of night had faded a little. Scores of singers sat in a double row, in the main audience hall before the sanctum. They sang hymns in Sanskrit to awaken Vishnu, as was done in ancient days to awaken a king. Their ritual besides the intricacies of worship preserved much of the court ettiquete of Hindu kings of the classic age. For Vishnu was worshipped in the great temple as emperor of the world. The enormous temple was a fort, encircled five times by giant stone walls. Within were many buildings, orchards, gardens, reservoirs and smaller temples scattered about the main temple of Vishnu.

Ramgovind was at his prayers for an hour before he came to the temple. He had prayed to the formless one. He was a scholar, learned in the philosophy of the Vedantas. As he faced the image of the four armed Vishnu, the formless infinity poured itself into the splendid form before him. Vishnu was the Hindu conception of God's endless energy in His aspect as Preserver. The deity was dressed in flowers, as when symbolically put to sleep amidst prayers and soft music, after a dawn to midnight ceaseless ritual worship. Few were in the temple then. Ramgovind liked this dawn of peace. The flutes of the "Sehnai" players welcomed dawn. Ramgovind bowed, stretching himself face downwards on the worn out stone floor of the sanctum. It seemed to him that the large eyed golden Vishnu looked down upon him and smiled faintly in recognition. Ramgovind was very devout. He kept his spiritual experiences to himself. There were cynical elderly money-making priests who laughed at him behind his back.

With the first pink of dawn the Great Temple was silhouetted against the sky. Red silk pennants flew from the massive golden spire. The temple was fabulously rich, built no one knew exactly by which king. Through time, Hindu rulers and merchants had added to its grandeur. Sometimes a fanatic iconoclast of another faith zealously came to destroy the temple, set fire to it, and loot the collected wealth. The Great Temple was too enormous to be destroyed. Exquisite carvings were effaced. Faultlessly beautiful heavenly nymphs had their noses cut off, their supple fingers broken. Yet they remained beautiful. The gold stripped spire had another plate of glittering



.....the large-eyed golden Vishnu looked down upon him and smiled.....

metal put on. The priests always hid the image of Vishnu in secret underground vaults before the destroyers came and left in its place a gilded wooden idol, which was desecrated and hacked to pieces or burnt. When calm returned the golden image of the life sized Vishnu reappeared, wearing his diamond jewellery and pearl necklaces. Underneath the gold was a lovely stone image carved by an artist called Jayabrata. This information was inscribed in ancient script, on one of the stone pillars of the main audience hall.

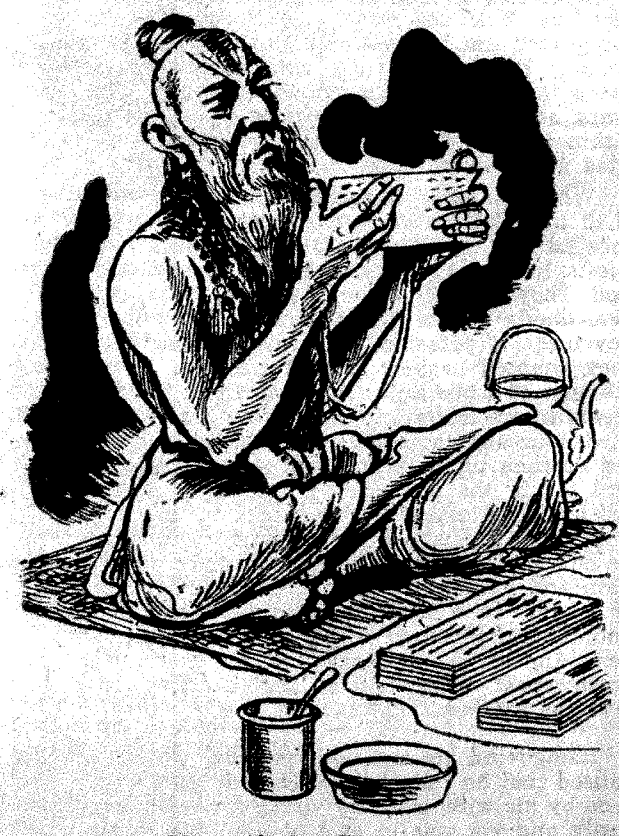
Ramgovind stood on the paved stone terrace which surrounded the main temple. He marvelled always at the work of the forgotten artist Jayabrata. As a scholar Ramgovind went around the Great Temple reading inscriptions which recorded the gifts of king and subjects. Time was frozen in one mass, in layers seen easily imposed, one upon another. The time that was present was seen only in electric lights which had crept in, up to the main audience hall. The sanctum was still lit by brass lamps and torches held aloft by junior priests of a lower order.

There was an old Brahmin, white bearded, a top knot of loosely tied struggling white hair on his head. He looked regal. No one knew who he was or from where he had come. From midnight he sat outside on the terrace, resting his back against the temple. He read the Gita, the holy book of wisdom. He finished reading at dawn. When the silver doors were opened he came in and said his morning prayers, twining his sacred thread round one thumb.....

"A rich party of pilgrims arrived last evening of the house of Negi Pal. At least five widows in their party", said Kishanlal, an assistant of Ramgovind. There were many Brahmins to help Ramgovind show around the pilgrims. For this they got money. Kishanlal was poor and ill-educated. Ramgovind sighed, he smiled with understanding. Wisdom had erased in him the love of money or material gains. But the majority of people he knew were still in bondage to their unilluminated ignorance. "Have you looked after them well? Negi Pal's family has been in our record book for many generations. See that they are properly housed and fed". "They are in Lachmipati's pilgrim house. Guni Pal, the head of the family has come himself. He gave me five rupees just for showing him the Dharamsala. He has money to throw away." Kishanlal crowed with pleasure. He had a long bony face, with big teeth, stained brown by betel juice. Ramgovind could not be impolite to any one. It was against his nature. So he had to listen to Kishanlal's money talk. A few barefooted pilgrims began coming in One of them paused to touch his feet. Ramgovind escaped Kishanlal when he showed the pilgrims into the sanctum.....

Intricately carved ivory beds with Benares brocade covers were carried out of the sanctum. Vishnu and his Goddess Laxmi had awaken. Pilgrims filled the dimly lit stone sanctum. Priests sat in a row to perform morning worship, bathing Vishnu in his reflection on a golden metal mirror. They poured over the reflection milk and honey and water from the seven holy rivers with roses floating. Pilgrims stretched out eager cupped hands for the perfumed water of the symbolic bath. This they drank and smeared over face and head.

Then the temple door of the inner sanctum was closed again. Ramgovind was there, with three high priests who changed the simple white muslin bath



He read the Gita.....

"We have to suffer for our deeds..,....."

robes of Vishnu for green and gold silks and fabulous jewellery. With the crowd of suffocating people gone Ramgovind lost his bearings and was in a trance of worship. He did not know what he worshipped, the divine in the flickering dancing flames of the brass lamps, as his earliest ancestors had done, or the glory within him, or the golden four armed image, decorated now like an emperor.

When the door was reopened no one was allowed in the sanctum but watched from the main audience hall. Lines of cooks, who were also Brahmin priests, hurried in carrying huge platters loaded with food. They were pale brown, bare bodies, sweating men, dhotis tucked up above the knees for brisk movement, a piece of cloth covering their mouths. They chanted prayers as they came in. It was like the hum of a bee hive. They had brought Vishnu his breakfast of fruits and milk-made sweetmeats and fried flour and coconut sweets of countless varieties, and earthen pitchers of curds set at night. Ramgovind sat in the centre of the sanctum and offered this food, the essence of the food, in man's wish to do homage to Vishnu. He scattered flower petals on the offered food. The row of Brahmin cooks came in again and hurriedly carried the food offerings away. To be kept in a separate building, where part of it would be distributed to pilgrims and part sold to them. Another set of cooks got busy making the pre-lunch repast. They had a large building to themselves as kitchen.....

Ramgovind got up, and stretched his arms. He realised that he felt hungry. He wanted a cup of tea made by his wife, a pretty young girl who loved him deeply and yet was in awe of him, due to his scholarship and wisdom. His house was a small brick building in a narrow lane which branched out from the Great Temple. Kishanlal met him midway with a group of pilgrims. "Here they are, of Negi Pal's honoured house. We were going to you. They want the dust of your feet in worship and correct devotion. You can all bow down to him here now. This is the head of the house, Sriman Guni Pal." A fair, pock marked, short gentleman came forward. He had grey hair, a handsome face, stamped with the weakness and decay of a spent line of decadent noblemen. Beggars teemed about the Great Temple. A leper woman, with stumps of feet bandaged in rags, asked for alms, stretching two fingers of a festering hand from which the other fingers had rotted away. Ramgovind knew her. She was Mani, a blacksmith's wife, before she was driven out of home due to this illness. Guni Pal barked at her and asked her to get away, with needless abuse. Ramgovind had taken out some coins from the waist folds of his tussore silk dhoti. He never met a beggar without giving alms. Frightened by the abuse Mani hobbled away. Ramgovind said curtly, "I will meet you all at the temple for evening "Arati". I am going home now." "Thakur is never like this. What made him cross ?" said Kishanlal.....

Stars were strewn across the dark sky. Pilgrims came in dense crowds for evening worship. They came with offerings of flower garlands wrapped in banana leaves. Bright hand woven cotton skirts of silver ornamented peasant women mingled with costly silks and diamonds of the rich. Everyone pushed and shoved. Priests elbowed their way through crowds, guiding their own group of pilgrims. The temple was decorated with a myriad oil lamps. A tall gold plated, brass flag pole stood before the main temple. It had lamp sockets set in ornate discs,

which went all the way up till they met the crouching "Garuda" crest. The Garuda, a mythical being, half man, half winger bird crouched, hands folded, facing the sanctum of Vishnu. The smell of close packed human bodies mingled with flowers and incense, sandalwood paste and burning oil lamps. The terrace was crowded with men who sat and recited from holy books or sang devotional songs. Each one had an admiring audience. Pilgrims had to circle round these islands of people.

Ramgovind was in the sanctum when Vishnu's afternoon clothes were changed for the most gorgeous gold-woven red brocades and jewelled crown. There were wide diamond anklets on Vishnu's feet. The idol was dimly seen through incense smoke and burning torches. A pair of big uncut diamonds glittered, set in the centre of Vishnu's large oblong eyes. Handsome priests of the highest order prepared the tiered brass lamps and camphor stands needed for the evening worship. Ramgovind stood with eyes closed, mind turned within, waiting to perform the "Arati". Kishanlal touched his shoulder lightly. "Guni Pal is here. Meet him after the worship". Guni Pal stood flattened against the sanctum wall. A few people were brought in by priests for they got paid handsomely for this.

Ramgovind took an hour to wave the many branched hundred wick lamps, the yak tail fly whisk, water filled conch, flowers and mirror and burning camphor in adoration before Vishnu. During this "Arati" ceremony the "Sehnai" played a gay tune. Conches blew, cymbals clashed and temple drums beat to a crescendo, drowning out the bell which Ramgovind tinkled in his left hand. Temple elephants came and stood in the main audience hall, raising decorated trunks in salute. Sweat trickled down Ramgovind's face, leaving wet patches on his cream silk dhoti. He forgot the world. He was in an ecstacy of happiness. The spluttering torches, the lamps, the diamond set gold face of the idol all blended together and faded out before the great glory in Ramgovind's heart.....

When the ritual worship was over, Ramgovind slumped tired on the marble steps of the main temple. Guni Pal touched his feet and sat down next to him. "Thakur, I am in trouble. That is why I came here. Vishnu has given me bad luck. My son is born sickly and deformed. He is getting ill and weak for no reason." Ramgovind stared at the dissipated face of Guni Pal and said nothing. "I want to offer prayers on a big scale. I will spend much money. One thousand and one rupees for the worship and then at your feet I will place hundred rupee notes. This son is my only heir."

Ramgovind was moved automatically to pity. He touched Guni Pal's head and said, "We have to suffer for our deeds. How can we blame Vishnu for that? Money cannot wash off the black stain of our own evil deeds. Only suffering and tears of conscious repentance can."

"Many people have reported miraculous recovery from illness when they came to worship at this Great Temple. If you spend with a large heart, of course your prayers will be answered," Kishanlal said, scared that his unpractical head priest would drive away this rich man.

"They who recovered had faith", Ramgovind said simply. "Money can not buy faith. It is something that is within. It is the rarest of blessings."

"The doctors say my son cannot live."

"Death comes to all, sooner or later. Prepare yourself to have courage," murmured Ramgovind.

Kishanlal laughed, a dry faked laugh. "You must plead properly, so that Thakur can have mercy on you and pray for the recovery of your son. Our Thakur is blameless, all his prayers are answered."

Ramgovind looked at Kishanlal with shocked eyes. "I never pray to ask for anything. That is desire. I am a Brahmin, by the grace of Vishnu I have achieved freedom from desire. There is great good in all the ever changing phenomena of life. Accept life and death equally as blessings."

"Then I would have become a monk", Guni Pal said exasperated. "I came to you for our family is in your list of devotees. I think I will go to another Pandit, more kind and sensible."

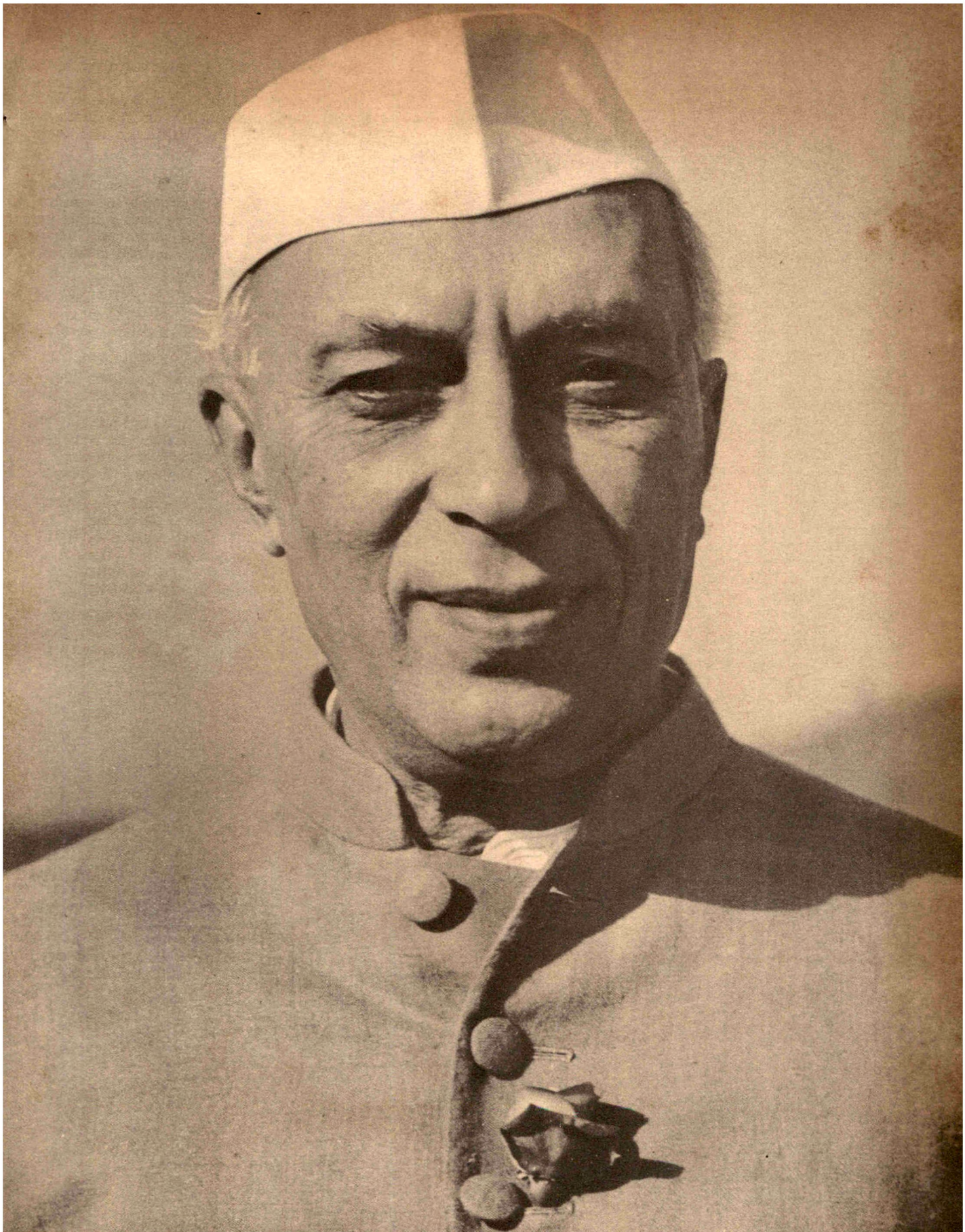
Kishanlal stood fuming with anger, as he saw Guni Pal walk off. "I too am a Brahmin. I need to fill my unlettered belly. See what you have done!"

Ramgovind smiled. "Some day perhaps Vishnu will make you a true Brahmin. Then you will be grateful to me for showing you the correct way."

"Thakur, you do not understand the needs of ordinary human beings."

"I don't?" Ramgovind looked at the stars in the sky and soon got absorbed in studying the constellations. This was another branch of ancient learning which he had imbibed. Bright stars dazzled like the diamond eyes of the golden Vishnu. Silk pennants flapped and fluttered in the evening breeze, on top of the towering spire of the Great Temple.

*



DEPARTED LEADER

PHOTO - Jarak Das

THE BURGLAR

By JATISH BOSE

ARUN got a telegram in the evening.

It ran thus: "Strange burglary in the house. Come immediately".

The words of the wire amazed Arun. What it meant by 'strange'. Surely, his father, who had wired him, knew that Arun would be off his guard by the word 'strange'. He had been all his life a teacher of English and was perfectly at home with words that might carry men off their feet.

It was about sunset. The golden hue of the setting sun could hold no charm for him. Instead he pondered and pondered over a cup of tea where his immediate task lay.

Not long after he made up his mind and immediately wrote a letter to his boss informing him of a week's absence.

Arun started for his village home by the night train. His mess-mates kept on wondering but Arun kept mum over his sudden departure.

A twelve-hour journey by train and the last two hours had to be covered by boat. The sun was blazing in full fury when he got down from the boat. Half a mile's walk and Arun reached his village.

* * * * *

A year ago Arun married Sita. She was a pretty girl. Unsophisticated, brought up far away from the influence of rouge-lipstick-society girls, she kept an abiding faith in rural scenic beauty and its evergreen freshness.

Arun's father, Harish Bose, was not very well-off. A graduate of nineties of the last century he was a man of strict principles and he chose teaching as the profession of his life.

His house portrayed the man he was. Simple and clean to the core, it shunned all artificial gaudiness. All the rooms had mud-built floors hedged around by corrugated sheets and the same metallic content on the roof-tops. The outer one, which housed him, and a bit spacious, had in it some old chairs and a table, a poor apology for modern costly furniture.

—Arun, Harish Babu called his son aside, you need not worry about the valuables. They are not even touched. But what strikes me is the burglar's choice of things.....

Arun looked rather bewildered and stood motionless gazing with vacant eyes at his father.

—Two portraits of Sita, one, a nice pre-marital oilpainting that was hung in her bedroom, and two of her favourite sarees have been burgled, Arun's father said.

—The night was dark and heavens opened to send down rain in torrents. Burglary that night connoted a great suffering for the burglar himself.

—Sita had Anuradha, your sister, as her companion in bed that night. As the night temperature sufficiently came down due to the showers, they lay in slumber like people struck violently by thrombosis.

—It was not till the next morning that we could detect it. A gaping hole in the mud wall first attracted your mother's attention.

—The police were informed, they held on-the-spot investigation, put searching questions to some

of us, but no clue had yet been found. They wondered at the strange methods of the burglars.

* * * *

—Sita, Arun asked his lovingly youthful wife, did neither of you, Anuradha or you, get any slight sound on that fateful night ?

—No. Sita looked through her big black eyes to her husband.

She was looking enchanting, vivacious in her fully-bloomed youth.

It was dead of night, but the night was lovely. The bright fortnight of the waxing moon had begun. The village was 'dead', all enjoying the sweet slumber, that was generally associated with the new moon.

Married a year ago, Arun had little occasion to be intimate with his wife. He had to leave her behind on the sixth day after his marriage.

This was the second time he was meeting her. Arun looked intently at his wife. A girl so innately simple and charming could not but be pure and virtuous.

—Sita, burglaries are not uncommon in villages. But this one strikes me as something unusual. Arun had a touch of mellowness in his voice.

Sita had full vision of Arun's eyes. Those were the looks of affection and entreaty.

She moved closer to her husband. She realised that he was being tormented by some mental anguish.

—Sita, Arun said, more sweetly, I am fortunate in having you as my wife. May I, without hurting you, ask you a question ?

Sita nodded in full consent.

—Can you throw any light on the burglary ? I have a nagging suspicion that the burglar might be a known man, having some fond link with the articles burgled.

Sita too had that suspicion. Could it be he ? Memories of those days were still fresh in her mind. She strove hard to forget them, things that were beyond her reach, things that would always remain a dream to her.....could not Almighty give her power to bury those thoughts in dark oblivion ?

Tears rolled down her cheeks as those memories flashed in her mind.

Oh, no, she must make a clean breast of everything to her husband. It could not be otherwise....'

Arun was hurt. Had he done anything to wound her feelings ?

—Sita, he enquired pleadingly, why are you weeping ? Have I been very much rude to you?

—Oh, no, Sita replied in sobs, I am in great ferment. I shall have no peace of mind until I tear the pages of my early life to you.

* * * *

Several years ago. A boy and a girl were playing in a mango-grove. They had several playthings before them, dolls, trifles and crockery. The boy being senior to the girl by about five years, was directing the frolicsome operations.

—Sita, the boy cried out, you need not go home early to-day. Your father is out in the town. Besides we have a long series of rituals to go through as the dolls are just married.

Sita, looked at the boy's face.

—But if mother takes me to task.

—No, no, she will not. I will accompany you to your house. She likes me, she wants me to grow a big man.....

* * * *

A prosperous village. Haridhan Guha and Nirmal Mukherji were neighbours. Both of them

Tears rolled down her cheeks as those memories flashed in her mind.

were well-to-do, having inherited vast ancestral properties. Animosity or rancour never vitiated their breasts, probably because they were not of the same caste. Nirmal Mookherji had two brilliant sons in Subhankar and Dipankar. Of them Dipankar was more meritorious. After his noted academic career Subhankar was well placed in life having been in the Judicial Service. Dipankar won a scholarship in the School Final examination and was a student in a Calcutta college.

Haridhan Guha, on the other hand, was the proud father of two lovely girls, Sati and Sita. Sati had been married, her beauty providing her with a worthy husband.

The family-intimacy had its repercussions. Dipankar and Sita had been playmates in their childhood and as they grew in years this childhood friendship grew into intimacy. But this evaded the suspicion of the elders.

—Sita, Dipu in an imploring tone would say, do you not feel for me when I remain in Calcutta?

Sita suppressed her sigh. She had no answer to this vexed question.

She thought of their childhood days, those days when they relished the little green mangoes and swam in ponds in competition, oblivious of everything.

What pleasure they derived in roaming about in the gardens and running in the fields ?

Sita often asked :—Dipuda, will that day not be a great event for us when the University will shower the highest laurels on you and you become a great son of India?

Dipu replied : But who will be the happier on that day, I or you ?

Sita blushed : Certainly I.

Dipu knew it and felt this in his heart of hearts.

And he did not belie Sita's or his elders' expections.

He took a first in both B.A. and M.A. in English.

Sita had by this time grown to be a lovely girl with a sweet nature.

She shuddered when Dipankar's words flashed back to her memory.

—Sita, what will happen if we become separated for ever.....

Sita knew that caste stood as a formidable rock between them. Both of them came of conservative families where things had been going on in the same fashion since the days of yore. The vast changes that had been sweeping the country had little impact on the villages. Dipuda might be right when he said that everybody must move with the times but could she move on ? Could she defy her parents and the village society ?.....

Dipu did not lose heart. He could not imagine a life without Sita. He failed to take into account the fact, that women were often shy and coy ; they would break their hearts but would not open their mouth in revolt.

Dipu preferred to wait and watch. Meanwhile he got a State scholarship for two years for a doctorate degree of a foreign university.

An ambitious youth, an eager devotee in the pursuit of knowledge he saw in it a ray of light. He might build up a promising career for himself which might crash the barriers that surrounded them.

One sunny morning he took leave of all his near and dear ones in his village home and started for London to have a doctorate there.

* * * *

More than a year had rolled by. Unsuspectingly, Sita's father was in search of a suitable match for her.

About six miles away from their village Haridhan Babu finally chose Arun as his prospective son-in-law.

He did not come of a well-to-do family but what led to Haridhan Babu's final selection of him was his intelligence, education, good physique and features. It did not take long for a promising youth to prosper, he thought. Sita could not open her mouth though her heart broke in agony and remorse.

Sita was given in marriage to Arun and Dipankar remained in the dark all about it.

* * * *

The night was pitch dark. Rain fell in torrents. The village roads became slushy. It was sheer madness to come out in the open that night.

But Nature's fury was no barrier for a man who lost his mental equilibrium. He could brave anything. Scorning at the elemental unrest a man was seen rushing forth through these muddy roads with a shovel in one hand and a torch in the other. From his looks and gait he did not seem to be a man of the lower strata. But he was in great mental torpor, something had struck him to put his mind out of commission.

He was walking at a brisk pace. He would have to cover a great distance to carry out his mission and that before the dawn broke out. It was long past midnight when he reached the outskirts of a village. He had earlier in the day visited the village and the house of his 'mission' incognito.

He was dead tired. Rain drops blurred his vision but he was as determined as a wounded tiger to pounce upon the shikari. He must do his work in silence. With the shovel in hand he advanced towards the house and the room where lay in deep slumber his precious treasure.

The shovel worked on and on inside the earth until there was a big cavity. He was calm and serene from the rude shock he received on coming home after his long absence abroad.

Unaccustomed as he was he got in with difficulty through the cavity. For a moment he got back his former self, he flashed the torch across the room, saw the treasure of his life, took the photographs and sarees and then disappeared in darkness.

* * * *

Some time after Arun got a letter in his mess. It was written by an unknown hand. It ran thus :

Arun Babu,

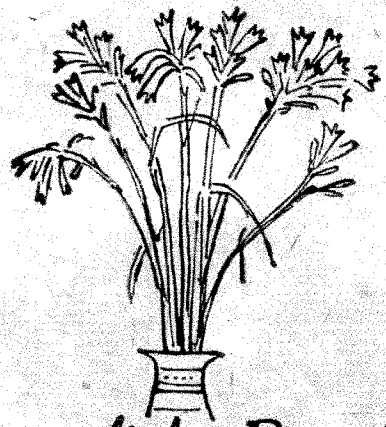
I am a stranger to you but not to your wife, Sita. You have robbed me of the most valuable treasure of my life and in return I have taken away some trifles. I need these to sustain my life. May God keep both of you in happiness.

—Dipankar

An Odour of TUBEROSE

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

by DHANANJAY BAIRAGI



An English Rendering of the Author's 'RAJANIGANDHA' by Vedantam Subrahmanyam

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

ASHA CHOUDHURY

DEBABRATA GHOSH

BIMAL CHATTERJEE

ROBI DUTT

"To die, to sleep,
And perchance to dream . . ."

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

ASHA CHOUDHURY'S rented house is situated in a lonely spot in Calcutta, which cannot be perceived unless seen. If one walks some good distance along one of the two parallel roads opposite to the cricket ground in Ballygunge, one would reach an open ground. Although the asphalt road ends here, there is an improvised path through this space, which people use as a short-cut. Cars too utilise this way to travel easily to and fro. Washermen dry their clothes in this open ground, where also the children of the locality play. There is just one rented house on the other side of this ground, that of Asha Choudhury.

The play starts, progresses and ends in the front room of this house. Fine taste is discernible in the arrangement of the articles in the room: The window at the back and the two doors on the sides of the stage are provided with curtains. A light is hanging right in the middle of the room. A low big-sized divan is on the right side with pillows and cylindrical cushions, which is used for sitting as well as lying down. The pillow covers are of Shantineketan designs. A low sofa set is placed opposite the divan, with a flower vase on the centre table. Two hillscape paintings adorn the room. There is a book-shelf adjoining the left wall. At the other end is a chair, with a tall lamp-stand nearby, which affords comfortable reading. There is an almirah with drawers at the back wall, providing safe keeping of im-

portant papers. The floor is covered with a carpet. This room occupies four-fifths of the stage, while the balance shows the street by the side of the house with a gas lamp post at the further end of the street corner. Asha Choudhury's outer door stands in a slanting position, opening to the street, so that no inconvenience is felt to have the view on either side of the door.

Before the curtain rises, a lady's shriek is heard "Save me, save me, oh, I'm dead", which is immediately followed by a male voice, "Who's there? What's the matter"? The curtain rises.

The electric lamp in the middle of the room is swinging. In the dark room a lady is lying down, panting, and an excited gentleman is coming forward in the street outside from the direction of the lamp post. He is Prof. DEBABRATA GHOSH, aged thirty-six, well-built and bespectacled, and dressed in a dhoti, punjabi, shoes, with a lot of books in one hand and an umbrella in the other.

Realising that the woman's scream has come from within, Debabrata rushes forward and knocks at the door. He leaves the books and umbrella near the door, and goes to the back of the house, visibly disturbed. His knocks on the window, as he calls out to open up, are distinctly heard.

Then Debabrata himself opens the window and enters the room. The light above continues to swing. He advances towards the sofa set, to find Asha Choudhury lying unconscious; he gets startled and steps aside. He goes to the door leading to the interior and cries out "Is anybody in?" There being no response, he comes back, and approaches Asha Choudhury once again. The swinging of the electric lamp gradually slows down. Slowly he lifts Asha and places her on the divan. He finds a thin rope with a noose at one end on the ground, which he picks up. He then looks up to find another thin rope hanging from the rafter. A stool lies on its side on the ground. There is a letter on the table, which he picks up, reads and puts back. He brings water from a jug in the corner and sprinkles it on her face. He suddenly dashes into the street after opening the outer door, and comes back finding nobody there. Now he does not bolt the door, but keeps it closed.

ASHA : *(Groans).*
DEBA: *(Approaches her)* Does it pain?
ASHA: (*Nodding*) Yes.
DEBA: Where?
ASHA: (*Groans again and points at her leg*).
DEBA: Your leg! How did you get hurt?
ASHA: (*Pause*) Where am I?
DEBA: In your own house.
ASHA: House?
DEBA: Yes.
ASHA: Then—
DEBA: You haven't died.
ASHA: Oh! (*Sighs deeply*) Couldn't do it.
DEBA: No. (*Pause*) I have read your letter. You wanted to commit suicide, but fate was against you. That's why the cord snapped and bounced you back to life.
ASHA: (*Sits up*) Who are you?
DEBA: I'm just an ordinary man.
ASHA: Here?
DEBA: You mean how I came here? (*Goes to the window*) Through this window. It's all quite simple, you know. I was just passing this way after my tuitions. When I reached your house, I heard you screaming—"Save me, save me....."
ASHA: Dont tell me I screamed!
DEBA: Why, you don't believe it? I say, anybody would do it when scared.
ASHA: I wasn't scared.
DEBA: Do you think it's so simple as that? I have seen old hags of eighty. So unwilling to die. A professional murderer is mortally afraid of his own death. Anybody would get the creeps at the very thought of death. Of course, you may be different. (*Smiles*). Tell me honestly, did you wish to die at all?
ASHA: What do you mean?
DEBA: If you really meant to kill yourself, you would have certainly taken strong rope and not a cord like this. See, I can break it with my hands. (*Breaks the cord*). After all, you can't forget your weight.
ASHA: Please stop it, for Heaven's sake. (*Pause*). I fixed up everything and was about to put my neck in the noose. Then the stool slipped. The cord in my hand broke and I fell to the ground. What a shame!
DEBA: What's there to be ashamed of? Don't you remember Bankim's Saivalini? She couldn't die. Pratap dipped twice in water, and Saivalini swam ashore. Fear of death had become her tragedy.
ASHA: My tragedy is also there perhaps. I could'nt get any peace in life, and—
DEBA: Who can assure of peace after death?
To die, to sleep,
And perchance to dream
Ah, there's the rub.
Hamlet too failed to die out of his fear,
ASHA: I think you read much.
DEBA: Yes, that's my profession—to read and to teach.
ASHA: Oh! (*Sits up, with legs hanging down*). *Asha Choudhury looks much younger despite her thirtyfive years, and is quite attractive in a matching dress. She is now wearing an old plain sari and a blouse, and her hair is plaited. (Debabrata smiles)*
ASHA: What's the matter?
DEBA: If you don't mind—?
ASHA: Not at all.
DEBA: Now you feel yourself a perfect fool, don't you? You prepared a definite plan for your final exit from the world by defeating your conscience, leaving a parting letter to whom it may concern, and probably even shedding a tear or two for your near and dear ones, but unfortunately the cord betrayed you.
ASHA: No jokes, please. Of course I've already become a laughing stock, and don't care for it now.
DEBA: Don't get excited. Really it beats my imagination about your being so dramatic regarding this affair.
ASHA: I don't follow.
DEBA: You could have taken poison. There are splendid ones, you know. Just put a drop on your tongue, and you won't have time even to turn your head.
ASHA: Where do you get them?
DEBA: How do I know? I've never attempted suicide.

I wish you won't mention this incident . . . . .

ASHA: Do you think it's so easy? I've tried my best, but failed miserably.
DEBA: Oh, forget it....Is there anybody else in this house?
ASHA: No.
DEBA: Excuse me for a personal question. Are you married?
ASHA: Yes.
DEBA: Your husband—
ASHA: —is alive, but not here.
Deba: I see. (*Pause*). Any relatives?
ASHA: They can't stand my sight.
DEBA: Oh (*Pause*). Then you are alone here?
ASHA: (*With a pale smile*) Absolutely. (*Strokes* her *foot*). Oh, God!
DEBA: Does it still pain you?
ASHA: Yes.
DEBA: Why don't you apply some medicine? There's nothing to be shy about. So long as you are alive, you have got to take care of your body. By the by, if you happen to consult a doctor, what story would you tell?.....Let me see, get up from there.

He holds her and makes her stand up.

ASHA: You bother too much!
DEBA: (*Laughs loudly*) My students feel the same about me. Nobody can bluff me in work. I insist on finishing the task at one stroke, and particularly students like you—

Asha goes to the table and takes her letter.

ASHA: Not me. I am past that age.
DEBA: How old are you? Twenty eight?
ASHA: Your guess is short by seven years.
DEBA: Oh, thirtyfive then? Doesn't matter. I am one year older than you. For the last thirteen years I've been teaching, and there are several girls of your age.

Asha tidies up the room.

DEBA: Why don't you drink something hot? It'll do you good.
ASHA: Let me see if I can make some tea.

Asha takes a few things and goes inside, Debabrata gets his books and umbrella from outside and talks loudly.

DEBA: This seems to be quite a solitary place. Don't you feel lonely here? What if a robber attacks you? No one would hear your screams even. It's indeed a pity having nobody to look after.

Debabrata turns the pages of a book, Asha enters a little later.

ASHA: I have a request.
DEBA: Yes?
ASHA: I wish you won't mention this incident to anyone.
DEBA: My goodness! What do you take me for? A street announcer? Besides, who would believe such a cock-and-bull story?
ASHA: What I mean is, we have met in peculiar circumstances, and unless I acquaint you with the broad details of my life, it'll be puzzling to you.
DEBA: Don't worry. Suppose we enter the theatre during the last act of the play. Yet we can easily be led to believe it's only the beginning....I didnt know it's so late. Let me get along.
ASHA: The kettle is on the fire, you know?
DEBA: Oh, I see. Then I wont miss my tea.
ASHA: What's that packet you are carrying?
DEBA: Lilies. Pala adores them. Pala is my wife. That's why I wanted to rush home. It sounds funny, but she has developed a habit of her own. If I reach home late in the evening, she will be on tenterhooks, pacing up and down the room and the verandah.
ASHA: Then I should'nt detain you.
DEBA: It's all right. An intellectual does not run away from his cup of tea. (*Pause*). My daughter is very mischievous. The moment she sees her mother walking to and fro, she catches her sari and follows her like a shadow.
ASHA: How many sons do you have?
DEBA: Two. Both of them are studying in High School. We five form our little family.
ASHA: You are a lucky man. A happy household. No counting the days.
DEBA: Pala is not much educated, but she is humane enough. When the girl was born after the two boys, I promised her a diamond ring. She longs for one.
ASHA: (*Hurriedly getting up*) Just a minute. The water must be boiling.

Asha goes inside. Debabrata arranges his books and puts them all together. Bimal enters calling out: "Sister! sister" Bimal is twentytwo years old, of good complexion, and his eyes and face indicate childishness. He wears a tropical suit. He looks at Debabrata and keeps quiet.

DEBA: She is in, preparing tea.
BIMAL: Thanks. Let me see. Sister, sister—

Bimal goes in. A few words are heard from inside. Bimal comes back.

BIMAL: She isn't in there.

DEBA: She will be back presently.
BIMAL: Hm. (*Pause*) Have I seen you here before ?
DEBA: Perhaps not.
BIMAL: But your face is familiar.
DEBA: May be. What's surprising about it ? I live in Calcutta every day of the year. You must have seen me in a bus or a tram, otherwise at some meeting.
BIMAL: Oh, no. Definitely not in a tram or bus. I have my own car. I used to go to school in trams, never afterwards. Wonder how people enjoy a tramride, packed like sardines.
DEBA: What else can they do ?
BIMAL: I hate crowds. Can't stand them. That's why I get out of Calcutta during the Pujas every year. I know the trains too are overcrowded, and so I don't go near them, not even planes. I go in my car, it costs me less. Of course, once in two years I have got to change my car for a new one. Old cars give a lot of trouble. I had a Jaguar previously. Now I have bought an Austin, A90, sporting model, convertible type.
DEBA: Very interesting.
BIMAL: (Opening his cigarette case) Cigarette?
DEBA: No, thanks. I don't smoke.
BIMAL: You seem to be a very calculating type, not even addicted to smoking. I'm dying with this habit. Must have at least thirty a day. Actually, I have to offer others more than what I smoke myself. I say, what's the matter with Calcutta ? Prices are spiralling from day to day. See, for instance, this suit. Very expensive, you know. It's not ready to wear, (*Shows the label on the inside*) John Burness, you see, and you know how costly it can be. But the cutting is superb.
DEBA: I've read their advertisements. They promise to make any village boor smart with their clothes.
BIMAL: (*Without caring for his words*). Look at the crease. I tried various tailors, but no one can beat these people. Of course, their charges are high. Have you seen this tie ? Anti-crease. Twist it whatever way you like. (*Twists and shows*). All silk, made in England. I got a dozen from a friend returning from abroad.
DEBA: Very interesting.
BIMAL: You know they say, 'A gentleman is known by his collar and shoes'. Look at my collar. My shoes, you know, (*puts his leg on the table and shows*) are Italian and they shine. I polish them daily myself, otherwise they won't last. (*Suddenly looks at his wrist watch*). What's happened to Sister Asha ? I'm in a hurry. I have purchased cinema tickets.
DEBA: Cinema ? At this time ?
BIMAL: Nine o'clock show. That's my habit. I don't go to any other show. Don't you—
DEBA: I seldom go since I have stopped seeing Hollywood pictures.
BIMAL: You are a wonderful man. What else do you see ? Hindi and Bengali ? The Bengali pictures lack the main dish of rice and curry while rare romantic delicacies are served at random. The Hindi pictures are a class by themselves. The heroine's father roars at the heroine to his heart's content and threatens to cut her to pieces and throw them to the birds of prey. Hah, ha, ha.....I like to sleep in those pictures.
DEBA: There is a reason for it.
BIMAL: What reason ?
DEBA: Bengalee's hate Bengali pictures most. Reason: they are understood fully. Hindi pictures are better, as they are less understood. They like English pictures best because they don't understand them at all.
BIMAL: Do you mean to say—. Here comes Sister Asha.

Asha brings three cups of tea in a tray. She puts aside Debabrata's umbrella and places the tea cups on the table.

BIMAL: You know what this gentleman is saying. Since we can't understand anything, we like English pictures—
ASHA: He's an English teacher, and thinks everybody is a fool.
BIMAL: Oh, I see. Now I remember you. Weren't you giving tuition to Sarama ?
DEBA: Which Sarama ?
BIMAL: Sarama Roy. Stays in Kyd Street. Her father is a barrister. There's a fox terrier in their house. Previously they had a Packard. Recently they have purchased an M.G.
DEBA: Yes. I used to go there. That was nearly four years back.
BIMAL: I saw you in their house. What funny jokes Sarama used to tell me about you !
DEBA: Jokes ? About me ?
BIMAL: (*Laughing*) One day Sarama made you stand in various poses and took photographs. In fact, the camera wasn't loaded at all. (*Debabrata becomes slightly serious*).
ASHA: What ? Now you feel you were fooled a bit, don't you ? How else can it be taken, if a renowned professor like you was made a victim of a practical joke by an ordinary girl student ?
DEBA: I see you have paid me in my own coin.
ASHA: What harm is there ? It's your own coin.
BIMAL: Sister has spoken the truth. If you read much, you will become a fat-head. That's why I put a stop to my studies.
DEBA: What do you do now?
BIMAL: Nothing.
DEBA: Nothing ?
BIMAL: Are you curious where I get my money ?
ASHA: He has a vast property.
DEBA: I don't think it'll last long, if he continues like this.
ASHA: It's not the usual property. His uncle is the famous writer—Purnachandra—
DEBA: Ow ! You are Purnachandra's nephew ?
ASHA: And his only successor, both to the cars and houses, and the royalties.
DEBA: Tell me one thing, if it is not too much to ask. How do you spend your time ?
BIMAL: (*Laughs loudly*) My dear sir, I don't get any time at all. Tennis, cricket, hockey, badminton, motor racing—
DEBA: Don't tell me you play all these games ?
BIMAL: I play some and see others. It all depends. Let me finish my avocations—motor racing, cinema, theatre, friends, relatives, hotels, restaurants, etc. Can you beat it ? I don't find time to meet any friend more than once in two months.
DEBA: I see. Somehow I can't understand this life.
BIMAL: My life moves like that. What can I do ? For instance, next week I'm starting in my car with sister Asha. At five in the morning my car will wait for her at her

residence. The luggage will be kept in the car the previous evening itself. Breakfast at Burdwan, lunch at Asansol, and dinner at Ranchi B.N.R. Hotel.

DEBA: You will stay in Ranchi ?

BIMAL: Can't say. Suppose you wish to get out of Calcutta. How long would it take you to get ready ?

DEBA: I don't know. I have never had the experience.

BIMAL: Can you guess about me ? In case I feel like eating the famous Burdwan 'mihidana' as I am getting ready for bath, I get out of my bath and reach Burdwan by tea time—

ASHA: I tell you there's no end to Bimal's talks.

DEBA: Aren't you married as yet?

BIMAL: No. Why?

DEBA: Then you would talk less. I've stayed too long. I am off—

BIMAL: Come along with me. I'll give you a lift.

DEBA: Not bad. Which side are you going ?

BIMAL: North Calcutta.

DEBA: But I go South.

BIMAL: I see. Then ?

DEBA: You can do one thing. Leave me at the tramway.

BIMAL: Gladly. Let me have a small tete-a-tete with Asha-di.

DEBA: Then I'd be terribly late.

BIMAL: What do you say ? How can I waste any time now ? I've to rush home, pick up a friend, and then dash to the picture. Asha-di, I have completed all odd jobs : Number one, I have fixed up a luggage carrier on the top of the car ; Number two, I have booked the car for servicing ; Number three—

ASHA: It wasn't necessary to do all this. I told you not to do anything without telling me—

BIMAL: I hate to put off the work till the last minute. Are you sure of getting leave from your office ?

DEBA: You are employed I suppose.

ASHA: Yes, in a Travel Agency.

BIMAL: Good Heavens ! It slipped out of my mind altogether. Uncle has written from Delhi. There are two vacancies in the Education Department. They have advertised in the papers. Here is the cutting. If you are interested, I'll get all details.

ASHA: I don't want it for the present.

BIMAL: So, after all, better sense has prevailed on you. Good. You know, Sir, whenever a devil possesses Asha-di, she takes our life out. For some days now, she has been raving about a post in Delhi. Thank God, now she has given up the idea.

DEBA: But make sure that another devil hasn't possessed her again.

BIMAL: What do you mean ?

DEBA: It's a dreadful disease like malaria. You can't get rid of the complaint completely, once you get accustomed to woo the devil.

ASHA: (*Laughs*) You have a wonderful sense of humour. I tell you nobody will take you for a professor.

DEBA: What compliment is this ?

ASHA: Whatsoever you can make of it.

DEBA: Thanks. Let me get along now, as I'm sure you will still be delayed.

BIMAL: Oh, no. Come on, let's go. All right, Asha-di, if possible I'll call on you tomorrow again.

DEBA: Good night. Hope to meet you again.

ASHA: Please drop in, if you pass this way. We have touched many topics today, but couldn't conclude them. Let's try to bring out the underlying truths in our next meeting.

DEBA: Sure. So long, then.

Debabrata and Bimal talk to each other as they go out.

DEBA: You saved my walking today.

BIMAL: How far is the tram-stop ?

DEBA: About a mile.

BIMAL: Do you often come this way ?

DEBA: Thrice a week. I have a student here. He stays in the third left-hand lane down this road.

BIMAL: (*Suddenly remembering*) Will you excuse me for a minute, sir ? (*Taking out a paper from his pocket*) I forgot to hand this over to Asha-di.

Without waiting for his approval, Bimal rushes back into the house. Debabrata stands there, slightly impatient. Asha is replacing the cups in the tray.

ASHA: What, Bimal ? Why have you come back ?

BIMAL: I wanted to make sure you are doing well.

ASHA: Of course, I'm all right.

BIMAL: You don't look it. Tell me honestly. What's happened ?

ASHA: There's no point in making him wait. He's much delayed.

BIMAL: I'm off just now.

ASHA: No, I need you for a while.

BIMAL: Oh ! (Goes to the door) Sir, do you mind if I delay you a bit more ?

DEBA: No. I'm in a hurry. You'd better carry on. We shall certainly meet again.

BIMAL: So kind of you. As a matter of fact, I wanted to accompany you, but—

Debabrata goes away smiling, Bimal goes back into the room.

BIMAL: Quite a jolly fellow, but gets glued to his seat.

ASHA: I wish to clear a few matters with you.

BIMAL: Go ahead.

ASHA: I told you not to step in here. Why have you come ?

BIMAL: I know, but I had to give you a message.

ASHA : You are still young. Do you realise that ? Your people won't relish your coming here so often.

BIMAL: What do I care ? They are jealous of you and spread many a false tale about you.

ASHA: When you have to stay in their house, you can't afford to flout them. You have your whole future to think about. All of them look upto you to be made happy.

BIMAL: (*Laughing*) Why are you so strange today? What have I done now to make them unhappy? I come here, because I like you. What's there in it ? I knew from our first meeting in Madhupur how well you appreciated me.

ASHA: (*Sighing deeply*) I know it.

BIMAL: No, you don't. If you did, you won't chide me like this. There's a picture of you in my room. My aunt makes fun of it. Let her. I don't care. They don't know what I'm made of.

ASHA: Poor child! In what way can I make you learn how intricate and complex the world is. My only wish is that you don't get into

I got from you what I failed to get from my mother.

trouble. If you really care for me, stop coming here. Promise me—

BIMAL: What are you talking, Asha-di ?

ASHA : (*Excitedly*) You heard me, didn't you ? I know how much they can harm you. I want you to go about freely in this wide world with a raised chin.

BIMAL: (*Goes near her*) I can't make any head or tail of what you say. Tell me exactly what's happened.

ASHA: I can't, Bimal, I can't. Please don't worry me further. Keep my word and go home.

BIMAL: All right, Asha-di. If that's what you want, I shalln't be here any more and be a nuisance to you. But I'm really surprised. I'm being pushed away by the one I love most. I lost my father, before I was old enough to understand him correctly. They say he used to dote on me. Nobody could replace his affection in my family, not even my mother. I tried my best, but somehow I couldn't get attached to my mother, as I should—

ASHA: It's not proper, Bimal. Your mother can never bear to be detached—

BIMAL: I got from you what I failed to get from my mother. I know what it is, but what's the use of recalling the past, when you turn me out like this. Still I respect you and I won't call on you for a few days.

ASHA : Not a few days. It should be till I send for you again.

BIMAL: As you say. (*Pause*) Send me a mesage when you would like to go to Hazaribagh.

ASHA: I've dropped the idea, Bimal.

BIMAL: What ? You won't see your boy ?

ASHA: (*Sighing, deeply*) No. I don't want to.

BIMAL: We planned so much and made so many arrangements including the booking of the travellers' bungalow, all because you appeared to be pining for your child. Now you cancel the whole programme !

ASHA: There's no use. I've given it careful thought. It's better to leave things as they are. I don't want him to have any connection with me.

BIMAL: It can't be. Don't you realise his happiness to have you back ? See reason and stop being obstinate. Let's visit him at Hazaribagh.

ASHA: No, I tell you. Let the boy prosper as he is. His mother is dead. Aren't there many motherless children ? He will be one of them.

BIMAL: What does he gain by it ?

ASHA: Why ? Don't you have respect and love for your father at his very memory? My boy will do likewise for his mother. That'll be my fond desire. I don't want to meet him even by a stray chance. If he comes to know of my present life, he would be much grieved and may even be ashamed to own me publicly. No, I wont see him.

BIMAL: Then you will slowly be reduced to ashes in your heart's flame, yearning for your son.

ASHA: I wish I were, but I'm not. My son has got his father, holds a respectable position in society, and is well provided for. He lacks nothing.

BIMAL: I don't follow you. Are you sure you aren't sick ?

ASHA: Now you get along, Bimal, and don't you call here again unless sent for. Promise me you will keep my word. I want you to become a great man, a respectable man, an idealistic man a—

BIMAL: I promise, sister. Bye bye. (*EXIT*)

After Bimal departs, Asha remains standing for a while and tidies up the room. She observes Debabrata's umbrella in the corner, takes it to the outer door, comes back and replaces it in the corner. She puts out the light and goes in. The gas light in the street is on. A little later, ROBI DUTT enters and stops under the gas light. Aged fortyfive, tall and hefty, pointed

nose, curly hair, good personality. Wears a sweater with a round neck, over corduroy pants. Carries a portfolio bag and a few letter files. He takes out a key from his pocket, opens the door and enters the room. He puts the light on. With a tired feeling, he drops down in the sofa. After a few moments, he rises, opens the almirah with another key, brings out a whisky bottle, and places it on the table. He brings a glass tumbler and a bottle of soda water from the adjoining room. He pours a stiff drink, and begins to sip it.

Asha enters

ASHA: When did you come?

ROBI: Just now.

ASHA: Why haven't you called me?

ROBI: Awfully tired. Wanted a drink badly. Will you join me?

ASHA: No. I'm not well.

Both of them keep quiet. Asha takes a book and turns the pages. With glass in his hand, Robi broods.

ROBI: Has Bimal turned up?

ASHA: Yes.

ROBI: Have you asked him?

ASHA: No.

ROBI: Why did'nt you?

ASHA: Could'nt get a suitable opportunity.

Robi Dutt gazes intently at Asha.

ROBI: Will you answer me a question?

ASHA: Yes.

ROBI: If you get a chance, will you ask him?

ASHA: Perhaps not.

ROBI: (*Gets angry*) So you are fooling me all this time, are you? You have been tempting me for one week now.

ASHA: What shall I do? I can't.

ROBI: Why can't you? What's Bimal to you? A vagabond, loafer, rolling in money—it's a flea bite to him to finance for a picture.

ASHA: If the picture flops, and you incur loss?

ROBI: In business you must expect both profit and loss.

ASHA: Nevertheless, I can't ask him.

ROBI: (*Gets up and walks to and fro*) You are so concerned about Bimal's probable loss, but you don't even raise your little finger at my complete ruination.

ASHA: I can't suffer your taunts today, Robi. I'm indisposed. Let me go and lie down.

ROBI: I know your heart has strayed far away from me, but it doesn't matter. I won't be sorry, anyway.

Asha raises her eyes and gazes dreamily at him.

ROBI: Don't you gaze at me like that. Those eyes could fool me in the past, but not now.

ASHA: Believe me, Robi, I'm not well to-day, and you too, I think, are not very sober. To-morrow morning—

ROBI: 'Frailty! Thy name is woman'. There was a day when those very eyes begged my mercy. They are trying to devour me today. I was an idiot and I succumbed to your beauty.

ASHA: (*Catching her head*) Please stop it. I can't bear it any more. Do you wish to drive me mad with that prattle of yours every-day?

ROBI: No. If at all, it's I who will be doomed. Producer Robi Dutt, Director Robi Dutt, owner of mansions and motor cars—oh, what a nightmare! The pictures flopped one after another like a pack of cards, and I have been washed ashore the island of ignominy like a rotten weed. It's a problem now to get two square meals a day. With all this, I have to look after my family, and support a white elephant like you as well.

ASHA: I'll never forget what you've done for me. If you hadn't liberated me from my husband, I would have gradually perished in the clutches of that beastly drunk. Unhesitatingly, you gave me shelter. I wish you well always.

ROBI: Enough of your flattery. I know you well. For my sake, I brought you out of that spider's web. That's all. . . . Can you tell me why I've been reduced to such degradation as this?

ASHA: You have yourself to blame for all this. You were all the time bent on swindling others and making money at their cost with your pictures. You never exhibited your sincerity. This game doesn't last long and naturally you are no exception to it.

ROBI: (*Mockingly claps hands*) Hear, hear! Learnt by heart a wonderful dialogue. Who has written it? Your Bimal Babu?

ASHA: Whoever it is, can you deny it? You have saved me from your friend's hands, but you have done it with a purpose.

ROBI: What's it?

ASHA: Your idea was a heroine for your pictures without any expense. Unfortunately all the pictures, where I acted, proved miserable failures. Since then you have begun to fret and fume. If I turned out a successful actress, Robi Dutt wouldn't have been speaking like this.

ROBI: Don't you wish that I regain my lost glory, produce superb pictures again, become rich and hit the headlines?

ASHA: I do wish it. . . . . .

ROBI: (*Appealingly*) Then why don't you get me the funds from Bimal? Seventy to eighty thousand will do—a paltry amount to him. I can't fail this time. I've in view an outstanding story. There is everything in it—tragedy, comedy, songs, dances, in fact, all the ingredients for a marvellous picture. It'll be a pronounced success and will be released in four reputed theatres of Calcutta. You will find the posters on every wall, insertions in every paper, neon light advertisements overlooking Chowringhee, endless multitudes going to see the picture. — Oh, oh, thank you, thank you, thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. I'm really honoured at your appreciation. Please stop your applause for a moment. I wish to acknowledge—(*lifts up his whiskey glass*).

ASHA: Stop drinking, Robi. You've had too much to-day.

ROBI: (*Sighing deeply*) No, I'm all right. Will you promise to get me the money? This will be my last effort. If you say, it'll be done. Bimal can't go against your word.

ASHA: (*Firmly*) That is why I'm unable to tell him.

ROBI: Won't you, Asha?

ASHA: No. It's better you don't produce that picture. Times have changed. Those songs, dances and cheap romantic situations we used to see in the pictures have no place now. People may care to receive some

message, but even that not from you, I tell you.

ROBI: I won't raise this point with you again. But I will raise funds and certainly produce my picture. It's my look-out to adopt whatever means I please. One more thing. I'm completely broken. I can't maintain you any further.

ASHA: Probably you are unaware that I haven't taken any money from you for the last six months.

ROBI: *(Enraged)* The house rent is to be paid, you know that. It has come to one thousand rupees. The landlord is kicking up a row every day.

ASHA: It's all right. I'll arrange that.

ROBI: Bravo! If you can, why don't you give it just now? I'll clear myself off the debt.

ASHA: I don't have it with me.

ROBI: You will have to borrow from Bimal only, isn't it? Give me a note. I'll go and collect it from him.

ASHA: It won't be proper.

ROBI: I know. Nothing is proper. He may take it amiss. Why should I suffer any nonsense for his sake? I won't take a 'no' from you today. I want at least five hundred now. Come on, write a short note on this paper—

ASHA: No, I won't—

ROBI: I'll see how you don't.

Debabrata approaches the outer door slightly before this and now enters the room by pushing the door open.

DEBA: Excuse me.

ROBI: Who are you?

ASHA: *(Surprised)* Professor?

DEBA: I forgot my umbrella here.

ASHA: Oh, yes. *(Gives him the umbrella).*

DEBA: It's quite late, I know. After I passed three stops, I remembered my umbrella. I got down from the tram and came back.

ROBI: *(Vexed)* You got your umbrella. You may go now. Good-night.

DEBA: Would you lend me your pen please? *(Sits down).*

ROBI: Why?

DEBA: I said, give it.

ROBI: What do you mean? Who are you anyway?

DEBA: It won't help you. Please give me the pen.

Robi Dutt is surprised, mechanically he gives the pen.

ROBI: What are you writing?

DEBA: A cheque.

ROBI: For what?

DEBA: For the house rent. What's your name?

ROBI: Robi Dutt.

DEBA: I've crossed it. Five hundred rupees.

ROBI: Oh. *(Taking the cheque in his hands)* Five hundred in a jiffy. If you are so philanthropic, why don't you make it a thousand?

DEBA: I certainly would, but, sorry, there's no balance in the bank.

ROBI: Thanks. *(Approaching Asha).* I didn't know you had such a galaxy of friends.

Robi tries to go out before Asha raises her head. Debabrata gets up from his seat.

DEBA: Just a minute, mister.

ROBI: *(From the outer door)* You want me?

DEBA: Let me have a receipt.

ROBI: What receipt?

DEBA: For the cheque given.

ROBI: Oh. Where shall I write it?

DEBA: Write it at the back of my note-book.

ROBI: What shall I write?

DEBA: You write my name. I'm Prof. Debabrata Ghose, address: 30 Circus Avenue, Calcutta. Then the usual wording. *(To Asha).* By the way, what's *your* name, please?

ROBI: *(Surprised)* Don't know even the name, eh? Asha Choudhury.

DEBA: Good. Write that you've received five hundred rupees towards Asha Devi's house rent dues.

ROBI: *(Handing back the receipt)* Here it is.

DEBA: Now, I wish you good-night.

ROBI: Good-night. *(Hurriedly goes out).*

ASHA: Why did you think of insulting me like this?

DEBA: I don't get you.

ASHA: *(Slowly)* I don't know what he thought of me.

DEBA: What's there about it? He wanted money and I gave it. He should feel glad.

ASHA: Glad! Do you know who he is?

DEBA: No.

ASHA: In case he is my husband?

DEBA: I'd pray to God to rescue you.

ASHA: It's no laughing matter, I tell you. He's an old friend of mine. I'm obliged to him for a fresh lease of life he gave me.

DEBA: I took him otherwise from the way he was talking to you. He looked like an unscrupulous creditor. That's why, to save you—

ASHA: What? Who gave you the right to save me?

DEBA: Why? You yourself.

ASHA: I? What do you mean?

DEBA: This evening, after I entered your house on hearing your cries and pulled you out of the jaws of death, I became your friend.

ASHA: You are playing with fire, you know.

DEBA: If I decide to play at all at this fag-end of my life, I'd better do it with fire only.

ASHA: Oh, I see.

DEBA: Go ahead and see. I've no objection.... Oh, it's too late. Let me get along.

ASHA: *(Closing the door)* No, you are not going. Sit down.

DEBA: Why?....I've already told you how my wife would be restless till I reach home. By now she must have covered at least three miles walking in and out.

ASHA: Will you please keep quiet?

DEBA: God Almighty! You lose your temper with a helpless fellow like me! All the while you were like a kitten before your creditor.

ASHA: He isn't my creditor, I told you that.

DEBA: Oh, yes. I'm sorry. He is your fast friend. But, you know, many a time it happens that friends do change to creditors. We are naturally helped by our friends, who would collect the principal together with interest.

ASHA: Please note I'm in no mood to joke with you now.

DEBA: Very good. Then let me get out.

ASHA: *(Firmly)* No, I won't let you go. Sit down.

DEBA: Gosh! I'm done for. I think you won't allow me to go unless you feed me sumptuously for the little help I have given you.

ASHA: I said 'sit down'.

DEBA: *(Sits)* All right, I've sat down.

ASHA: Give me that note book.

DEBA: Have it. *(Gives it to her).*

ASHA: *(Reads)* 'No. 30, Circus Avenue'.

DEBA: Oh, I see, you want my address! It's so easy. If you go by bus, take number eight.

It'll cost you ten pice and takes half an hour. If you go by tram —

ASHA: If necessary, I'll go by car.

DEBA: Then it's slightly inconvenient. The car can't enter the narrow lane. You will have to walk a few paces. I tell you, Pala will be delighted to see you. She will prepare tasty snacks for you —

ASHA: Pala may not be so delighted as you make it.

DEBA: Why?

ASHA: How will you introduce me to her?

DEBA: Why? As my friend. Of course, if you don't have any objection —

ASHA: *(Laughs)* Why should I object? I only wonder which woman would welcome with a smiling face a husband's friend like me?

DEBA: What's wrong with you?

ASHA: I'm so unknown in this city. I came out of my husband's house. Many know me as a cinema actress. Pala will discover it soon, if she is not aware of it already. Do you think she will still be pleased?

DEBA: To be frank with you, I haven't thought in that way.

ASHA: You should have. Suppose Pala will come to know that you agreed to become my captive till ten in the night today. How will she take it?

DEBA: I'll tell her the whole truth.

ASHA: What? You would say a pretty girl was on the point of putting her head in a noose to hang herself, and to save her you jumped inside the room through a window. Then you wrote a cheque for five hundred rupees and managed to send away her creditor with it. Who would believe such a fantastic tale?

DEBA: Whatever it is, she will have more faith in me than you.

ASHA: Is it so? I can prove that you were here till this late hour. Bimal was a witness.

DEBA: Bimal!

ASHA: The fact that you gave a cheque to Robi can also be proved. The bank people will confirm it.

DEBA: Robi Dutt!

ASHA: The proof for the money given by you towards the house rent is the receipt itself.

DEBA: Are you determined to blackmail me? I fail to grasp your motive *(Pause)* You know what I have done? I have paid that amount from the money I saved for Pala's diamond ring. However, she won't misunderstand me, although she may in the beginning. But, believe me, I never wanted to do any harm to you.

ASHA: *(Laughs)* What's happened to your playing with fire?

DEBA: Enough of it. I've already burnt my hands.

ASHA: You thought of making me a slave of yours by issuing a cheque for five hundred rupees, isn't it? Has it now gone to your head that Asha Choudhury cannot be captured so easily? Once you set foot, you can't escape from my trap.

DEBA: You mean all this is a hoax — putting a noose to your neck, and shouting for help? Is this the method Robi Dutt adopts for his abominable business?

ASHA: Don't be alarmed. I won't ruin your life. *(Laughs)*. I'm indeed obliged to you. But for you, I wouldn't have been living at this moment. Anyway, you will be responsible for this new life of mine.

DEBA: What are you driving at?

ASHA: You will have to meet all my expenses. Whenever you go this way for your tuitions, drop in here for a moment. I'll give you a list of my requirements.

DEBA: If I refuse to carry out your word?

ASHA: Then I'll be reluctantly compelled to visit Pala.

DEBA: Oh, no. Please don't. I'll call on you regularly.

ASHA: Very good. I don't need anything now. You can get the balance five hundred rupees of the house rent at your convenience.

DEBA: Hm!

ASHA: What are you thinking?

DEBA: Nothing at all. I've agreed to all your conditions.

ASHA: That's the way intellectuals behave.

DEBA: *(Sighing deeply)*. May I leave now?

ASHA: With pleasure. *(Opens the door)*.

DEBA: *(Goes upto the door and stops)*. Will you do me a favour?

ASHA: What is it?

DEBA: Please don't break up my family. I can never survive if I lose my Pala.

ASHA: I give you my word that as long as you carry out my instructions, I won't wreck Pala's life.

DEBA: I depend upon you. Good night.

ASHA: Good night.

They part. Asha closes the door and thoughtfully opens the note-book. Debabrata stands near the lamp post and notes down the house number and address in his note-book. The curtain slowly comes down.

CURTAIN

✱

ACT TWO
Scene One

The same scene as before, after a few days. When the curtain rises, the room is in darkness. The gas lamp outside is lighted, but in the distance is seen the glow of the setting Sun. Debabrata enters as in the previous scene with his books and umbrella. He presses the calling bell of Asha Choudhury's house. After the bell rings twice, Asha Choudhury enters the room. She puts the light on. She is wearing an ordinary sari, and enters wiping her face, with a towel. She opens the door and is surprised to see Debabrata.

ASHA: You!

DEBA: Are you expecting somebody else?

ASHA: No.

DEBA: I think you didn't anticipate me so soon.

ASHA: *(Slightly startled)*. Don't be standing there. Please come in.

DEBA: Thanks. *(Places the books on the table)*. I have a tuition in this locality to-day. So I thought of giving my attendance to you.

ASHA: Oh. I see. If you remember our agreement, let me tell you I don't require anything for the present. You may attend to your tuitions.

DEBA: To tell you the truth, I started earlier so that I won't be late after spending some time with you. Now if you turn me out with one word, I shall have to wander on the roads.

ASHA: Then you may wait here.

DEBA: The pity of it is, we both have reached such a state that I'm frightened to speak freely to you.

ASHA: Why?

DEBA: If I talk unwarily a few words, which you judge as out of limits, who knows what traps might be laid for me. I am just a normal middle-class man, and how can I meet repeated demands for money?

ASHA: You are right, and the only solution is not to talk. You simply sit down and read those books of yours.

DEBA: There isn't a single book with me worth reading.

ASHA: How is it?

DEBA: Some are college text books, some are reference books and the others are notes. Today, I have to teach a poet, whom I don't like at all.

ASHA: Who is he?

DEBA: Tennyson. His writings are not extraordinary, but, of course, he became the Poet Laureate in Queen Victoria's time.

ASHA: I had a poem of his in my B.A. class. I liked it somehow.

DEBA: Which poem is it?

ASHA: I don't remember the title, but it's about a girl, who used to sit in a castle on the bank of a river. She would look at the world through a mirror, and when she tasted life for the first time, the mirror broke.

DEBA: "She left the web, she left the loom
She made three' paces thro' the room
She saw the water-lily bloom
She saw the helmet and the plume
She looked down to Camelot
Out flew the web and floated wide
The mirror cracked from side to side
The curse is come upon me, cried,
The lady of Shallot."

ASHA: But I know many who are satisfied with the shadow of life. They have neither the courage nor the spirit to look at the real life.

DEBA: *(Laughs)* By your serious talk, one is led to believe that you have tasted life considerably.

ASHA: Of course, I have. At times I feel I shouldn't have gone so far.

DEBA: That's a sort of ego. Man feels he has suffered the maximum sorrow and hardship *(Pause)*. I'd like to ask you a question, providing of course—

ASHA: What's it?

DEBA: How many children do you have?

ASHA: Only one son. He doesn't stay with me. Do you wish to see his photograph?

DEBA: Whose?

ASHA: *(Rising)* Just a minute. *(Gets an album from the drawer)*. This is my son Saroj, when he was three years old. We used to be in Patna at that time.

DEBA: Patna?

ASHA: Yes. That's my husband's place.

DEBA: He is Mr. Choudhury, isn't it?

ASHA: Yes.

DEBA: What is he?

ASHA: Nothing at present. Previously he used to practise as a barrister. *(Showing a photograph)*. Look at this, when my boy was a little older. He was six years.

DEBA: Don't you have any wedding photo?

ASHA: This photo was taken, when I had reached twenty one years, a little before marriage. I left college then.

DEBA: Hm. You were quite pretty.

ASHA: At least that's what they used to say. Otherwise, why would a rich barrister marry an ordinary middle class girl? *(Showing another photograph)* I purposely took this photo, seven days before I left my home and came away. It was on the day Saroj was forced to leave for Hazaribagh to stay in the hostel there.

DEBA: In the hostel? What was his age?

ASHA: He hadn't completed his seventh year.

DEBA: Then what was the hurry?

ASHA: It was his father's will and pleasure. Besides, who would object? Well, Professor, how old is your eldest son?

DEBA: About twelve.

ASHA: Twelve, is it? How tall is he? Upto your shoulders?

DEBA: *(Rising)* Without a doubt. In a short time he will be wearing my shirts. These boys, you know, grow up without being noticed. By the way, I think you haven't looked up Saroj recently.

ASHA: I saw him six years back.

DEBA: Then it may not be easy for you to recognise him now. He must have grown tall, his voice too might have changed, and the moustache must have begun to show itself out.

ASHA: *(Suddenly rising)*. Will you have a cup of tea?

DEBA: I don't mind if it's there.

Asha hurriedly goes inside. Debabrata sets sticks of tuberoses in the flower vase. Asha returns with a tea tray.

DEBA: It sounds funny, but as Rabindranath puts it, we are no better than those fluttering mythical birds waiting anxiously for the first shower of the season to quench their thirst. Even before it is four o'clock, we are already restlessly craving for our evening tea. But I tell you this is an age-old practice. Some of the original inhabitants in the hilly tracts of India were in the habit of drinking the juice of——

ASHA: *(Stopping him)* Probably you've forgotten I'm not your student.

DEBA: Oh, yes. You're right. But isn't it interesting?

Asha serves him tea.

DEBA: By the by, I haven't given you this paper as yet. Here it is.

ASHA: What is it?

DEBA: The receipt for the balance five hundred rupees. I've paid it to your scrupulous friend and well-wisher.

ASHA: At this fag end of the month? How would you explain it to Pala?

DEBA: Don't worry. I can find a way out, but I won't disclose it to you and risk another trap. You know, there are many similarities between you and Pala. You have suddenly cut short my harangue on tea. I felt Pala herself spoke.

ASHA: Pala must be much younger than I.

DEBA: Of course, but she looks older.

ASHA: When you come next time, please get me a photograph of her. I wish to see.

DEBA: I tell you she doesn't look well in a photo. Her cheeks bulge like ripe tomatoes and that's why she never agrees to be photographed.

ASHA: I say, you seem to talk without end about her. Does she also go round talking about you?

DEBA: Oh, no. She is only mad after pictures. If she sees one picture, she narrates the story at twenty or thirty places. *(Suddenly looks at the clock)* Good Heavens, I've spent a long time. My students must have been tired of waiting for me. I'm off.

ASHA: I've been thinking if it would be proper on my part to trouble you a bit.

DEBA: Not at all. Come, what's it?

ASHA: Will you write one application for me?

DEBA: What for?

ASHA: For a job.

DEBA: But you have one.

ASHA: There's a better job in Delhi. I've the necessary qualifications. I mean trying for it.

DEBA: All right. Tell me what I should write.

ASHA: I've made a draft. Will you have a look at it?

DEBA: Give it to me.

Asha brings a paper and gives it to him.

DEBA: I can't wait any more to-day. I will take it and bring it back.

ASHA: That will do. Sorry to bother you.

Debabrata advances towards the door.

ASHA: Please don't forget about this. I've to send it tomorrow.

DEBA: How can I afford to forget your work? If I do, I know surely the report goes to Pala. *(Laughs)*. So long.

ASHA: Good night.

Debabrata goes out. Asha closes the door and puts out the light. The gas lamp is alight. As before, Robi Dutt comes and opens the door with his key. He puts on the light and calls Asha.

ROBI: Asha, Asha!

ASHA: What's happened? I don't see you at all these days.

ROBI: Frightfully busy, and I didn't like to worry you often also.

ASHA: Oh!

ROBI: *(Takes Debabrata's tea cup in his hand)* Who's this lucky person who had tea with you today? (*Asha remains silent*). Is it the Professor? Why don't you answer? Professor, isn't it?

ASHA: Yes. Any objection?

ROBI: Not at all. I see you've caught hold of a good client. He looks an idiot and doesn't realise the money spent on you will go down the drain. He has paid me another five hundred today.

ASHA: I don't know if he is an idiot or not, but he is a model gentleman. He doesn't come to me with motives, as you all do.

ROBI: Wonderful! Professor comes here daily to teach you, I hope.

ASHA: I'm sorry I can't tell you all the facts. But, remember, he is a happy householder with his wife and children. He has been kind enough to help me out of my troubles. That's all—

ROBI: Asha, what do you take me for? I'm not such a fool as Bimal or Professor to believe whatever comes out of your mouth.

ASHA: I don't care whether you believe it or not, and I won't bother it any more. Understand?

ROBI: Surely there must be a rub between the husband and wife, or the professor is a rogue with the avowed purpose of humouring women.

ASHA: You don't know under what circumstances he had to give the money.

ROBI: *(Laughs)* Circumstances!. Don't you fly off at a tangent. I tell you. Whatever it is, I'm warning you beforehand. After all, he's an innocent fellow. Don't you dare to play ducks and drakes with his life. One day we might hear the Professor has become a confirmed drunkard, even if he started only to keep company with you while at home his wife couldn't endure it any longer and hanged herself to death. The flame is already kindled. Don't fan it any more.

ASHA: You needn't be afraid on that score, Robi. Professor will be safe, I assure you. I know I didn't derive any happiness in my life, but I won't be so mean as to spoil another's life, if I can help it.

— Do you want it ?

— Why not ? Especiall when you are serving it.

ROBI: Then why is it I'm reduced to this state?

ASHA: Anybody may be responsible for it, not me (*Pause*). Very soon I shall try to repay the thousand rupees to the Professor. Afterwards, he would stop coming here. I know his peculiar nature. Whenever he talks of his house, he forgets the whole world. Pala, Pala, and Pala. His entire life is centred round Pala.

ROBI: Will you please stop this useless talk? I've come to tell you something important. If you don't wish to hear it —

ASHA: Robi, can't you spend at least one day with me without fighting?

ROBI: What can I gain by it?

ASHA: There's no loss either.

ROBI: What are you doing?

Asha goes and gets whiskey and glasses.

ASHA: Don't you want it?

ROBI: Why not? Especially when you are serving it.

ASHA: I did it many times before.

ROBI: You remember those days? When I first brought you to this house, I named it "Madhukunja." Pleasure used to emanate from you. Laughter and music were continuously heard, as if the house itself began to sing.

ASHA: Really, Robi, do you remember how often I used to change the decoration of this house? I recall that day when I bought a carpet for five hundred rupees from one Englishman in Ballygunge, who was transferred from Calcutta. You were actually put out that day.

ROBI: Yes. This is that carpet, isn't it? It's beyond recognition now. The house hasn't been whitewashed for a long time. The curtains are soiled and spider webs are hanging from the ceiling. (*Both of them look up*).

ASHA: Let's both forget those good old days, Robi.

Robi Dutt pours whiskey in two glasses.

ROBI: Take care, this is country whiskey. You may get the kick easily.

ASHA: Don't worry. (*Takes a gulp*) Oh, marvellous. It's like meeting an old friend all of a sudden.

ROBI: For me this is the only friend remaining now. All the old friends are not to be traced. Rajani, I think, has expired. Pramatha has obviously left Calcutta. By the way, do you remember Rajsekhar?

ASHA: You mean him, whose poetry you used to like most?

ROBI: Yes. He was a real poet of heart and soul. Oh, what recollections I have! "When peace departs unnoticed, Its memory lags behind fully slouched, Emitting deep sighs in the solitary cell."

ASHA: You too seem to be composing poetry like Rajsekhar?

ROBI: "Laughter! Oh friend, we aren't in Heaven,
Reigns here thirst like floral vermin
In the castle of wishes, the heart's core
Hemmed in by desires more and more,
As the doting bee whirls round the lotus,
Although emptied, hoping for success.
Oh, friend, when peace departs unnoticed,
Its memory lags behind fully slouched,
Emitting deep sighs in the solitary cell:
Laughter is scarce in this land of Hell."

ASHA: Who says laughter is not easy? See, I'm laughing. Come on, Robi, join me.

ROBI: Stop that whiskey, I tell you. Even a little upsets you so much.

ASHA: You don't understand, Robi. I'm quite happy. I hear torrential rain outside. No, no, it's a harmonious symphony of sweet bells. Don't you hear it?

ROBI: Not with a small dose like this. If I take in excess, my mind gets numb. (*Empties his glass and pours again*). I don't get any pleasure out of it. But still I drink, as there is no alternative. I can't keep my mind at rest. Within the last few years my whole life has become topsy-turvy. You know what I think, Asha? We have started with the film industry. How can it get rid of us? Yet it's getting on, as I see.

ASHA: Don't you spoil your mind, Robi. All of them care for you, respect you.

ROBI: Whatever I earned was in this profession only. As I step in the studio, all the people there get up and greet me cordially. They think I don't know what they feel in their heart of hearts. As my back is turned, a mischievous smile creeps in their faces. They whisper among themselves that Robi Dutt is a dead horse. Why did it happen like this, Asha? I can't explain the reason.

ASHA: Please, Robi, you're becoming very serious today. Forget it for the time being.

ROBI: (*Pauses a while*) I can't. As long as money was coming, I failed to appreciate its mystery. How many contracts have I refused! I have lost my self-confidence now. My mind is disturbed. I know I didn't treat you also well that day. I'm really awfully sorry. How I wish I could have my last attempt and produce one successful picture!

Bimal comes and presses the calling bell.

ROBI: Who's that?

ASHA: How do I know?

ROBI: Is anybody expected?

ASHA: No.

ROBI: Go and see. If it's some useless fellow, send him away. I don't feel like wasting my time for nothing.

Asha goes to the door and waits.

ROBI: If it's Bimal by any chance, do bring him in.

Robi lies down on the divan. Asha opens the door, finds Bimal there, and standing on the threshold, draws the door close to her.

ASHA: Bimal, why have you come again?

BIMAL: I've come to this locality, and as I haven't called on you for many days, I thought of looking you up once.

ASHA: It isn't necessary. If I want you, I'd send for you. Get along now ——

BIMAL: Why are you so excited?

ASHA: No, I am not.

BIMAL. Then why are you standing here? Come on, let's go in.

ASHA: No, you are not going in.

BIMAL: What's the matter? Is there anybody in?

ASHA: That's none of your business. You can't come in.

BIMAL: Oh, I see, You're drinking again, Asha-di? You forgot your promise to me not to have a drop?

ASHA: I don't remember. Will you go now? My time is precious.

After I entered the temple, I lost sight of you.

BIMAL: My God! What's come over you, Asha-di? You appear as if you can't live unless you turn me out.

ASHA: Yes. Are you satisfied? Now please go away. Don't try my patience any more.

BIMAL: All right, I'm off. I have realised today that whatever my people say about you is correct. You are deviod of noble sentiments, and you are only self-centred. If it's otherwise, how can you forsake your family and run away as you have done? I should have understood you long ago.

ASHA: Any way, better late than never. Get out.

BIMAL: I thought you sincerely longed for Saroj and senselessly planned to fulfil your wish. Fie on you! With the setting Sun, you start your drinking bout, and you're ashamed of letting me in. You could have been plain in your talk, without mincing matters. All right, I'm going and I won't come back even if you send for me.

Bimal goes. Asha stares in that direction for a few moments, slowly goes in and closes the door. She looks at Robi lying down, approaches him and finds him asleep. She sits in a chair and finishes her drink in one gulp. She looks again at Robi and brings for him a shawl from the almirah.

ROBI: (*A few moments later*) Who's that, Asha?

ASHA: Yes?

ROBI: I had a sound sleep and dreamt as well. (*Laughs*).

ASHA: Why do you laugh?

ROBI: It's an interesting dream.

ASHA: In what way?

ROBI: I took you along with me to climb a mountain. On its top could be seen a temple without any path leading to it. With utmost difficulty we reached there panting. After we entered the temple, I lost sight of you. I searched everywhere, but couldn't find you. I got down and went up several times and no one seemed to have noticed you.

ASHA: Then?

ROBI: At last a cowboy led me to you. When you saw me, you burst out laughing. I woke up as you continued to laugh.

ASHA: What's so interesting about it? I too dream many meaningless things.

ROBI: He seemed familiar to me.

ASHA: Who?

ROBI: That cowboy. But for his appearance, his gait, manners, and accent were exactly those of Bimal.

ASHA: Bimal?

ROBI: Yes. Bimal showed me the way in my dream. I tell you, Asha, he will give me the money. Whatever you dream, it comes true.

ASHA: But, Robi —

ROBI: Now I know, Asha, I've made a mistake in telling you. There's a peculiar relationship between you both. He respects you, likes you and is very fond of you. How can you ask him for money? I'll have to do it, and he will surely agree.

ASHA: It's all right, Robi. Anyway, you can't talk to Bimal now. Go home early. Sarama will be pleased.

ROBI: (*Dispiritedly*) How can she?

ASHA: At your sight.

ROBI: Those days are gone. As I reach home, Sarama comes to me once without fail, but it's only to search my pockets for money. I'm surprised. So long I was earning, there was no complaint from Sarama, and she would never allow me to sleep without my food, however, late I returned. At dawn she would take the children away from my room lest my sleep should be disturbed. And now?

ASHA: Go on.

ROBI: She sets the children on me. They extend their hands like creditors. But for the word 'want' they haven't learnt any other vocabulary. I'm frightened to go home. Sarama's burning tears and the children's derisive laughter—I can't bear any more, Asha.

ASHA: You are too excited, Robi.

ROBI: No . . . . . Let me wash my face and hands. I'll be back.

ASHA: Listen. Don't fall asleep, as you did the other day while washing your face.

ROBI: What's there to lose even if I do. (Exit).

Asha sits along and has a drink. She hums a tune. A little later, Professor comes and presses the bell.

ASHA: (*Opens the door and surprised*) You?

DEBA: What's the matter, tell me? Whenever you see me, you get startled.

ASHA: No, it's not that. It's not the usual time of your visit.

DEBA: I have made your application ready. What you wrote was, of course, good, but I have made it better.

ASHA: I shall read it later. Thank you very much.

DEBA: Let me tell you clearly. These 'shalls' and 'wills' are not to my liking. I don't believe in future tense. Have a look at it just now.

ASHA: It's so late. That's why—

DEBA: What do you say? The night is still tender. It's not yet nine o'clock.

Debabrata walks into the room.

ASHA: Even then, Pala will be anxiously waiting for you and may misjudge you, if you're late.

DEBA: *(Comes to the table)* Oh, I see. That's why you are feeling so uncomfortable about letting me in. I'd assure you, though I'm a teetotaller, I'm not so averse to others drinking. Carry on with a free heart.

ASHA: No, I won't drink any more.

DEBA: *(Taking the whiskey bottle in his hand)* Excuse me, what exactly is this? What kind of nectar? Oh, this is whiskey *(Laughs)*.

ASHA: What's funny about it?

DEBA: You know, once I took part in the drama 'Chirakumar Sabha'. The character was—what is it, what is it?. . . . . Yes, I remember—Darukeswar. There I sang a song also. *(Sings)*

ASHA: Believe it or not, you bore and entertain at the same time.

DEBA: How is it?

ASHA: To put it correctly, you are a fine jester.

DEBA: Hurray! You have begun to follow the college students.

ASHA: You mean the college students call you a jester?

DEBA: They know better ways of doing things. They write on the black-board: 'Prof. Ghosh is a clown'.

ASHA: I haven't heard anybody admitting how he is fooled.

DEBA: Doesn't matter. I have at last made you laugh. Otherwise, you always sit with a serious frown on your face.

ASHA: You're right. Laughter has evaporated from my life. Well, Professor, don't you ever commit mistakes?

DEBA: Where? In arithmetic?

ASHA: No, in the leaves of life.

DEBA: Of course, I do. I have indeed committed many mistakes. After all, it's in man's nature. And I'm not inhuman.

ASHA: No, not the ordinary mistakes, but slips, which if once committed, you will have to regret the rest of your life. I mean irretrievable mistakes.

DEBA: Why do you put me such a question?

ASHA: Suppose an ordinary middle-class girl, accustomed to simple food and habits, grows up in the midst of want like many others of her kind. If she is accidentally married to a very rich man, what would be her mental reaction?

DEBA: In the beginning she may be a fish out of water, but in due course she gets adjusted to the new surroundings, of course, if she co-operates towards this end.

ASHA: Who wouldn't co-operate, tell me? She tried heart and soul to please her husband. She erased out of her mind the sad memories of her father's poverty. She gave up the idea of looking up her mother on her death-bed, for fear of wounding her husband's feeling. *(She closes her face in her hands.)*

DEBA: Stop it, please. As I see, you're much disturbed.

ASHA: Professor, can you tell me why a boy had to come in between them? He entered into the sad farce of an unhappy couple's life and began playing with his tingling laughter and melodious hand claps *(Stands up)*. An embodiment of innocence!—Probably I would have forgotten all my worries with this treasure, but even my child was snatched away from me. A child of six, he wouldn't stay away from me for a minute. Can you visualise the rest of the story, Professor?

DEBA: I can. That girl would find it impossible to remain in that house any longer. She would get out at a suitable opportunity to look after her future. There's every possibility for her to succeed, but in such cases some snag remains somewhere.

ASHA: With a view to record my silent protest, I came away to Calcutta without informing my husband. After seven days, when I cooled down and wanted to return home, I dashed against a dead-end. My way was blocked.

DEBA: Why? How?

ASHA: Religious sanction.

DEBA: Oh. Then!

ASHA: With a scandal on my head, I had become a scapegoat of society. One idea remained uppermost in my mind — vengeance. I wanted to see how my husband would go about as a gentleman of the town. I went to the other extreme. Being forced, I revived my acquaintance with Robi Dutt, started living with him openly in this house, entered the cinema and took to drink. When news reached me that my husband was humiliated amongst his circle of friends, I used to feel happy about it. You know what happened later?

DEBA: What.

ASHA: He came here.

DEBA: Who? Mr. Choudhury?

ASHA: Yes. He came and took the same seat where you are sitting now. His piercing looks weren't there. Appealing voice. He came to tell me how badly I treated him, as a result of which how he suffered. Then I broke into a guffaw of laughter before him.

DEBA: So you have won surely?

ASHA: No. He didn't allow me to win—the devil. When I paid a deaf ear to whatever he said, he stood at this door on his way out and told me—'For the sake of Saroj's future, I would request you sincerely to keep our differences with us only. Don't spoil his life'. It was nothing short of lashing across my face with a whip and stamping mercilessly my insulted motherhood with his foot. Then he went away. Day and night I brooded and brooded, couldn't feel happy for a single day, and I couldn't even die with the satisfaction of having hugged my darling son to me for once. Above all, I couldn't forget for a moment the piercing words he darted at me on the plea of bettering my son's lot. I stopped acting in films, kept myself aloof from all activities, and then—

DEBA: Then I know the rest. *(He looks up and Asha too follows suit)*.

DEBA: Later our meeting had taken place, which resulted in the beginning of yet another drama.

ASHA: Professor!

Robi Dutt's voice is heard from inside.

ROBI: *(From within)* Asha, Asha!

ASHA: Coming *(Frightened)* You'd better leave now, Professor.

DEBA: Who's there? Robi Dutt?
ASHA: Yes.
ROBI: (*From within*) Whom have you there? (*Sound of footsteps*).
ASHA: Please go away, Professor. He's quite excited.
DEBA: I don't mind it.
ASHA: No, no, don't remain here any more. I've opened my heart to you and am very happy. I hate to have a reverse.
DEBA: All right. I shall try to come day after tomorrow.
ASHA: Please do.

Professor goes out. Asha closes the door. Almost simultaneously Robi Dutt comes from within.

ROBI: With whom were you talking? Who's come? What's the matter, you don't reply? Come on, out with it. Surely it's Bimal, isn't it? That's why you didn't give me an opportunity to speak to him. You know well he will agree to my proposal and advance me money. Why are you so hard-hearted? You hate my trials to come up again.
ASHA: It's not Bimal.
ROBI: Then who was it you were so attentive to?
ASHA: (*Gazes intently at Robi Dutt's eyes*) Professor.
ROBI: Professor? (*Hangs down his head*) Oh.

Professor is standing outside, and the curtain comes down.

Scene Two

The same scene as before, after a few days. When the curtain rises, Robi Dutt is seated and Bimal is playing recorded music.

BIMAL: Oh, wonderful. This is what music should be. Anybody is tempted to keep the beat.
ROBI: When you say, it'll be done.
BIMAL: I say, life must be there. You'd better bring your music director to me. I shall give him the necessary direction.
ROBI: I will. By the by, I had been to Karabi today, and practically fixed her up. I shall take you to her to-morrow.
BIMAL: At what time?
ROBI: In the evening, say at about 5 o'clock, if of course, it's convenient to you.
BIMAL: I shall make it convenient, and I shall pick you up. What shall I wear, tell me? I've recently made a suit of American cords from Ritz. It's really dazzling, you know.
ROBI: Karabi is a good girl. You'll rarely come across such a girl in the films. Good family, educated, and quite young.
BIMAL: She may look too young in the film.
ROBI: She's twenty—twenty one. Fine complexion. Dense long hair. Very pleasing appearance.
BIMAL: For Heaven's sake, don't you dare to tell Ashadi about Karabi. That will—
ROBI: Do you take me for a madcap? These things aren't meant for—

Asha enters

ASHA: What's happening here?
BIMAL: Why didn't you tell me before.
ASHA: What?
BIMAL: About Mr. Robi Dutt.
ASHA: Robi, so you have done what you wanted.
BIMAL: I've heard his proposal and agreed to it. Why were you so worried, I don't understand? The money is lying idle in the bank and what harm is there to invest it in some good business!
ROBI: Asha! You must fix up an auspicious day for the inaugural.
ASHA: Why do you rope me into this?
BIMAL: That means, you don't like my becoming a Film Producer, isn't it?
ROBI: She likes it without a doubt, but you know it's natural for her to take it slightly amiss, since we both discussed the proposal and took the decision without telling her. Think of the reverse case, where Asha fixes up something without our knowledge. We would also take it otherwise.
BIMAL: (*Goes near Asha*) Asha-di, please, you must fix up an auspicious day for the inauguration. You will have to take full responsibility for the supervision of the function.
ROBI: I have worked up the details. Asha would be ready on that day with the clap-stick. How do you like it, Mr. Bimal?
BIMAL: Simply grand. Mr. Dutt has really got certain original ideas. Let us decide about the day.
ASHA: Then let me refer to the almanac.
BIMAL: I care a damn for the almanac. Whatever day you suggest is auspicious for me, I say, let us celebrate to-day. I shall arrange for some snacks. Driver! (*Goes out*).
ASHA: What an innocent boy! he can't see the intrigue!
ROBI: What if he can't?
ASHA: He'll suffer in life.
ROBI: I know many tricks, and yet I am suffering a lot.
ASHA: That's probably because you know too many tricks. Anyway, give up that topic—I tell you to give up the idea of producing a picture with Bimal's money.
ROBI: That means, you will obstruct him from helping me?
ASHA: Not exactly. I'll warn him, though. I've got to do it, as he is after all a mere boy.
ROBI: Do you realise the result? If you object, he won't advance the money. If he doesn't, I won't be able to produce the picture.
ASHA: I know. But what shall I do, tell me? When Bimal believes me so implicitly, how can I deceive him?
ROBI: Excellent! Bravo! (*After a pause suddenly*) I'm telling you what to do. If Bimal comes and asks your opinion, you must encourage him without a moment's hesitation. Understand?
ASHA: If I don't?
ROBI: Then you can't imagine the grim consequences.
ASHA: Don't you threaten me, Robi (*Laughs*). What do you think you can do to me?
ROBI: Suppose I break up your friendship with the Professor.
ASHA: (*Laughs*) Go ahead. It doesn't matter at all. Take it from me, I'll be least affected if he stops coming here. Our relationship is most casual.
ROBI: Suppose I go to his wife and describe fully in my own words the happy episode between you both.
ASHA: (*Frightened*). Don't be crazy.
ROBI: (*Laughs*) What's the matter? Are you frightened? But let me tell you, one day the Professor's life will be blasted to smithereens. On whose account? Not unlikely on yours. Why? Isn't it pleasant to hear? Who can say if it won't be to your advantage? Deserting the wife and child-

abode to yours. Then how would you like if I bring out a headline in the papers 'Another triumph of Asha Choudhury?' (*Asha keeps quiet*). — What's happened? You are so silent. Don't tell me you prefer golden silence to silvery speech.

ASHA: I know you. There's nothing in the world to stop you from your evil designs. Doesn't it prick your conscience to wreck that family.

ROBI: Conscience! No. It's revenge. Get it? Revenge on Asha, the Beauty Queen. The address—No. 30 Circus Avenue—has become very familiar to me from the receipts I gave him. Name—Prof. Debabrata Ghosh. Ha, ha, ha . . . . .

ASHA: Enough of your pranks. Tell me what you want me to do.

ROBI: (*Laughs*) Come, come, that's the way to behave. I say, don't you be under the impression that I don't know you fully. I'm aware of the various reactions by pressing the different levers. I'll make you dance like a doll to-day.

ASHA: Hm ——

ROBI: Whatever Bimal says, you will approve with a smile.

From within—Asha-di, Asha-di

ROBI: Here comes Bimal. (*Bimal enters*).

BIMAL: Get the tea ready, Asha-di. I have sent for the snacks from Gariahat corner.

ROBI: I have already put the kettle on the fire.

ASHA: Let me see. Tea or coffee?

ROBI: Coffee without milk. (*Asha goes in*).

Sound of Bimal's car.

BIMAL: I think the car has returned. (*Loudly*) Asha-di, get the coffee. The snacks have come.

ASHA: Why do you shout? I'm not deaf.

BIMAL: Oh, come on. Shall I help you?

ASHA: Get the snacks from the car.

BIMAL: The driver will get them.

Meanwhile Debabrata comes to the door with a canvas bag containing books in his right hand, a packet of snacks in his left hand, and his umbrella under his arm. He puts the bag on the floor and presses the calling bell. Bimal opens the door and is surprised. Asha goes in by this time.

BIMAL: What's it you have brought?

DEBA: Snacks—the very same items you have asked your driver to fetch.

BIMAL: But why are you carrying them?

DEBA: First you take them. (*Hands over the packet to him*). I was returning home from my tuitions, when I met your driver coming here. He gave me a lift.

BIMAL: That doesn't matter, but he shouldn't have made you carry these things. It's his job ——

DEBA: In a way he's not to blame. I almost snatched it from his hands. Hallo, Mr. Dutt, Good evening. Am I to understand that I'm gate-crashing in a private party of yours?

BIMAL: No, sir. You're most welcome. We are actually celebrating —

DEBA: What for?

BIMAL: Bimal Production.

DEBA: Of what article?

BIMAL: We are starting a Film Company. Proprietor — Bimal Chatterjee. Director — Robi Dutt. Title—"Pluto's Love." How do you like it?

DEBA: Good.

BIMAL: What do you mean?

Are you frightened ? Let me tell you, one day the professor's life will blasted to smithercens

DEBA: Easy way.

BIMAL: For what?

DEBA: For evaporation of surplus money. If you produce a few pictures, there's nothing else to worry about. Your uncle's royalties can be fully utilised. But it's good in a way, you know. The more money in circulation, the better for the country.

ROBI: I'm afraid your remarks seem to be tainted.

DEBA: That must be due to your defective hearing. I am straightforward in what I say. By the by, what did you say the title is?

BIMAL: "Pluto's Love."

DEBA: Splendid. Even otherwise, Pluto's influence on you is obvious. I trust Shri Robi has himself written the script.

ROBI: Any objection?

DEBA: Why should I have any objection? As they say, Pluto is a deadly planet. If Robi, I mean the Sun, enters Pluto's house and is looked upon by the latter, then follows complete disaster.

Asha enters with tray containing coffee and notices Debabrata.

ASHA: When did you come?

DEBA: A few minutes—but Mr. Robi Dutt is already ruffled.

ASHA: Why?

ROBI: His talk is not to my taste. There's a loose screw in his head.

DEBA: I've mentioned to him an astrological phenomenon, which he didn't like.

ASHA: Forget it. Come on, will you have coffee?

DEBA: Sure; also Bimal Babu's snacks.

Asha serves snacks and coffee to all.

BIMAL: The theme is full of suspense. In one scene, Supriya is lying alone in a dark room, and there is low background music from a piano. At that time, an ugly looking person, having received a severe beat-

ing, enters the house. When his shadow falls on the glass door, Supriya shouts 'Who's there?' The man sneaks out silently but terrified. On his way out, he accidentally kicks a glass flower vase, which falls and breaks. The girl gets up shrieking. Can you imagine how the audience will receive this scene?

DEBA: Excellent. You have developed a thrilling situation, but people may think that you have lifted it from the "Hunchback of Notre Dame."

ROBI: What? How dare you say that? Do you think I'm a common thief?

DEBA: I can never think so, but you know often when we see an Indian picture, we feel as if we have read it somewhere. It's all due to too much reading, which I admit is a fault of mine.

ROBI: I'm sure you haven't seen my pictures, and if you see perhaps—

DEBA: Of course, I've seen. "Vijay-Jayanti," "Man Marmar," "Dhulidhusar"— the formula is the same for all—even the Chinese Chow-Chow cannot beat it.

ROBI: I don't follow. If we produce "Pluto's Love," will the people like it or not?

DEBA: You have thrown on me the horns of a dilemma. How can I enter the people's minds? But one thing. If people refuse to see the picture, we must conclude they have become shrewd enough. On the other hand, if they do see it, prayers must be conducted for their redemption.

ROBI: Asha, you've seen the rude tone of his talk. You'd better warn him in time.

ASHA: Professor, why don't you please change the subject of your conversation? Some other time—

ROBI: Besides, what does he know about the film industry?

DEBA: Nothing.

ROBI: Then why do you talk?

DEBA: I give my opinion as a spectator only. (*Pause*). Look here, Bimal Babu, if I am not very inquisitive, why did you think of this film production?

BIMAL: To make money, of course.

DEBA: (*Laughs*). For that you could take up any other business, where the risk of loss is less.

ROBI: Have you any idea of what the profit would be in pictures?

DEBA: I reckon it will be the same as would go out of your hands in case of loss.

ROBI: Money is not the only criterion, more important is fame.

DEBA: —and ill fame too!

ROBI: (*Excitedly*). Will you stop?

DEBA: Don't get excited. I am only answering your questions.

BIMAL: There's nothing wrong in what he said. We must think of the pros and cons.

DEBA: Just that. I never said anything else. I didn't suggest that Bimal Babu should not invest in this venture, or that Robi Babu being a broken man is not to be trusted, or that—

ROBI: Shut up.

ASHA: Professor, please be quiet.

DEBA: All right, I shall.

ROBI: I'm getting late. I'm off. Well, Bimal Babu, are you coming tomorrow evening?

BIMAL: Robi Babu, please give me a little time. It's better not to do anything in a haste.

ROBI: You mean you wish to back out when we have gone so far? I am a man of one word, and I have already fixed up several matters.

BIMAL: I'm very sorry. What shall I do, tell me? When doubt enters the mind, it's always desirable to clear it.

ROBI: Then, what do you want me to do? When shall I see you?

BIMAL: I'm also starting. We shall talk about it in the car.

ROBI: Let's go, then.

BIMAL: You, Sir?

DEBA: (*Showing Asha*) I've a little business with her.

BIMAL: We are off, Asha-di. I shall look you up tomorrow. Thank you very much, Sir, your suggestions are admirable.

ROBI: Bimal Babu, you'd better get along. I've got to square up a small matter here.

Bimal goes out. Robi stands close to Debabrata and speaks to him in a threatening tone.

ROBI: I don't understand why you pick upon me, but please note that Robi Dutt is not a simpleton. I will teach you a good lesson.

DEBA: I don't know if I've offended you unintentionally, but if I did, I'm awfully sorry.

ROBI: Cut out your acting. I tell you, if Bimal doesn't go ahead with my proposal, you will really be sorry.

ASHA: Robi, I shall explain to Bimal tomorrow. You'd better calm down.

ROBI: You too shut up. I know all of you planned to ruin me. Don't worry. I shall take care of it. (*Goes out*).

DEBA: (*Goes to the door*). Good Night.

Robi turns back and looks angrily at Debabrata and goes away. Asha sits down and holds her head with both hands.

ASHA: What have you done?

DEBA: Infinitesimal benevolence. I've saved a young innocent boy from the clutches of an unwary trap.

ASHA: I wasn't in this, you know.

DEBA: May be. To be a little blunt about it, how can I find out what is real and what is not? When Robi Dutt is after all your exclusive friend, and victimises simple people in your joint enterprise, I don't see any reason for a sudden break-up of your partnership.

ASHA: It is necessary to reveal certain facts to you today.

DEBA: You're welcome, if you feel like doing so. (*Looks at the watch*).

ASHA: (*Sighing deeply*). How I wish I got the Delhi job!

DEBA: Are you anxious to settle in Delhi?

ASHA: That will be best for all concerned.

DEBA: But what will happen to people like me, I mean, the sacrificial goats? Will you give us freedom before you leave? If so, I will pray to God from now onwards: "Oh, God, grant her the job, grant her the job."

ASHA: I assure you there's no pretence in what you saw on that first day when I lay unconscious here. I really wanted to die. (*Pause*) I know it's hard for you now to believe this, but I swear I'm not lying. (*Pause*). When I came to my senses, I didn't like you saving me. I was enraged with you later, when you advanced money to Robi. It set me thinking why you got

You have done me a great service by saving Bimal.

mixed up with my miserable life. It is with the intention of putting an end to this relationship that I played the blackmail game. (*Pause*). What are you thinking?

DEBA: I'm not thinking. I'm listening.

ASHA: I shall return your money as soon as possible, probably next week.

DEBA: There's no hurry.

ASHA: I thank you sincerely for helping me out of that tight corner. I'm also sorry to have frightened you.

DEBA: You are thoroughly mistaken there, for I wasn't frightened at all. I knew full well you wouldn't harm me.

ASHA: How can you say that?

DEBA: There's an exact similarity between you and Pala in whatever you say or do. I know Pala completely. Such women can never be anything but good.

ASHA: I'm amazed at your implicit trust in me. You can be deceived later, you know that?

DEBA: I don't care for the probabilities. If I can't believe humanity for fear of deceit, what's the good of living in society? It's better to renounce the world and change your abode to a forest. (*Pause*). I was in fact afraid of Robi Dutt. If he perchance conceived a dirty plan, you would have become a mere doll in his hands. There are plenty of Robi Dutts in every stratum of society. They are selfish and self-centred, and can't stand the sight of others.

ASHA: But today you have floored him.

DEBA: What shall I do, tell me? I couldn't tolerate infanticide. Bimal can never gauge his structure.

Tears in Asha's eyes, and she covers her face with her sari.

DEBA: You're crying?

ASHA: You have done me a great service by saving Bimal. Though I wished too, I was helpless.

DEBA: How is it?

ASHA: Robi threatened me that if I didn't co-operate with him, he would go to your house and disclose everything to Pala. So I was afraid naturally.

DEBA: Hm.

ASHA: I suffered much in my life, Professor, and I wish nobody met such a fate. Robi will destroy all your happiness, if he goes to your house. It's therefore better if you tell her all the facts.

DEBA: (*With a pale smile*) I think I should.

ASHA: Let me wish you good-bye. Perhaps we won't meet again. I'll send you the money. Though we have come to know each other recently, I'll always remember you, if I'm alive. I don't know if you care to think of me at least now and then.

DEBA: What do you say? You will always be alive in the shape of my Pala—in her talk, her movements, and in every phase.

ASHA: If at all possible, please write me a letter. I'd be most anxious to hear how Pala reacted to your revelation of our episode.

DEBA: I will. (*Laughs*) May I leave now?

ASHA: God be with you.

DEBA: Thanks.

ASHA: Good Night.

DEBA: Good Night.

Debabrata goes out. As usual, Asha closes the door, and leans against the door for a while. Debabrata too waits standing outside. Asha moves in and puts out the light. Debabrata goes to the gas lamp and looks back. The curtain comes down.

CURTAIN

✱

ACT THREE

Same scene as before. When curtain rises, Bimal is talking to Asha in a gay mood. Asha is well dressed in a yellow blouse and light green sari. The hair is plaited and done up, with flowers in a semi-circle. Bimal appears to have rushed as he is, with a soiled pant and a shirt. It is evening, but still there is sunlight.

BIMAL: I told you it's very, very good news. Now you can guess it—

ASHA: What's the good news? Tell me.

BIMAL: No, I won't. Guess: one, two—

ASHA: Don't be childish. Tell me.

BIMAL: Will anybody give out good news so easily? Don't you see I have rushed here straight from the house? I haven't changed my shirt, haven't sent for the driver and I have driven the car myself. The speedometer was showing 50/60, and I didn't release my foot from the accelerator. Didn't apply the brake at all. The car was shooting like an arrow, and they were all aghast throughout the way.

ASHA: My Goodness! What's all this useless talk? Tell me the good news.

BIMAL: I give you three guesses, and if you are correct, I shall give you a prize. It may be useless talk, but it isn't harmful like Robi Babu's. I have brought you solid good news. When you hear, you will be startled and begin wondering how I happened to know it. My God, I think I'm caught now. Don't you understand what it is? You can't estimate my greatness? Come on, guess it. I told you I'll give you a prize.

ASHA: I don't want the prize. Tell me what it is.
BIMAL: Be a sport. I tell you. Guess.
ASHA: I see. I know what it is. You must have got a good match, and you will be married soon.
BIMAL: (*Seriously*) How did you know?
ASHA: Am I right? But for marriage, what else can it be? I knew it from the beginning. Where does the girl belong to? Who has made this match? Don't you give your consent without my seeing her, I tell you.
BIMAL: You will be very happy to see me married, won't you?
ASHA: Sure. Your happiness is my happiness.
BIMAL: (*Sighing deeply*) It's not about my marriage.
ASHA: Why do you sigh so deeply?
BIMAL: You got that job in Delhi.
ASHA: Who told you?
BIMAL: Uncle has written from Delhi. I've just got it. I knew you will be very happy to hear the news. I have dashed here. But now I feel it would have been better, if I didn't turn up.
ASHA Why, Bimal?
BIMAL: My mind is upset.
ASHA: (*Goes to Bimal and fondles his hair*) What's happened? Tell me, Why are you upset, Bimal?
BIMAL: You did not even tell me you were applying for that job.
ASHA: I was afraid.
BIMAL: Of what? You thought I was just a child, and might bungle the affair and you would miss the chance. Never treat me like that. If necessary—
ASHA: You would rush to Delhi and expedite my appointment. Again, if I get that post, you would miss me like this and regret my going away. I know everything.
BIMAL: (*Pauses a while and looks intently at her*). However, you are bubbling with joy. Don't you imagine I can't see you through, if you put up a serious countenance. You are justified, Asha-di. It is a great honour. After all, you will be working in the Capital.
ASHA: It's not that, my boy. I'm getting a poor pay in my present job and I find it very hard to maintain myself.
BIMAL: Why don't you take money from me? I asked you many times if you needed any. Always you put me off that you would take later, if necessary, but that 'later' remained 'later' without changing its colour.
ASHA: The time is not yet past. I want a loan of a thousand rupees before I leave for Delhi. Can you help me?
BIMAL: Loan? Are you still treating me as an outsider? Can't I give this small sum as a present? (*Pause*) Let me give it to you to-day itself.
ASHA: As a loan only. You'll have to take it back.
BIMAL: Let it be as you say. (*Takes out the money from his pocket*). Be careful lest you may lose it.
ASHA: Suppose I don't get that Delhi job?
BIMAL: So what?
ASHA: Then how shall I repay you this amount?
BIMAL: Oh, I see. You wish to rack your brains for this? Forget it. Incidentally, has the Professor called on you recently? He is a very nice fellow. But for him I would have been an easy victim of Robi's tricks and would have lost a good packet.
ASHA: What? You mean the devil which goaded you to become a film producer has flown away from your brain?
BIMAL: Decidedly. Of course, Robi Dutt is awfully annoyed with me, more so with the Professor.

Robi Dutt's cough is heard.

BIMAL: (*Startled*) My God! Robi Dutt is coming. (*Frightened*) What shall I do?
ASHA: Nothing.

Robi Dutt enters the room and seriously looks at them both. All are silent for a few moments.

ASHA: What happened, Robi? You are quite serious.
ROBI: Where's the Professor?
ASHA: How do I know?
ROBI: Hasn't he come here?
ASHA: No.
ROBI: Then where has he gone?
ASHA: Must have gone home.
ROBI: I'm coming from there.
ASHA: From his house? That means, you have done what you said. Have you told Pala everything? (*Robi Dutt wrinkles his eyes and laughs*). Do you realise what you've done? The family will surely break up, and the Professor won't survive this calamity. I know it.
ROBI: What do you know?
ASHA: His whole life is centred round Pala, his sons, his daughter and his happy home. No, no. I can't bear it. I'll go and try to mend matters.
ROBI: (*Seriously*) With whom?
ASHA: With Pala.
ROBI: There's no Pala.
ASHA: No Pala? What happened? (*Pause*) Speak out.

The professor is a cheat and a bare-faced liar.

ROBI: There's nobody named Pala. There never was.
ASHA: What do you mean ?
ROBI: The Professor is a cheat and a bare-faced liar.
ASHA: What are you saying ?
ROBI: The plain truth. He stays in a hotel. I have gathered all information about him from his room-mate. He has made some money, but hasn't got a wife or family. I was suspecting him from the beginning. He is a bachelor.
ASHA: What do you gain by telling me all this, Robi ?
ROBI: To whom should I speak ? If I meet him face to face, I would have given him a pretty bit of my mind.
ASHA: Do it by all means.
ROBI: Why not to you also ? You're such a fast friend of his.
BIMAL: Robi Babu, why do you waste your breath with Asha-di ? What does she know ?
ROBI: All of you deified him and made me a fool. A polished scoundrel, indeed !
BIMAL: Please calm down. You'd better go and sit in my car. I shall drop you at your place.
ROBI: Nobody need worry about me.
BIMAL: I will get along.

ROBI: But I won't leave the Professor scot-free.
BIMAL: (*Takes out Robi by pushing him*). All right, all right. You will deal with him later.

Bimal returns after leaving Robi outside. Asha continues to sit dazed as before.

BIMAL: What are you brooding over?
ASHA: Strange. Is it possible? Sons, daughter, wife—all this a got up tale?
BIMAL: Has he himself told you all these things?
ASHA: How else should I know? He has also written me a letter (*Fetches it from the drawer*). Read it out. I'll hear it once again.
BIMAL: (*Takes it in his hand, turns it over once or twice and then reads*).

"Srimati Asha Devi,

As promised, I write you this letter. On returning home last night, I told Pala all about you. She was really very pleased. She is quite anxious to meet you. After I get your approval, I shall bring her to you. Hope you will like her.

Do you know why I compare you with Pala? I don't mean the complexion, as you are undoubtedly by far prettier. Anybody will have to accept this fact, even if he or she may be unfriendly with you. It is the mental phase where you both resemble each other.

Girls of your temperament can never compromise with injustice.

It becomes most difficult for them who come into contact with you. They cannot afford to avoid you and proceed with any work. At the same time, they are conscious that you would not allow them to do any unjust acts. That is why they are afraid of you as much as they like you.

We are all safe, and hope you are doing well.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,
Debabrata Ghosh."

ASHA: Then this letter is also a hoax, isn't it?
BIMAL: But the Professor has written facts. You are likeable, and you also instil fear. I wonder how the Professor understood your nature. Even Robi Dutt is afraid of you. I well remember once he was telling me something and suddenly warned me not to bring it to your notice. Can you tell me the reason?
ASHA: I don't know, but I tell you this gentleman who has written this letter is least scared of me. He has literally bored me with his oft-repeated stories of his wife and children, and now we find he is a bachelor.
BIMAL: I'm in fact amused, you know. I'll go to his place.
ASHA: I, for my part, am puzzled. Having heard so much fiction, I won't be able to believe anybody easily. I know we are in the midst of untruth like the society, and the affectionate ties. But I used to like the conversation of the Professor. I was attracted, since I didn't enjoy such a happy life, as he depicted. I was more or less tempted. Even though it is false. In such a case, what is true in this world? Can you say, Bimal?
BIMAL: Calm yourself. I am going now and shall come back with the details of the Professor.

After Bimal goes away, Asha comes out and watches a few plants in pots outside. They are in bloom. After a little while, she slowly retraces her steps to the door. As she is about to enter the room, she turns around and finding somebody in the distance, takes a few steps and calls loudly.

ASHA: Prof. Ghosh, Prof. Ghosh!

As before, Prof. Ghosh comes to her laughing, with books and umbrella in his hands.

DEBA: What a pleasure indeed! You are standing outside.

ASHA: I think you are on your way for a tuition.
DEBA: You are right.
ASHA: I got your letter, but I'm sorry I couldn't reply. When I have met you personally, there's no further necessity to write letters. What do you say?
DEBA: I feel happy to get letters, and keep many of them safely.
ASHA: Are you busy this evening, Prof. Ghosh?
DEBA: Not particularly.
ASHA: Then how do you like my going to your place and being introduced to your Pala?
DEBA: Oh, Pala? It's a very good suggestion. She is herself most anxious to meet you. But you know——
ASHA: What?
DEBA: It is not possible to-day. She went to her father's house only last night.
ASHA: So what? Let's go there and meet her.
DEBA: (*Laughing*) It's not in Calcutta. It is a long distance. That's the trouble.
ASHA: Oh, I see. Come on, let's go in. I have to give you something.
DEBA: Sure.

Asha and Debabrata go in. Asha puts on the light. She takes out the money from the drawer and hands it over to Debabrata.

DEBA: You have redeemed your whole debt, I see.

ASHA: Yes. I have also given you back your freedom.

DEBA: Many thanks, but there was no hurry for this.

ASHA: Shall I ask you one question? Will you truly answer me?

DEBA: Yes, certainly.

ASHA: Was it so necessary to tell me so many lies?

DEBA: What do you mean?

ASHA: Don't you understand? Pala, your sons, daughter, your family—didn't you tell me all those tales? You are a bachelor and you live in a hotel. I have come to know the truth.

DEBA: Have you? Who told you? Is it Robi Dutt?

ASHA: Whoever he may be! What a shame! You have fooled me for such a long time.

DEBA: No, I have not fooled you. . . . . What I mean . . . . .

ASHA: A low born, mean minded person only can play such practical jokes.

DEBA: You're unnecessarily getting excited, without understanding me. I haven't played any joke.

ASHA: Please don't talk. I can't believe a word of it.

DEBA: (*Pausing a while*) You are cross with me, while I'm not the only person who told lies. You too told lies. You threatened me several times that you would report me to Pala, that you would take me to task, and so on, whereas you never intended them. Of course——

ASHA: I have no time to appreciate your intellectual gymnastics. I am going out.

DEBA: Let us both start. I'll take you to the house of a student of mine. What I was actually telling you——

ASHA: No more talk, please. Good-bye.

DEBA: Oh, Good-bye.

Asha closes the door. Debabrata stands outside for a few moments and goes away. Asha takes out the letter from the drawer and reads. At this time, Debabrata comes back and presses the calling bell. Asha opens the door and is surprised.

ASHA: You've come back?

DEBA: No, I mean, there was a mistake. As a matter of fact, today is not the day of my tuition. By mistake, I have come to this locality. If you don't believe me, you can have a look at my time-table. (*Hurriedly opens a note book, turns the pages and shows her*). Yes, look here—Shibnath Sen, Wednesday and Saturday. Today is Tuesday.

ASHA: It may be, but you haven't come by mistake. You have come on purpose. Who knows if you have a student at all in this locality? It may be another trick of yours.

DEBA: This is really too much. You suspect me without reason. I tell you I can take you now to my student's house. They are quite big people. They will be pleased to receive you.

ASHA: You may kindly stop joking with me.

DEBA: If you object, I'll never do it. It's against my nature.

ASHA: I'm amazed how God created you all out of the same mould. My husband, Robi Dutt, you, Bimal—all are alike. Do you find any difference amongst all of you?

DEBA: Poles apart. Your husband is a wealthy man, couldn't feel happy even with a pretty wife, and is accustomed to an aristocratic life. Robi Dutt is too proud and suffers from over-confidence. These people may fall down from their own created pedestals, but will never admit defeat. Then, Bimal. He is a boy, with plenty of money. He doesn't know what to do with it, and cannot decide anything. And I——

ASHA: Why do you stop? Go on.

DEBA: Let me stop here. If you hear, you may get excited again.

ASHA: I have respected you in my heart all these days, and thought you were coming to me due to fear of my blackmail. I've treated you as a strong man, who courageously and openly admitted his pure love towards his wife, children and happy family life. Now I know it's nothing but a bare-faced lie. You've been visiting me not out of fear, but of your own free-will, and to be amused, just as Robi Dutt comes here and many others.

DEBA: I have admitted all your accusations. There's nothing more to charge me with. You should also give me an opportunity to explain.

ASHA: Please, excuse me. It'll be another day. I'm unable to stand any more today.

DEBA: Give me five minutes. I wish to tell you a small story before I leave. There was a writer in English literature, whose name was Charles Lamb.

ASHA: What will I gain by Lamb's life?

DEBA: Please listen. (*Pause*). Charles Lamb used to work as an ordinary clerk in a mercantile office on a small salary. As the youths generally do, he too loved a girl, but couldn't marry her. Lamb's sister, Mary, had at that time became insane. One day, she happened to kill her mother in one of her lunatic fits, and she was arrested by the Police. Charles gave an undertaking to the Police that he would be completely responsible for Mary and brought her home. All his time was spent in looking after her, and so he could not marry later on. The girl he loved was married elsewhere, and she begot children, whom Charles Lamb used to see and feel that they were his own, and feel in his mind that the girl was his wife. (*Smiles*). There's a personal essay of Lamb. If you get an opportunity, I wish you read it. The essay is entitled "Dream Children" —

As he says the story, slowly his voice becomes hoarse.

ASHA: Dream Children!

DEBA: You said correctly that in this world there are certain people who exist by dreaming only. Let me take leave of you today. I have vexed you a lot. If possible, please try to forgive me.

Debabrata takes his books and umbrella, and slowly walks out without looking at Asha any more. Asha, however, goes on staring at him. Suddenly she gets up and shouts for him: Prof. Ghosh, Prof. Ghosh! Debabrata comes back.

ASHA: I've forgot to give you some news, and didn't even thank you for your help.

DEBA: What is it ?
ASHA: I think I have got that job in Delhi.
DEBA: Congratulations.
ASHA: It's due to the application prepared by you. I'm obliged.
DEBA: Oh, that's nothing. So, on to Delhi, isn't it ? When are you going there ?
ASHA: They told me at the time of interview I should be ready to join by the beginning of next month.
DEBA: I see. If I pass this way for my tuitions, I shall look at this house, and it shall bring back many memories of you. (*Sighs deep*) It's really funny. Although we were acquainted recently, I feel that ours was an old and intimate friendship.
ASHA: (*As she talks, she enters the room*) It's probably because we met in exceptional circumstances. We were brought together at the death's door.
DEBA: I'm only sorry that I have failed to save you in the end. It's my fault that I irritated you.
ASHA: No more of it. Come on, will you have a chocolate ? I've got it in my bag.
DEBA: Sure.
ASHA: When the mouth is sweetened, we are friends again.
DEBA: But I haven't quarrelled with you.
ASHA: I have got a doubt. Will you clear it ?
DEBA: What doubt ?
ASHA: Why have you told me the story of Dream Children ?
DEBA: Because I like it.
ASHA: It's not merely that, Who's Pala? Won't you tell me ?—
DEBA: Pala is a girl's name.
ASHA: Please.
DEBA: Her original name is Utpala. She is my friend's sister.
ASHA: Then ?
DEBA: What do you want to know ?
ASHA: Please, Professor.
DEBA: I used to like her much and I named her Pala. She was also attracted by me. The rest of the story is simple. It was a question of her status and mine, and she was married to someone else.
ASHA: Where is she now ?
DEBA: At her husband's house with her children.
ASHA: Oh. Do you visit her now and then ?
DEBA: No. What's the use of troubling her ?
ASHA: And you didn't get married also ?
DEBA: Didn't get a chance. Actually, I couldn't find a girl.
ASHA: Anybody would laugh, if you say you couldn't find a girl.

DEBA: There's no dearth of girls, but not one of my choice, I mean like Pala. She has got herself imprinted in my mind like Helen of Troy. I would be disappointed, if I begin to compare any girl with her. Now even if the real Pala comes to me, perhaps I may not accept her also. I prefer only my ethereal Pala. Believe me, she is my real Pala. She speaks to me, laughs with me, and narrates stories to me. When I am sick, she sits close to my head for nights on end. I'm pained to see her unpleasant, and am frightened when she loses her temper. I can never tolerate her tears.
ASHA: Professor !
DEBA: I feel lighter after I have told you all this, which I couldn't do to anybody else. Pardon me, I never wanted to deceive you with lies. I wanted to tell you about Pala at a suitable opportunity. (*Pause*). Can you get me a glass of water, please ?
ASHA: Sure.

Asha gives him a glass of water. Debabrata drinks the water and returns the glass to her. He holds her other hand lightly.

DEBA: I have narrated to you many things today, as I pleased, without caring to know how you take them.
ASHA: I liked it immensely.
DEBA: But I haven't finished, you know.
ASHA: Then, go ahead.
DEBA: Probably I would have continued to live with my visionary Pala and ended my life without being much affected, but when I had seen you on that first night, my dream broke. I felt Pala had come down to earth in you.
ASHA: (*Looks at him*) Professor !
DEBA: Your looks, your features, your voice —these are familiar to me. The beautiful hair on your head, your gait, your accent, your movements, and your clean mind—I could never imagine that my Pala would come to me in such a perfect form.
ASHA: Don't you speak like that, Professor. I m afraid.
DEBA: Afraid of what, Asha ?
ASHA: All the subtle sentiments in me were dead, but today they seem to be waking up again. Professor, everybody wishes to live, isn't it? Nobody would like to die. (*Pause*) But, Professor, can you assure me that this isn't a mirage?
DEBA: No, Asha, it's not. This is life.
ASHA: I see. This joy, this happiness, this love —Professor !
DEBA: Asha !

Both catch hold of each other's hands and look at each other intently. At this juncture, Robi Dutt enters the stage in a drunken state. He pushes the door with a jerk and coming into the room, notices Debabrata and Asha. He laughs boisterously.

ROBI: Fine, fine, Excellent. The drama is reaching its climax. (*Both of them separate*). What happened ? Why should you feel shy about it ? The pose was wonderful, holding each other's hands. Resume it, please. I'll just take a photograph.
ASHA: Please, Robi, stop it.

ROBI: Why should I ? I told you I liked the way you were standing. Actually, what was on your mind—to pose as a perfect couple, or a pair of love-birds.
DEBA: What will please you ?
ROBI: Shut up. I'm talking to Asha, who is true to her name.
ASHA: You're terribly drunk, Robi.
ROBI: What's there left for me except drink ? You have forsaken me like an old shoe, and are enjoying yourself with others without compunction.
DEBA: Would it be too much to ask you to talk in a gentlemanly manner ?
ROBI: I do behave with gentlemen in a gentlemanly manner, but not with fellows like you. Bare-faced liar ! What kind of Professor are you ? Professor of lies ?
ASHA: I say, Robi, what's all this ? I won't allow you to insult the professor in my house.

Debabrata walks up to him seriously and slaps his face.

ROBI: Oh! It's because he is a respectable man, who makes an honest living with his wife and children, is it? A most dishonourable, cheap fellow without any shelter but for the disreputable hotel, where he is put up—

ASHA: There's a limit to my patience, Robi. I wish you get out of here at once.

ROBI: If I don't?

DEBA: Then I'll be compelled to neck you out.

ROBI: What? You dare to talk to me like that! I'll thrash you and teach manners to you, my dear Cheap Jack!

Debabrata walks up to him seriously and slaps his face. Robi Dutt is stunned. Asha remains silent.

ROBI: Well, Asha, I've now come to know what a turncoat a woman can become. When I am insulted in your own house by a mean fellow like this, you don't even protest.

ASHA: Probably you deserved it.

ROBI: I see. Anyway, let me tell you why I've come here today. I admit I'm no more a match for your wits: You have managed to dissuade Bimal from our venture, with the result that I've lost my only chance of producing a picture. I'm surrounded on all sides by creditors, and so I had no other alternative but to file my insolvency petition. All those, who used to adore me in the past, have developed a dislike to my very sight, and have gone to the extent of laying hands on me. You are aware how many women like you were maintained by me in the good old days. To-day you have the audacity to ask me to get out of your house. (*Takes out a small phial from his pocket*) All right, now listen why I'm here. (*He fetches a glass and a whiskey bottle. Pouring whiskey into the glass*). This is my old friend. There is a strong poison in this phial, which I'm mixing in this whiskey. I'm sure you now understand why I've come.

ASHA: What are you saying, Robi?

ROBI: Quite simple. It's enough if I gulp this down. That's all. The creditors won't trouble me any more. I will cease to be a target of your attacks. I'll attain salvation, from one and all—salvation.

ASHA: Don't be crazy.

ROBI: I've decided to take this step after much deliberation. I shall be alive after death, while you suffer a living death, and that too very gradually.

ASHA: What do you mean by all this?

ROBI: (*Laughing*) Ha, ha, ha. The police will come and find Robi Dutt's body in whose house, you know?—in Asha Choudhury's. They will detect poison in the whiskey glass. The rest is easy—murder—trial—sentence—

ASHA: What's this, Professor?

ROBI: What can the Professor do? At the most, he can give evidence in the court, but no one would believe him, as such practices are common in affairs connected with women. You also realise that our relationship is not unknown to all around us.

DEBA: If you get another opportunity to produce a picture, would you work?

ROBI: What?

DEBA: Don't you wish to live?

ROBI: I did in the past, and I lived all along with fond hopes. Now I've come to the conclusion that there's no more utility of my life. So I've got to die, and in my death I am determined to implicate you both.

DEBA: Suppose I advance you the money?

ROBI: (*Laughs*) It's not a paltry thousand like the house rent. It's about a lakh of rupees.

DEBA: I haven't got that much money, but then if I give you twentyfive thousand—

ROBI: (*Winking his eyes*) Twentyfive thousand?

DEBA: Yes. I can give you a cheque right now.

ROBI: Twentyfive thousand! That'll do for the present. I shall extract the balance from the distributors.

ASHA: What is it you are doing, Professor?

ROBI: Don't object, Asha. Allow me to make my last effort. I wish to live. I am awfully scared of death.

DEBA: Here's the cheque. I've crossed it.

ROBI: (*With tears in his eyes*) I don't know how to talk to you. I've misjudged you. Please forgive me. Asha, you both be happy. That's my request. I will not squander this money. This will enable me to rise up in life once again. (*Holding Debabrata's hands*) If I utter the word 'thanks', it'll be a pale expression of my real feelings of gratitude. May God bless you. To-day you have given fresh life to a down-trodden human being on the verge of extinction. You know, Asha, a black curtain was coming down over my eyes. I could clearly feel the inevitable beckoning. Now the darkness is clearing up. I begin to see light, getting brighter in golden yellow hues. I'll succeed this time. My picture will be released in the best theatres of Calcutta, the neon sign will glow at Chowringhee corner announcing Robi Dutt's next production. Let me go now. Probably I have wounded your feelings, but I have apologised to both of you. I'm off.

Robi Dutt opens the door and goes out happily.

ASHA: My God! I was frightened beyond measure.

DEBA: Of what, Asha, specially when I'm with you?

ASHA: I began to feel that after a long long time I had been blessed to taste the first fruits of real life, and if this crashed due to Robi Dutt's curses, my sorrow would have been limitless, Professor.

DEBA: I sincerely wish to see you happy.

ASHA: I'm happy. There's nothing more I want. My bad dream seems to have ended. Tell me, aren't you sorry to waste such a lot of money? (*Smiles*). You won't get it back. I know Robi well. He will burn it up in two days.

DEBA: (*With a pale smile*). Don't worry, Asha. It's a false cheque.

ASHA: What do you mean?

DEBA: I don't have that much money.

ASHA: (*Surprised*). What do you say? You have given him the cheque wantonly. He would come to know your game, as soon as he calls at the bank tomorrow. Why have you done it?

DEBA: To save you.

ASHA: Strange! You mean you don't mind destroying one to save another?

DEBA: There was no other solution. Can you imagine the consequences, if Robi took that poison?—police, enquiry, courts, no end to our worries.

ASHA: We both have boldly faced all that, and suffered, if necessary, with a smiling face. No, no, this isn't proper. Robi Dutt, I know, is not to be trusted, he is a man without character, but after all he is a human being. On the point of death, you tempted him with false hopes. Didn't you see how happy he felt and how he tried to acknowledge your help?

DEBA: I never thought of anything else except you. That's why——

ASHA: That's why you acted like a blind man.

DEBA: Love is blind——

ASHA: I don't appreciate such blind love; let others do it, whoever believes that foolish theory. You have yourself written to me in your letter that I can never compromise with injustice. I never did it, and probably will not in the future. (*Sighing deep*). Whatever it is, you please leave this place and go away somewhere for a few days.

DEBA: Why?

ASHA: It's very likely that Robi may harm you.

DEBA: And you?

ASHA: Forget about me.

DEBA: It can't be. If it's going out, we shall go together. Will you come away.

ASHA: Let me think.

DEBA: What's there to think? We are both in danger. I played that game only to gain a few hours. Let's go meanwhile to whatever place you say——

ASHA: (*With a pale smile*). And Robi Dutt will chase us like Pluto. That will be another drama.

DEBA: My brain refuses to work today. I shall come tomorrow morning and then let us do what we feel best.

ASHA: That's good.

DEBA: Then, let me get along. You will remain here won't you? If suddenly I get a brain wave, I'll rush here. (*Pause*). What are you thinking?

ASHA: Somehow I am troubled in my heart of hearts. I am questioning myself as to why I'm unable to retain this joy, this happiness, and this love.

DEBA: Asha, (*Sighing deep*)—this life of human beings is most complicated. Love cannot exist here.

ASHA: Love is eternal, love is immortal, it cannot die, Professor. We may travel far and wide and away from each other, but there is nothing like death for love. Good-bye, Professor.

Sighing deeply, Asha closes the door. Debabrata goes away. Asha stands silently for a few moments in the centre of the room. Then she goes and takes the poisoned whiskey glass left by Robi Dutt from the table. She comes again to the centre of the room. She puts out one light. Only the table lamp in the corner is lit. She writes a letter. She leaves it on the table, and puts a paper weight on it. She raises her hands and salutes. Exactly at this time Debabrata enters the stage in a disturbed state and presses the calling bell.

ASHA: (*Frightened*). Who's that?
DEBA: It's me, Debabrata.

Asha raised the whiskey glass and drinks it in one gulp. Debabrata knocks hard on the door.

DEBA: Open the door, Asha, open the door . . . . I've got a wonderful idea.

There is no response. Asha is slowly losing her senses. Debabrata goes to the back of the house and enters the room through the window, in the same way as at the beginning of the drama. He approaches Asha and springs back with fear.

DEBA: What happened, Asha? Asha, Asha, tell me.

He shakes up Asha, gets no response, looks at the empty whiskey glass, and also reads the letter on the table.

DEBA: Oh, God! What have you done, Asha? Why have you done this?

ASHA: Don't be angry with me. You have given me this fresh lease of life. Now I am not afraid to die.

DEBA: It's my mistake, I couldn't understand you earlier, and I did trouble you.

ASHA: No, Professor. I had not tasted real love before and so I was afraid of death at the first attempt. Now I am fearlessly dying, as I got what I wanted.
DEBA: Asha!

ASHA: Forget Asha, Professor. I shall always be alive as your Pala.
DEBA: Pala!

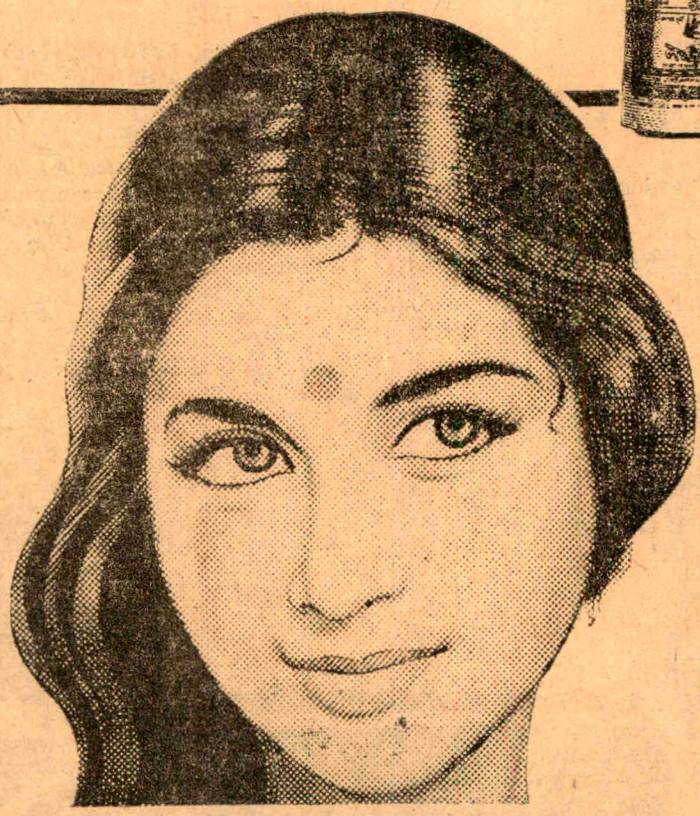
Asha falls down, Debabrata weeps bitterly. He recalls the first day's incident. He looks around vacantly. A thin rope hangs from the ceiling as on the first day. The curtain comes down.

CURTAIN

What happened, Asha ? Asha, Asha, tell me —

FOR LOVELY LOCKS IN ABUNDANCE

Use **Lakshmibilas**—a medicated and perfumed hair oil with **Century Old Tradition**, for all your hair troubles. It helps luxuriant growth of hair, revitalises the roots of hair and keeps your brain cool. It's ideal for people suffering from high blood pressure. A regular use of at least three months will produce the desired effect.



CAUTION

When buying check up
(1) Trade Mark—Ram Chandra Murti
(2) Manufacturers—M. L. Bose & Co.
(3) 'RCM' Manogram on Pilfer Proof Cap.

LAKSHMIBILAS Hair Oil

M.L.BOSE & CO. PRIVATE LTD.
LAKSHMIBILAS HOUSE, CALCUTTA-9

NEITHER PRESIDENT NOR CONVENER BE

by

CHARULAL MUKHERJEE

WITH so much of Shakespeare in the air (not yet in the A.I.R. to be fed up) in his Quater Centenary (mind it quater, not 'quarter' in Shakespeare's mother tongue English—a grim reminder that the Bard of Avon had "small Latin and less Greek") the line that haunts me from Hamlet is the advice of Polonius to Laertes :

"Neither a borrower nor a lender be".

It will be a sacrilege to distort Shakespeare but one can just mend his sayings. A quote : "Ben Jonson's" He was not of an age, but for all time", could well be *amended* (italics ours) to. "He was not of one land, but of all the world" (Vide folder, William Shakespeare Quater Centenary, B.I.S.)

Thus fortified by an Englishman's liberty, this scribe by a fantastic association of ideas amended it to :

"Neither a President nor a convener be."

President of what ? Convener of what ? Why ? Why? Functions. *Fanctions* (if you choose to call it so)—I have heard it pronounced like that, times without number, by Rockefellers and "road-side Romeos "in *Poundals* (yes, pandals to purists). On oath I say—it is not a manufactured malapropism. I swear again, "like a Heathen", you may scold.

So it comes to this : Don't be either a President or a Convener of a function (yes Cultural as they say).

PRESIDENT ? Why not ? The observed of all observers, "the cynosure of neighbouring eyes", the focus of two slanting arc-lights in fullest blaze —on whom flowers are strewn and garlands hung— "Crowns and garlands cut from the branches of palms and lotos drawn from the water" (Songs of Bilitiz).

Pardon gentles all, you will find the answer in the following story connected with a combined festival commemorating Shakespeare and Tagore, Centenaries (an amalgum of 'Eve' and 'Post') of the national poets of India and England.

When a brain-wave struck the disciples of Dr. H. of Rangoon to organise a Cultural festival synthesizing Shakespere and Tagore at the Bengal Academy Hall and they asked the doyen of Bengali culture at Burma to preside over it, he was afire with enthusiasm. There would, be, the organisers said, a Gargantuan feast of play-readings, music, dance-dramas, solo dances of the fairies of Mid Summer Night's Dream, a scene from Valmiki Prativa, the Rehearsal scene from Hamlet etc. etc. Dr. H. thought and dreamed of the prospect, lapsed in a brown-study and felt he was calling upon the "Muse of fire, that would ascend the brightest heaven of invention! A kingdom for a stage, princes to act and monarchs to behold the swelling scene "and a' that and a' that." A D.Litt of Harvard would inaugurate the function and a *homo multarum literarum* would be the Chief Guest. The time for the festival is 6 p.m. sharp. Punctuality first target. Everything according to schedule. The artistes would be brought in timely, despatched timely. They have other engagements. The Chief Guest has a high blood-pressure and the inaugurator is nursing something like an arthritis.

The conveners have invited Mrs. Benjamin, the Bulbul of Shakespearean music and her husband (both Goanese) a maestro of the songs of East and West. Miss Loyla of Bombay will give a recital of Portia and Miss Mehta and her troupe will stage the English version of "Valmiki Prativa." It was agreed that they would be released by 6-30 P.M. as soon as their parts are over.

Morning of the festival. With a complete works of Shakespeare on his lap together with some translations from Tagore, President Dr. H. was scribbling on his pad:

1. *Homely Shaks.*

I remember the toddler Winston Churchill's cry on returning from a stage-play of Macbeth. "Daddy, Macbeth was speaking Shakespeare."

An eloquent commentary on the home-consumption of Shakespeare.

2. Tagore's *"Chini go chini tomay ogo bideshini"*—Of. Dark lady of Shaks' sonnets — mark English tune.

3. A joke.

I remember again how when Lady Macbeth was "mouthing it". . . . trippingly on the ton-

gue". . . . . "Out, damned spot" in a Radio-play, the house-holder's dog SPOT listening to the relay, quietly walked out of the drawing-room.

President Dr. H. was at his post—one hour before the function. The reality was that the Inaugurator, motoring from Kemmendine, was delayed due to a street-accident and the Chief Guest from the Rangoon University campus was detained as his daughter-in-law had to be sent to a Maternity Home.

Bengal Academy Hall. *Longyis* shine with all their rain-bow hues. Mangoloid beauties in a fashion-parade with Gujerati, Sindhi, Bengali saris and salwars. The cosmopolitan audience all 'agog' with enthusiasm (to use a journalese). But suddenly the mikes fail with all the lights. Repairs take twenty minutes and then the mikes blare a cacophony. Adjustments take another five minutes.

"Ladies and gentlemen," said the inaugurator on his legs. The President Dr. H. suddenly received an S.O.S. from Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin that they must be off at 6-30 P.M., their scheduled departure. Miss Loyla (Portia) scrawled on a card, "It was settled that my car would come at 7 p.m. Please, I cannot wait." He stared at the slips: he felt the lights of his brain were fused.

The inaugurator starts from Shakespeare's deer-stealing episode, warms up with the sonnets, delves in the Dark Lady with her Shavian reorientation—katharsis—Bradley Coleridge, Lamb (Lear cannot be acted) German criticism, Russian communistic angle on Shaks.—Brings in Tagore (the inheritor of Vyas and Valmiki), compares his dramas with Shakespeare and the symbolical plays of west.

The Assistant Secretary steals into the dais on tip-toe and whispers into the ears of Dr. H., "Sir, Messrs. and Misses—are in tantrums. They say their parties are about to leave. Please stop the address."

"How can I lift up Olympus?" blurted out the President in an audible whisper, "Dr.—from Kemmendine is here on *our* invitation.

"But, sir . . . . . ."

"Patience," crooned the President with the most amiable smile he could summon. And then he mentally recited Cleopatra:

> "Patience is sottish, and impatience does become a dog that's mad."

Another Joint Secretary hands over a note, "Kindly ask the speaker to shorten. The Dancing troupe leaving."

The President looked glum and without his elan. How could he, observed of all observers, walk up to the mike and hand over a slip? That would be insulting a guest.

The inauguration took an hour. The Chief Guest had to be accommodated. He would be short, he said. "My blood-pressure won't allow a lengthy address."

Short? Shakespeare was compared with Aristophanes—Tagore's comedies were brought in relief—Sheridan's influence traced—Restoration Comedies—a fusion of East and West—"the twain shall meet. . . . ."

Behind the stage, the artistes were nagging. The President's heart went pit-a-pat. The last slip read, "The Kerala dancer has asked for his driver."

"Since there is no help let us kiss and part," mentally mumbled the President.

But the last slip was a bomb-shell. "Stop," wrote his missus from the auditorium. Electrified, the President was about to rush to the mike, when suddenly, the hurricane stopped with a long-drawn applause from the guests.

When he woke up from the stupor, President Dr. H. looked at his watch—8 p.m. Mr. and Mrs. — left? The Kerala dancer? "None left," twittered a girl Assistant Secretary. There Mrs.—was supervising the entrance of the table-harmonium on the stage with tambourines, tablas, and all "*muraja, murali madhura*". . . . . "with more peril in thine eye than twenty of their swords," happy, blinking, stagy, self-conscious. . . . . .

"Then why this 'pother'? Frailty, thy name is woman. The husband is a sne-man a hen-pecked hubby, "the President philosophised. He was feeling like tea. As he left for the tea-room for a pot of green-tea, a girl artiste was crooning:

"Love, love, nothing but love, still more—" from Troilus and Cressida.

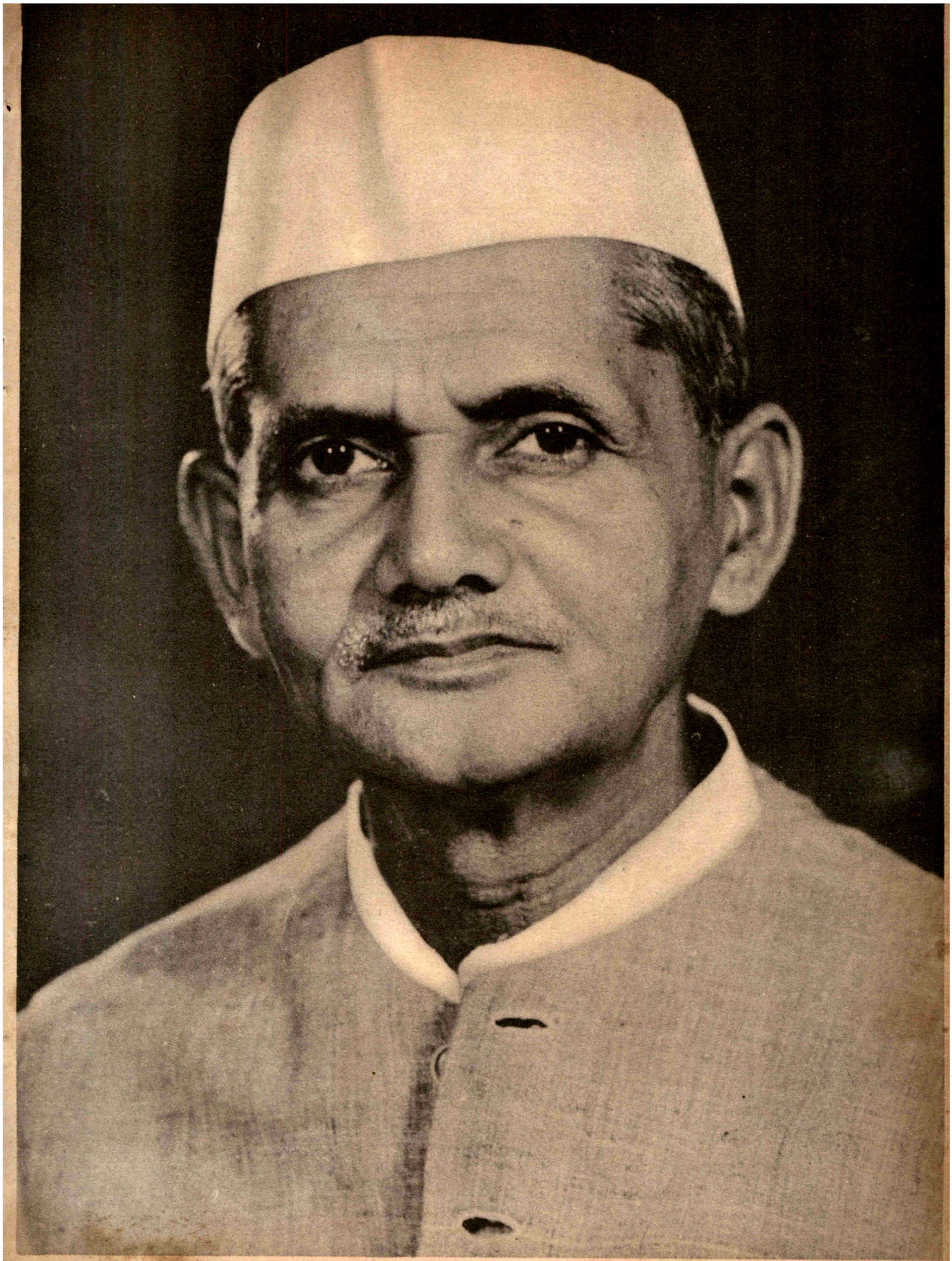
* * * *

Filled with a "humorous sadness" as Dr. H. was walking up, did he hear the lines?

"Second childishness and mere oblivion,

Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything."

The voice was from the green-room. "Can they mean me?" Dr. H. wondered and wondered.



OUR PRIME MINISTER

THERE is no accounting for personal preferences as far as places are concerned. One is influenced sometimes by the obvious aesthetic pleasure a place provides; at others, doubtless by sheer association. My predilection for, of all places, the Rue Lepic in Paris, seems utterly illogical. It has neither the fashionable aura of the Champs Elysees, nor the artistic and bohemian appeal of Montmartre or the Left Bank. In fact, it has no obvious claim to distinction whatsoever. At one end it forks off the Boulevard de Clichy, just where the husk of the old Moulin Rouge stands—a modernised, streamlined night club without any of the atmosphere it had in Toulouse Lautrec's day. The Rue Lepic winds over a hill whose highest points are the Sacre Coeur and Montmartre. In its first half, more fascinating than the second, the Rue Lepic is a shopping centre. Here things are cheap and those who have the time to haggle will find their efforts well repaid. In its second half, before the night clubs start, the Rue Lepic is a residential area which, with its quiet, shuttered, old-fashioned windows reminds one of Malabar Hill in the days before the flat system took over: in its queer, dirty sepulchral hotels, more than one character out of a Simenon novel has sought temporary refuge from justice. In the small alleys branching off from the main roads between the houses, there is invariably a great deal of activity of one sort or another. Carts rumble through cobbled side streets, and children under the influence of the cinema, play on the pavements, while cats chase each other over the tiled roofs. The Rue Lepic is a connecting link between the prosaic Paris of the housewives, and the enchanting Paris of the tourists. It has an "anything-can-happen" air, and in a small way, is a street full of petty excitement and unexpected farce.

It was quite by chance that my husband and I discovered the Rue Lepic. He had gone to enquire about a particular night club, and I walked down by the Moulin Rouge to buy some *petit suisse*, the cheese, which according to the initiated, is no cheese at all. It was being sold at a small counter in front of a shop. In the untidy glare of an unshaded lamp, the owner, all in white, was a man who might have been almost any age. He was completely absorbed in an Ellery Queen detective novel. Having read it myself, I appreciated his avid interest. A shapeless woman, with a half-filled shopping bag was arguing with him.

"Five francs? Who do you think you are? I'll give you two!"

"Five," he said mechanically, his eyes still glued to the page.

"Two-fifty, you rogue!"

'Five." he said, turning a page.

"Three!.....Or I'll call the cop."

"Five," he droned.

"Four-fifty," and that's my last offer."

I don't know what they were arguing about. He reached below the counter, wrapped something in paper and handed it to her. She fumbled in her shopping bag, and brought out her purse, grumbling the while.

"Have you ever heard of such a thing? What is this country coming to? Soon, we'll be murdered in our beds!"

With each statement, she thrust her rather unpleasant warty face into mine. I shrugged and approached the counter she'd left.

'Yes?" said the man, without looking up.

"Can I.....can I ....have some *petit suisse*?"

I suppose it was the voice and the accent which were all wrong. He looked up from his book. "Ah! A stranger!" he said.

"Indian," I murmured.

His eyes showed a spark of interest.

"I have just been reading a serial on India,...." He turned from the counter to a rack behind him, and thumbed through a pile of papers on it.

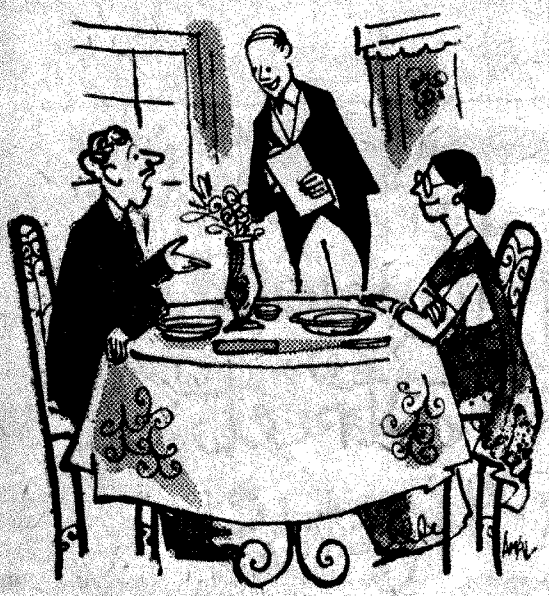
'Here it is," he announced triumphantly. "All about India!"

I looked at another one of those "mystic East" articles.

"Must be wonderful to be a maharajah!" he said.

"Not much, any more," I replied.

He looked disappointed. He asked a number



"Escargot? What's that?"

of questions and it was difficult to cut his enthusiasm short.

"My *petit suisse,*" I said firmly. He fumbled in an ice-chest behind a counter, while I picked up the Ellery Queen.

"Did you guess who did the murder?"

"No, of course not! Do you think I would be reading it if I had?"

"I suppose not."

"He gave the *petit suisse,* and as I was leaving, held the book up.

"Who was it?" he threw after me.

"The doctor's wife."

"Why did you tell me?" he said perversely.

"But you *asked* me!" I protested.

"Yes, but I thought you wouldn't tell me. A hint perhaps, but not actually tell me!"

I joined the strollers who were mostly habituees of the place, out for their evening walk. They were mostly middle class people and the street seemed to have both the harassed housewife—and the elegant loafer. In a little while, my husband joined me and we proceeded to look for some sugar —to go with the cheese.

The grocer was a big, untidy man.

"What do you want?" he asked belligerently.

"Some sugar please."

"How much?"

I should have known this would happen. Those were the days before we were introduced to the metric system.

"Very, very little," I said, hoping it would work.

"So much?" he asked, holding up a thumb and forefinger, about an eighth of an inch apart.

"Give me a kilogram," I said boldly.

I was horrified to discover how much a kilogram was, but had not the temerity to argue. My husband's horrified query as to why I needed so much sugar was more than justified.

"Please," I said. "I don't want to argue with this chap. Let's just take it!"

When he handed the package over, my husband essayed his few words of French. "L'addition s'il vous plait....the bill, please?"

The grocer shook a thick finger in his face and said in English: "No l'addition....cash!"

We paid quickly, and fled towards the higher reaches of the road, and stopped at a small bar in a side street. It was almost full. There were a couple of young men in T-s-irts and some older ones with berets and sabots. One of two women who looked like artists sipped coffee, while behind us, a serious-looking young man with thick spectacles read Jean-Paul Sartre. Two Africans were discussing something loudly in a kind of French I couldn't follow, while the woman with them, who looked like a model had an air of perpetual boredom. One or two couples regarded each other intently as if the world outside was a mere hallucination.

After a few drinks we sought our dinner at a shabby little restaurant nearby. It was the kind of place where bills are scribbled on the paper tablecloths, and where rabbit in lieu of chicken was liable to arrive. At the moment it was short-staffed, for the single-aproned attendant was deputising for the cook. He brought the menu and asked what madame would like. I rattled off an order for an omlette and garnishings.

"What about monsieur? *Hors d'oeuvres,* perhaps?"

"Yes. What do you suggest?" my husband asked.

"You would like some *escargot?* No?"

"*Escargot?* What's that?"

"*Hors d'oeuvres,* monsieur," the man said obligingly.

"Is it fish?"

"No, not fish. It is small....." he made a circle of thumb and forefinger.

"Ah! Round. Meat balls, perhaps?"

"Not meat..... No, no....."

"If it's not fish or meat, what is *escargot?*" my husband asked me.

"*Escargot?*.....Oh, its some kind of *hors d'oeuvres,*" I said absent-mindedly, reading my paper.

"I *know* it's *hors d'oeuvres,*" he said patiently. "I want to know what kind. Animal, vegetables or mineral?"

"Frankly, I've forgotten what it means. Why not have something else?"

"I shan't! I'll have *escargot.*"

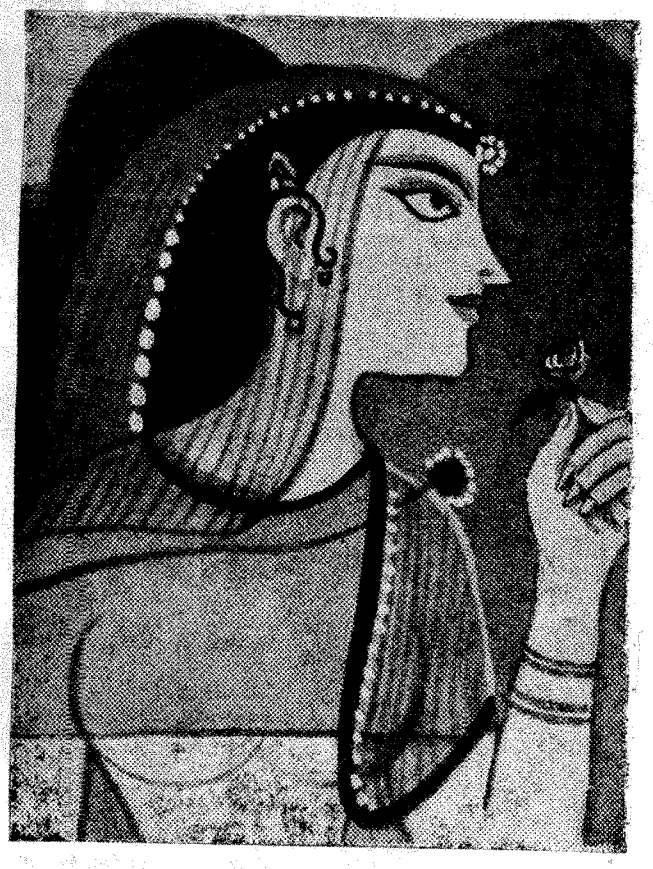
It arrived quite fast.

"Hm.....delicious!" he exclaimed.

I looked at his plate. He seemed to be eating

(Continued on page 133)

"Two-fifty, you rogue!"



THE ARMY OF GHOSTS

By L. N. BIRLA

THERE ruled in Ahmedabad a king by the name of Mohammed Beg. Large parts of Sourashtra and Gujrat were under his sway. He had a commander in the army called Hathikhan Pathan. Hathikhan also acted as Governor of Patan. But the commander was a man of straw. There were allegations against him but he paid no attention to such complaints and this had created a sense of frustration among the people.

About fifty miles from Patan was situated the town Soubhat, and Tejsingh Tunwar ruled there. He had a beautiful daughter of about fifteen years of age. Her eyebrows were slanting like fishes, while the two large eyes were like lotus buds. Her nose was like the bill of a parrot and the two lips were of the colour of coral. Her teeth were pure white like pearls of the first water and a long neck like a Kurja bird (a kind of stork). She had a well sculptured body, and was like a second moon on the earth. The fame of her beauty spread far and wide.

Hathikhan also heard of it and decided to kidnap the daughter of Tejsingh. He collected about a thousand men who were well trained in riding and quietly reaching Soubhat at night he attacked the town. The queen of Soubhat with her daughter under the cover of darkness, escaped and went to her brother, while Tejsingh together with three hundred of his soldiers was killed in defending the town.

When Hathikhan reached the palace he was disappointed to find that the queen and her daughter had already gone. In his fury he ransacked the palace and burnt the whole town.

Tejsingh and his soldiers became ghosts and they visited Soubhat at night. The town was already ruined and when they found it was also haunted, even those near about fled afar. Some cowherds used to tend their cattle there during the day, but at night they went back to their villages.

An ascetic was travelling in easy stages in that part of the country. One day, late in the evening he reached the ruined town of Soubhat. The cowherds were just returning with their cattle. They saw the aged and venerable ascetic, and went to him for his blessings. They also informed him that the town was haunted. But if he would so agree, they would feel honoured to take him with them and put him up in their village.

Replied the ascetic: "My boys! I am neither afraid of ghosts nor of death. Even if I die, it does not matter because I am always in the services of God and if He so desires, I shall go to Him after death."

The ascetic proceeded towards the burnt town. The only good place which had a roof over it being the king's palace, the ascetic went inside and in one corner of the large hall, put down his things and went to sleep.

After an hour or so, he was awakened because of a strong light falling on his face. The whole place was brightly lighted with the chandeliers. The ascetic found servants cleaning the big hall and laying cover for dinner. Shortly afterwards when everything was ready, he saw a tall and comely figure having a kingly look approaching with one hundred followers. The king sat in the centre while the officers sat all around him. While they were having their dinner and drinking wines, lo! a few dancing girls arrived and started dancing to entertain them. The ascetic was surprised to see such happenings and was wondering whether they were really ghosts or living beings. In the meantime, the king turned his head and his eyes fell on the ascetic in that corner. Tejsingh ordered two of his officers to fetch the ascetic. The officers went and with due respects requested him to present himself before the king.

King Tejsingh after bowing and paying his respects to the ascetic said: "Oh! revered man, know that I am Tejsingh, king of Soubhat. All of the men whom you see around here including the dozen girls, are all ghosts." Then he narrated to him what had happened at Soubhat and how while defending the town they all had been killed. And he said: "The only way to end our living as ghosts is

firstly to marry my daughter to a suitable and worthy young man, and secondly to take revenge against Mohammed Beg and his commander Hathikhan. Unless these conditions are fulfilled, we shall all continue as ghosts till the last day. My request to you, Oh, Holy man, is to kindly proceed to Muaha. If anybody could help, it is my friend, king of Muaha. He has a brave and worthy son named Jagmal. If he agrees to marry my daughter and promises to take revenge, I shall be rid of this life of ghosts."

The ascetic promised to convey his message to the king of Muaha and also assured the king that he would do his best to persuade Rawal Mallinath to agree to such a proposal.

When it was near about dawn, all on a sudden the ghosts and everything disappeared from the hall, and all became quiet as before. The ascetic rested a little while and, next day he took the road to Muaha arriving there after about a week.

On the outskirts of the city, he took shelter under a tree. Those who saw, thronged to him the whole day. As the ascetic was a well-known figure, there was a large crowd standing around him to do obeisance to him. The next day the king of Muaha also heard about his arrival, and with his queen accompanied by about fifty officers went there to visit him. After he had enquired about his wellbeing, the ascetic asked the king to call Prince Jagmal also as he had a message for both of them. The prince was sent for. When he arrived, the ascetic took the king and the prince aside and conveyed to them the message of King Tejsingh. He also added. "O! King, it is your duty to come forward and help brave men like Tejsingh and take revenge against the turpitudes of Hathikhan and his king Mohammed Beg.

Prince Jagmal was a brave man and he was ever ready to help all those, who were in distress. Therefore, it didn't take more than a moment to decide what he would do. He immediately agreed to marry the daughter of Tejsingh and also take revenge against the king of Ahmedabad.

The ascetic returned to Soubhat and going to the same hall in the palace stayed there for the night. The events of the previous night started to repeat again. The king arrived with his officers and the girls started dancing. After Tejsingh had finished his dinner. his eyes fell on the ascetic. This time, he himself got up and approached him.

The ascetic informed the king how he had carried out his mission at Muaha and how Prince Jagmal had readily agreed to marry his daughter. So when he had already done so much, the ascetic was requested to contact the queen of Tejsingh and inform her of what had happened in Soubhat. He was also to carry the message from Tejsingh to the queen that she should return with her daughter to Soubhat and make arrangements for the marriage with Prince Jagmal.

On an auspicious day the prince at the appointed hour with five of his friends arrived at Soubhat. The queen was already there with her daughter and at night in the presence of Tejsingh they were married. After the marriage, Tejsingh blessed the happy couple and informed Jagmal of the second condition that he should take revenge against King Mohammed Beg and Hathikhan. He also said that his three hundred soldiers who had died with him would be there to help the prince whenever he went to war against Mohammed Beg. When he saw the morning approaching, the ghost departed and Prince Jagmal with his bride returned to Muaha

The news of the marriage of Jagmal with the daughter of Tejsingh became known everywhere. Hathikhan got wind of it and he became furious. He started making arrangements to fight with Jagmal and kidnap his wife. Muaha fort was a very well protected place and it required a great planning to attack it.

Jagmal also learnt the news. He was also not idle. Mohammed Beg was a big king and had larger resources. It was difficult for Jagmal to go and attack him to win. The only course left for Jagmal was to induce Mohammed Beg to attack Muaha and defeat him there. Preparations, therefore, were made by Jagmal with this strategy in mind. With the rolling of the days, years flew quickly and before anybody realised, three years had already passed. On this side, Tejsingh was getting impatient, but having no means of direct contact with Jagmal he was helpless.

The Princess, Jagmal's wife, remembered the day she was married. When the proposal was mooted to marry her in her father's palace at Soubhat, she was afraid. All the time she was gaping from behind her mother with fear. Every noise made her jittery. Then suddenly she saw her father poised under the glittering chandelier.

He was adorned in full kingly regalia. He had his gold handled sword hanging from his waist from

..... *take revenge against Mohammad Beg and his commander Hathikhan*

the brocade belt, his broad forehead shining under his turban. She was enchanted beyond fear. Without touching her, he blessed her by raising his hands and said: "Mrinal, now it is in your hands to get me my freedom from a ghost's life. Don't let your husband forget about me."

Princess Mrinal tried to speak but her words were lost in a blush and murmuring. Then a haze surrounded him and slowly he vanished. Only then she realised what had happened. And now three years after that, she still remembered every detail, as if she was just watching the scene happening at that very moment. She could not control herself and a sob escaped her.

Jagmal was resting by her side. He sat up. This was as if a signal for her. She put her face on his lap and burst out.

"Why, Mrinal, what has happened?" Jagmal was full of apology. He put his hands on her back and after a great deal of cajoling, she replied. She reminded him of how her father was still a ghost and that though three years had passed he had not done anything to fulfil his vow.

Jagmal suddenly realised that so much time had passed. He had been so busy with strengthening his fortifications. He had also trained up a good fighting force. He told her: "Oh my lady, now my preparations are practically at an end, and I shall certainly take some action by which I shall force Mohammed Beg and Hathikhan to attack me in Muaha".

In the month of Chaitra (about March) falls the annual festival of unmarried girls. They worship Mahesh and Gouri and pray for worthy and beautiful bridegrooms for themselves. After worshipping, the idols are taken in procession with music and dancing through the city.

King Mohammed Beg had a grown up daughter of the age of sixteen. Her name was Gindoli. She was a beautiful girl, and though she could not worship Mahesh and Gouri, being a daughter of a Mohammedan king, she always joined the procession. All the best musicians and dancers of her father's realm accompanied the procession. She herself sat in a palanquin.

Jagmal decided upon that particular day to make his first move. He selected fifty brave soldiers of his army with very fast horses. One by one, all of them entered Ahmedabad quietly and waited on the road as if to watch the procession. When the palanquin carrying Gindoli reached there, they stopped the palanquin and capturing Gindoli put her on a horse and raced back to Muaha. Before anybody could become wiser, they had gone quite a distance. The army of King Mohammed Beg got ready to follow them, but it was already too late. They soon reached Muaha and there Gindoli was married to the younger brother of Prince Jagmal.

Mohammed Beg was furious and Hathikhan became so white with rage that it appeared as if he had no blood left in the body.

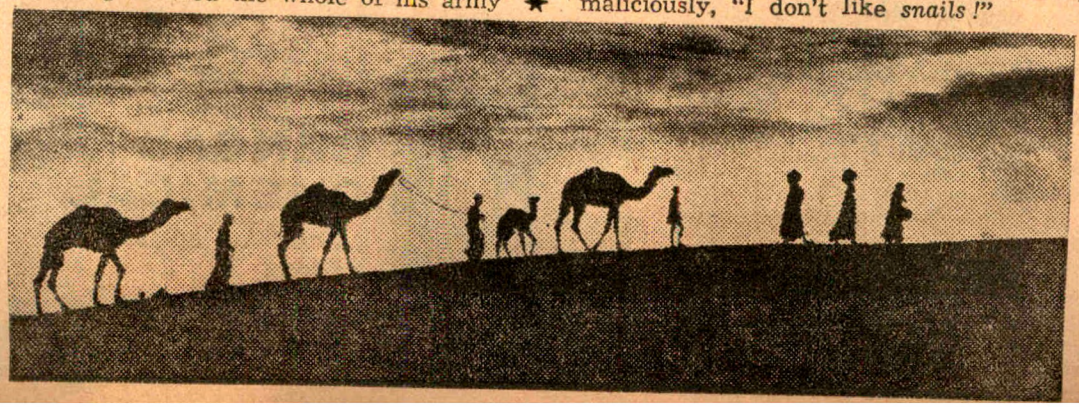
Mohammed Beg ordered the whole of his army and after selecting thirty thousand strong, he started for Muaha.

In order to reach Muaha they had to pass through the valley of desert which was full of high sand dunes. Jagmal hid his army behind the sand dunes and deployed them for a surprise attack on Mohammed Beg. Mohammed Beg's army was preceded by his scouts. One by one they were picked up by unseen hands, and Mohammed Beg lost all his intelligence about the enemy.

It was just before dawn on the sixth day when Mohammed Beg's army passed that spot which was selected by Jagmal. Because of the journey, the army was feeling tired and the beasts also were not in their humour. Suddenly Jagmal attacked. The ghost-army of Tejsingh also arrived instantly and joined the fray on the side of Jagmal. Whenever the ghosts struck they shouted: "Take it from Jagmal". The men of Mohammed Beg were killed in hundreds and thousands. They only noticed a sword falling on them but saw no man doing it. This created a panic among them and very soon they started running. Soon the run became a rout. Mohammed Beg with great difficulty escaped but Hathikhan was killed in the battle.

Jagmal actually did not have to do much, and before his men even could put up a good fight they were surprised to find that the army of Mohammed Beg was already routed and gone. Jagmal returned to his town in triumph. What the Beg's army could not understand was how a single Jagmal could reach thousands of men and strike them with his sword.

Jagmal grew into a legend in Ahmedabad. His name would create a profound effect on the soldiers of Mohammed Beg. It was enough to shout the name and they would throw their swords and run.



MY FAVOURITE STREET

(Continued from Page 130)

little bits of black rubber, the identity of which was no longer a mystery.

"Are you quite sure its all right?" I asked diffidently. "Are you *sure* you like it?"

"Its delicious!"

"What does it taste like?"

"Can't say, quite. Its like mushroom....only more spongy and different. Now that you've seen it, do you recognise it?"

"It's....I'm glad you like it," I said parrying the question.

"Have some."

"No thank you," I said hastily, wondering at the perversity of human nature, for how often had I been in despair at home over his squeamishness, and here he was eating *escargot* of all things!

"Do have some!" he insisted.

"No really....I'll stick to my omlette."

"Why won't you have some?" he asked suddenly suspicious.

"Because," I said slowly, and perhaps a little maliciously, "I don't like *snails!*"

for better

Comfort

'Sankha & Padma'

VEST

ESTD 1922

D. N. BOSE'S HOSIERY FACTORY
CALCUTTA

Show Room | Hosiery House | 55-1, COLLEGE STREET, CAL-12

ROYAL ENGINEERING COLLEGE

12, Dr. Debendra Mukherji Row, Shealdah.

Phone 35-5580

ENGINEERING SECTION :

Admission is going on in A. M. I. E. (India), B. O. A. T., Turner, Fitter, Mech. & Civil Eng., Draftsman, Electrician, Radio & other courses. Plucked S.F. candidates are also admitted. Proper Diplomas or Certificates are given to the successful candidates.

COMMERCE SECTION :

Complete courses in Typewriting and Shorthand are taught in 1, 3 or 6 months with guarantee. Book-keeping and Accountancy are taught in 6 months with guarantee Learn Spoken/Written English from Foreign Tutoress.

TUTORIAL SECTION :

S.F., H.S., Pre-U. and Degree Courses are taught by experienced Professors. Admission is going on in "Return of Guarantee Fee" scheme for S.F. Examination. Admission is going on in German class also.

BRANCHES :

5, Dharamtala St.; 2, Panchanantala Lane, Behala; 143, Circular Garden Reach Road, Kidderpore, 87/2, Cornwallis St., Shyambazar; 108, South Sinthee Road, Dum Dum; 6/1, Panchu Khansama Lane, Shealdah; B. C. Roy Road, Burdwan; Station Road, Habra; and also at Bombay and New Delhi.

your lovely hair needs care and nourishment

BENGAL CHEMICAL'S

cantharidine

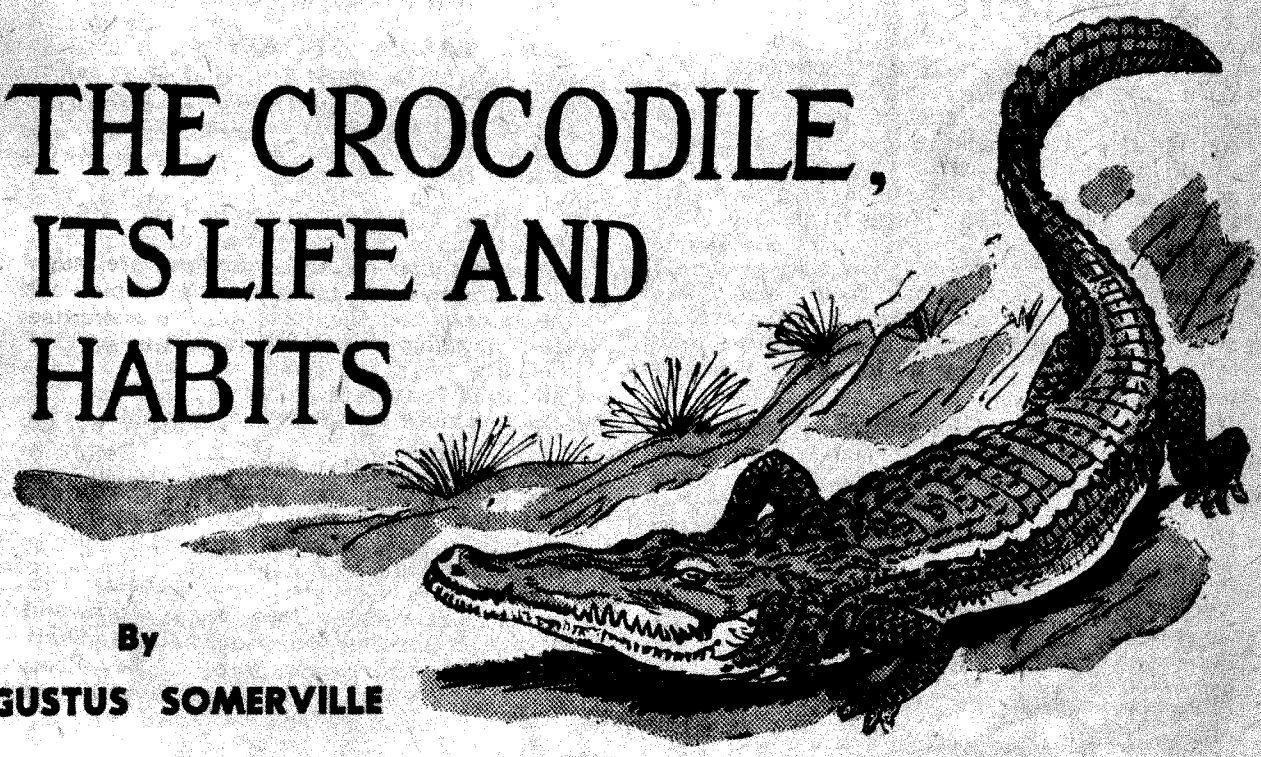
hair oil

helps to promote growth of long lustrous silken-soft tresses. Extract of Cantharides contained in it prevents falling of hair.

BENGAL CHEMICAL

CALCUTTA · BOMBAY
KANPUR

THE CROCODILE, ITS LIFE AND HABITS



By

AUGUSTUS SOMERVILLE

I HAVE always been fascinated by the crocodile and have never lost an opportunity of studying it at close quarters. To the average man, this reptile is sinister, repulsive and dangerous. But to those who live in close proximity to it, the crocodile is no worse than the many far greater dangers they have to face in the jungles. This repulsion is probably based on some atavistic memory of dinosaurs and dragons that preyed on man in his pre-historic past and the appearance of this saurian, so dragon-like and sinister, awakens in him a response of fear and loathing.

When Dost Mohammad my shikari informed me that a large number of these saurians were always to be found basking on the sands that fringed the banks of the Raimangal River that lay a few miles to the East of our present camp, I immediately directed him to proceed in that direction. Care must be taken when navigating this stream. Not only is it broad and rough, but it forms the Eastern Boundary of Pakistan with West Bengal.

When we emerged on to the waters of the Raimangal it was still early dawn. Edging our way closely along its bank, we were gratified on observing several large crocodiles basking in the early morning sun. Around them the usual crocodile birds fluttered in large numbers and our approach was a signal for them to spring into the air, uttering their shrill, harsh cries, warning the sleeping saurians that danger was approaching. These birds are a species of Egyptian plover who appear to obtain much of their sustenance from the worms, ticks and other vermin that conceal themselves in the cracks and crevices of the armoured backs of the crocodiles and in repayment for this free lunch, constitute a valuable warning system for their hosts. Herodotus, before 450 B.C. is credited with the story that these birds actually enter the distended jaws of the crocodiles basking on the sands and pick out the vermin and bits of decaying meat adhering to their gums. How far this is true I am unable to state, as although I have watched these birds for long periods at a time, I have never had the good fortune to see any of them engaged on this essential dental service. This does not mean that the statement is incorrect. Many shikaris affirm that they have actually seen the birds so engaged, but I have probably been unfortunate.

After spending the major portion of the day in drifting up and down these banks, I realized that it was practically impossible to approach sufficiently close to the basking saurians to study them in their natural habitat. Selecting a patch of firm grassland, sheltered by solitary tree, I directed the Manjis to beach the boat and while Dost Mohammad and I proceeded on foot along the banks, the rest of the crew erected the tents and set up camp for a protracted stay. About a mile south of our camp, Dost Mohammad and I came on a site that was ideal for the purpose I had in mind. Here the sand was fine and deep and the forest at one point approached fairly close to the water's edge. Here well hidden in the dense scrub jungle, I directed Dost Mohammad to build a "Hide". As we were not waiting for tiger or deer, this shelter was not to be a very ela-

borate affair. Just a screen of grass and leaves sufficient to protect the front and keep me from being observed by any crocodile leaving the stream and approaching the bank. Here for the next few days I sat at my ease in a deck chair and studied these saurians as they crawled up the bank.

In West Bengal, in fact in the whole Gangetic Delta, we have three distinct species of crocodile. The first of these is called, locally, a sose, and is well known to sportsmen as a marsh crocodile. This species seldom exceeds five feet in length. It is found in shallow water in marsh-lands, in jheels and creeks. It lives entirely on carrion, fish and the like. Burrying itself in the mud it awaits the passing of small animals, like kids, fowls, ducks and piglets, all coming from neighbouring villages to feed. A swift blow from its powerful tail precipitates the animal or bird into the water, where it is promptly seized and eaten. It does not attack cattle or man. This crocodile is noted for the distances it will travel in quest of fresh feeding waters. It is easily traced from the broad, flat trail left by its tail, as it wanders over the country.

A few years ago, when visiting Hazaribagh, I shot one of these reptiles in a small village called Khatkamsari on the old Chattra Road. Miles away from the nearest water supply, this crocodile had taken up its residence in the village tank or rather

The crows now swept in and in a moment several viciously snapping crocodiles were picked up . . . .

jheel, where the disappearance of several kids, piglets and ducks, soon made its presence known.

The sose is held in high esteem by fishermen. The fat when boiled down and clarified is used as a specific for rheumatism.

The most popular crocodile from both a sporting and commercial standpoint is the "Gharial", also called a "Bhoja" from the tufted snout or sponge-like termination on its upper jaw. This is the largest of our fish-eating crocodiles. It frequently reaches 25 feet in length. Its snout is usually four times as long as the base of its skull. Its jaws are armed with rows of formidable looking teeth, 27 on each side of the upper jaw. Its fingers and toes are partially webbed. Although the colour varies, the prevailing tint is dark olive, paler in young crocodiles and spotted with brown. Although living mainly on fish, it evinces a partially for carrion both human and animal, so frequently seen floating down our rivers. It seldom attacks man or large animals.

Finally, we have the mugger, the most dreaded of all our crocodiles. Similar in every respect to the Gharial, this saurian has heavy, powerful jaws, the snout being about twice as long as the breadth at the base of the skull. It carries about 17 to 19 teeth on each side of its upper jaw. Its fingers and toes are partially webbed, with a serrated fringe on the outer side of the legs. This is the true man-eating crocodile and is frequently observed far out at sea. It often exceeds 30 feet in length.

Although I spent about 15 days in my hide on the Raimangal Sands, I never had an opportunity of witnessing two crocodiles mating. This, the fishermen informed me takes place at the beginning of the rains, when the turbulent waters lend zest to their courtship. Once the rains are over and the biological urge has cooled off, the male crocodiles tend to drift away from the females. The latter, taking advantage of the receding waters, press their way up-stream till they reach a favourable chur or sand bank where they proceed to lay their eggs. My luck at this time was wonderful. It was about the fifth day of my vigil that I observed, late one evening, a huge Gharial cautiously drifting in towards the bank. For a long while she lay partially submerged in the water, only her eyes and the end of his snout, visible. Then obviously satisfied that no danger threatened she moved in on to the sand and slowly dragged herself out of the water. Even now her movements were cautious and restrained. A quick survey of the terrain evidently satisfied her and she moved slowly up the bank and to my alarm directly in my direction. When about ten feet from the hide, she turned away towards a clean patch of dry sand that lay before her. With her fore legs she started to remove this sand rapidly, till she had dug a shallow depression about two feet across and about one foot deep. This done, she hurried back to the water and submerged. I cursed my luck but I need not have. Barely an hour passed when I saw her again emerge in the increasing darkness and hasten back to the hole she had dug. It was too dark for me to see in detail what she did, but I could tell from her movements that she was laying her eggs in this depression. It was now quite dark and I was feeling rather uncomfortable. Crocodiles were not the only man-eaters who were abroad that night, so rising cautiously I made my way out from the back of the hide and returned to the camp.

The next morning I was back at the hide early. A cautious look round showed me that the mother crocodile had carefully covered up her nest with sand and dried leaves from the surrounding bushes. Certain that she could not have left the site completely, I watched the surface of the water intently and was rewarded by seeing a tufted snout and two eyes emerge slowly and drift towards the bank. Evidently the crocodile has the same distrust of her neighbours as others have.

For three days this unprofitable vigil continued. On the fourth day, at about noon, when I had just finished a cup of coffee and some sandwiches, I noticed two pelicans settle on the sand before me. Shortly after a flight of crows arrived and sat noisily on the branches of a dead Sundari bush at

the edge of the clearing. A hawk or two glided through the air above me. I was intrigued. Why had these birds come? Could a shoal of small fish be drifting in towards the shore. Eager to ascertain the cause I watched the water intently. Suddenly I was electrified to see the eyes and snout of a crocodile emerge from the water and move steadily towards the shore. Immediately the two pelicans were awake and alert. The crows sprang into the air, wheeling and cawing incessantly, while the crocodile, without a moment's hesitation hurried up the bank. Here on a secluded spot she paused and started to remove the sand slowly. Immediately after she had completed the task, I observed some twenty eggs, gleaming whitely in the setting sun. The removal of the sand seemed to have awakened the unhatched crocodiles, for in a few minutes the eggs were agitated violently, the shells peeled off and tiny black snouts appeared, snapping and wrigling. In a moment even this encumbrance was cast aside and a mass of tiny monsters, looking like large black ants, rushed out of the nest and started moving towards the water. This was the signal for the awaiting audience. In a moment the pelicans pounced on the procession and snapped up all they could catch. The crows now swept in and in a moment several viciously snapping crocodiles were picked up and borne away towards the edge of the forest. From below me a mongoose and two water rats joined in the slaughter and by the time they were through, I do not believe more than ten of the newly hatched crocodiles reached the water. Later, when the stampede died down, I left the hide and went to inspect the nest. An actual count revealed some thirty eggs. So nature was proving once again, her ability to maintain the status quo.

That evening Dost Mohammad showed me an egg he had extracted from a nest further down the stream. It was the size of a Turkey's egg, round off-white in colour with large beige freckles. The shell was soft and clammy, and the contents pleasing neither to the eye nor to the nose. The female lays these in a shallow depression in the sand, covering them up carefully and leaving the sun to assist in the hatching-out process. From twenty to seventy eggs are laid at a time and if it were not for natural enemies destroying the majority at birth, our streams and marshes would be choked with a teeming mass of crocodiles. When the eggs are due to hatch, the mother crocodile returns to the nest. Here she removes the sand covering the eggs and it is thought that this movement indicates to the unborn crocodile that the time to emerge has arrived. Provided by nature with a sharp, bony protusion at the upper end of its snout the young crocodile attacks the egg shell from within and in a few seconds breaks free. Within a minute or so they are able to move and then starts the race for the water.

Baby crocodiles are about 8 inches long at birth. Their skins are olive and bluish in colour, their eyes bright and golden. Aggressive and fierce from the moment they quit the shell, they will snap viciously at anything in their vicinity. On entering the water the young crocodile subsists eitirely on water insects. From insects he gradually advances to crustacea and then on to fish. Fish appear to form the bulk of his diet for the rest of his life. But as he grows older, heavier and more bulky, he probably looses his taste for an exclusively fish diet or with age he probably lacks the speed and energy needed to catch his prey. At this period he will probably be about ten feet long and it is now that he develops a liking for meat, any meat, and human flesh is a delicacy he cannot resist. Like the tiger,

Dost Mahammad showed me an egg.....

once he has killed man, human flesh is the only meat that seems to satisfy his voracious appetite. He will lie in wait near bathing-ghats, fords and any place where he is likely to intercept human beings, and the toll he takes of unwairy humanity is terrible.

When in search of prey, he will lie motionless in the water, his eyes just above the surface, and await his opportunity. His favourite method is a slow, stealthy approach towards the bank and opposite the place his victim is standing. Here he will submerge himself still further till he can secure the necessary purchase on the soil below him, when with amazing power, he will lash out with his tail, precipitating his victim into the water, where he will seize it and dive deep into the stream drowning his victim. Seldom does he consume it immediately. Once all further resistance has ceased he will rise to the surface carrying his victim with him, frequently draped over his neck and back. This extraordinary habit has given rise to the belief that the spirit of his victim rides on his back especially in the case of the man-eating mugger, directing him to where he may obtain other human prey. Although the mugger will attack and kill any animal entering his element, he is at heart a scavenger. I have seen him swimming beside the rotting bodies of men and animals, swept down the river during the floods, tearing off pieces of flesh and swallowing them with a quick snap of his powerful jaws. In the case of live prey, he will first drown it, and, then when sure that his victim is dead, will carry it to some depression in the bank or a convenient hole under water, where he will leave the body "to hang" till it has decomposed sufficiently to suit his taste. This peculiarity is often of great advantage to his human victims. Some years ago while shooting in the vicinity of the village of Gosaba, I was shown an underwater cave, entrance to which had been effected by a shaft driven through the silt directly above. Here the Fishermen informed me that one of their members, who had been seized further up the stream, while bathing, had been taken by the crocodile. Fortunately the man lost consciousness as soon as he was seized and the crocodile, assuming

(Continued on page 142)

TRIKRAMDAS Karoree was the proprietor of a large business combine. Sitting in his own chamber of the Delhi office he was signing cheques. His orderly came with a card. It was from M. Zulfiqar Khan. "Ask him to wait," said the boss.

After a while the clerk went out of the chamber with a bunch of signed cheques. Trikramdas rang the bell. The orderly entered. Said Trikramdas, handing over the card. "Let the gentleman come in".

Zulfiqar Khan entered the chamber. He saluted Settji and said:

"I am from the Intelligence Branch."

Settji was perturbed.

"Any more income tax irregularities?" He enquired.

"That I don't know," Zulfiqar Khan replied. "But here is a serious charge against you.

"Is it? What's wrong?"

"You have married thrice."

"Oh, is that all!" Trikramdas whooped in joy! "If I've married at all what is wrong with it? I am a Hindu. I can marry as many times as I like. I am not supposed to be confined to four Bibis like you".

Khan Shahib waved his hand and said: "Aw, Settji I see, you only know how to earn money and nothing else! You are quite ignorant about the world. Why don't you know that a Hindu cannot marry according to law more than once. Haven't you heard of the Hindu code?"

"A pleasant surprise!", Settji exclaimed, "Is it so? Yes, I am always busy with this or that. I cannot keep abreast of time. I am only interested, you see, in what new tax is going to be imposed, which licence I shall have to apply for and such items. But really, I do not quite understand what you say. Why, my uncle Hurchandji, has two wives. Yet he is quite hale and hearty. And no charge-sheet against him."

"He had married twice before the enforcement of the Act. So it is not an offence. But you married three times after the Act. You are liable to a deterrent punishment. It may run into ten years' imprisonment or heavy fines".

Settji was frightened. He said: "It is really embarrassing. Now what is to be done?"

"Look here, Settli! you are a rich man and and respectable too. We don't like to put into trouble a distinguished person like you. We are giving you a month's time. Please settle the matter in the meantime."

"How?"

"Keep one wife and dispense with the other two as early as possible. How much compensation you have to pay I cannot say. You better consult a lawyer. And as for my fees it may be settled later on."

Trikramdas stroked his forehead with his plam and uttered in despair: "Oh, Ramji; Oh, the Supreme Spirit; Oh, save me please. I have married one according to the Sanatani rites, another by the Arya Samaj custom and the third one by the Civil Marriage Act. How can I discard them all?"

"Don't get nervous please, Settji. You are not short of money. Spend a few lakhs and everything will be o.k. Give your two wives a heavy compensation and have a confession from them that they are not your real wives but only 'pleasure girls'. In that case we can hush up the whole matter. Please do not waste time. Engage a good pleader immediately. Goodbye, I am leaving now. Two weeks hence we are meeting again."

Trikramdas was on the wrong side of fifty. The history of his married life is really a chequered one. Just a year ago, his only wife died leaving behind a few children. Some months later, Trikramdas married Anandibai. He again married not once, but twice. But he did not disclose it even to his relatives and friends. Anandibai is the name of his eldest wife. She is the only child of Harjeevanlal the ex-Dewan of Khajoulee Estate. Thus, she inherited enormous wealth. When Harjeevan died, one of his distant cousins posed himself as the guardian of Anandibai and tried to deprive his niece of her property. But, Trikramdas with the help of her maternal uncle married Anandibai and brought her entire property to his custody. Anandibai is about twenty-five. She is not good-looking. She makes it up with her virulent tounge, and hauteur derived from her high birth.

Delhi is the business centre and head office of the Trikramdas concerns. Besides, the branch offices at Bombay and Calcutta are not negligible. He inspects these two offices three or four times in a year. Once he went to Bombay after marrying Anandibai. Kissenram Khobani, the Manager there, invited his boss one day to his house. He hailed from Sind, now in Pakistan. After partition he came to Delhi for settlement. Now he is living in Bombay as branch manager of the Settji concerns. Kissenram is foppish. His flat is well-furnished. He introduced his wife and his wife's younger sister to his master.

Settji was an old-fashioned man with no experience at all of society girls. So he was simply charmed at the sight of Kissenram's sister-in-law, Rajhansi Zalkani. How nicely she dressed! How fair her complexion! She put on a light blue *Salwar* and a deep blue *Kamij* and a light green tinselled *dopatta* on it. She was a pleasant talker and very animate, smiling all the time. She was hospitality itself.

The meal was over. Settji took Kissenram aside. He heard from him all about Rajhansi Zalkani. She had no parents. Her only brother lived now in Singapore. He was a business magnate there. But hardly made any enquiry about his younger sister. So Kissenram sheltered his sister-in-law in his house. She could act very well, sing very well and wished to be a film star. But Kissenram and his wife did not like the idea.

Settji made up his mind then and there. He asked his Manager to arrange her marriage with him. "I will make her happy", he assured. He asked his Manager to purchase immediately a house in Bombay. Rajhansi would live there. He, too, would come to Bombay and stay most of the time there. "You see, I want to expand my business here" he told his Manager.

Settji suppressed the story of his former marriage with Anandibai. Kissenram knew his boss to be a widower. So he gladly agreed to the proposal. Rajhansi, too, agreed. She did not remonstrate at all against his old age. They were happily married according to the Arya Samaj custom. A new house was then purchased and Rajhansi began to live there.

Some time after Trikramdas went to Calcutta for inspection of his Calcutta business. Paritosh Hore-Chaudhuri, Manager there, is a man of active habits. He puts up at Alipore in European fashion. He invited his boss to dinner at his residence. Trikramdas was introduced to Sri Hore-Chaudhuri's wife and sister. He was simply amazed to see Miss Balaka Hore-Chaudhuri. True, she was not fairer than Rajhansi. But the style in which she put her saree on was graceful indeed. And how she talked! Her manners and etiquette, too, were charming. She spoke English like an Englishwoman. Hindi she spoke but not faultlessly. Nevertheless, how sweet it was! Settji was captivated.

Paritosh Hore-Chaudhuri informed him that Balaka was an M.A., a good dancer and singer too. The film directors were after her for a contract. It is only Paritosh who did not lilke the idea. Trikramdas could not restrain himself:

"Miss Balaka, I would like to marry you", he spoke out in Hindi.

"It is so kind of you", Balaka replied with a pleasant smile. "But how can I stand the sweltering heat of Delhi? Neither should I be able to take your food? *Dal-roti, bhaji* and *dahibora*".

"By Jove! who is pressing you to go to Delhi?" replied Settji. "I am purchasing a new house here in Alipore. You will stay there near your brother's house. I will spend nine to ten months of the year here. I would like to expand my Calcutta business. And you are quite free to take fish and rice and no *dal* and *roti* business. Don't think that I dislike to eat fish. But after all it has a very bad smell."

"I will make *hilsa-fry* for you with essence of rose you'll see, how it tastes".

Balaka heard from her brother that Settji was a widower. She gave her consent to the marriage without delay. And they got registered after twenty days.

Trikramdas alternated his stay between Bombay and Calcutta. There arose no difficulty in his three-prong conjugal adventure. He began to pass his days with great pleasure. So all on a sudden that day Zulfiqar Khan came to him and broke his peace of mind with that distressing news.

Khajanchand, B.A., LL.B., Pleader, is a trusted and obedient friend of Trikramdas. Trikramdas needs him most when he has to submit his income-tax returns. That evening Settji went straight to Khajanchand's house. He told him of his distress.

"You acted very childishly, Settji", replied Khajanchand. "I know, you trust me. But it is regrettable that you even for once didn't inform me that you were dating with girls in Bombay and Calcutta"

Settji folded his hands and said: "Please excuse me, dear. That I am going to marry again at this old age with a wife still living, is itself disgraceful. How can I tell you this, young friend?"

Khajanchand thought for a while. He then said: "You should not tell Anandibai anything at present. She would be upset, perhaps weep bitterly. You better tell your two other wives the whole story one by one. They are modern girls. Their sense of self-respect is very high. They will sure be flared up. Maybe even refuse to see your face again. In that case, it will go in our favour. If you compensate them handsomely and give your two managers a few coppers, everything will, I tell you be all

Would you please register this house in my name . .

right. Of course, in that case you will have to spend a few more lakhs. But that won't be too much for you".

Trikramdas did not like the idea. He said: "You don't understand, dear Khajan, what my heart desires. I have a mind to expand my business. For that I shall have to hobnob with men of position. Now, if I give any Ministers and big officials a party, who will play the hostess? Anandi? Phew! Rajhansi and Balaka are the women for it. If I am to discard any one well, I will discard Anandi. And may it cause my heart crack or I may have to loose a great fortune. I am ready for it. Again, there is another difficulty. I am in a fix as to whom to keep and whom to discard, between Rajhansi and Balaka. But I like most Balaka Debi of Calcutta. My next choice is Bombaiwallee Rajhansi. Well, do not bother about the amount. I am ready to spend ten to fifteen lakhs, if necessary."

Khajanchand earnestly requested him not to take that extreme course. For, Anandibai was his legally married wife. Her case should be considered first. But in that case he may have to play many deceitful tricks. He will have to give up his claim over her paternal properties at a huge loss. He may also have to take the help of that wicked uncle of Anandi's. But Trikramdas is resolute. He never gives in.

Khajanchand at last said: "Well, I shall try my utmost. You, too, don't waste time and explain the whole story to your three wives. Let us watch how they react. Then I will tell you what is to be done next".

Trikramdas flew to Bombay without wasting time. Straight he went to Rajhansi's house. Rajhansi was at that time gossipping in her drawing room with a well-dressed young man.

"Oh Settji! When did you come?" she said surprised. "You don't know him, perhaps. He is my *phupheya* (a cousin) Mr. Zumkamal Motkani. My distant relative. He is an expert accountant. By the by, the accountant of this office has grown grey in years. Why do you not retire that old man?. Won't you take him in for that post?"

"Well, I would consider it. But, I have a very urgent matter to discuss with you, Rajhansi".

Zumkamal left the room. Trikramdas hesitantly spoke out the story of the wives. But its reaction was quite unexpected. Rajhansi eagerly heard what he said and then burst into giggles:

"Bravo Settji, bravo! You are a jolly chap, I see! So you have two more wives! But what does it matter to me? I won't mind it, rest assured. Everything will be all right. Please see to it, that it may not leak out. Would you please register this house in my name as early as possible? The municipal authorities are harassing me very much".

"Very good", replied Settji. "It will be so arranged as you like. Sorry, I cannot wait now. I am just starting for Calcutta"

Reaching Calcutta Trikramdas went direct to Balaka's residence at Alipore. Balaka was then dancing in her drawing room. A strapping youth was at the piano.

"Well, Settji, you come all on a sudden. Is it not surprising!" Balaka spoke out: "Perhaps you do not know him. He is Lotankumar Bhore, a distant cousin of mine. He is a proficient dancer. I am now taking lessons from him in pigeon dance. Do you like to witness it for a while?"

"Sorry, I have no time just now", replied Trikramdas. "Balaka, I have an urgent talk with you".

When Lotankumar left the room, Trikramdas told Balaka the story of his three marriages with a heart palpitating.

"Good gracious! Is it so?" Balaka touched her cheek with a finger and said lightheartedly: "Oh Settji, you are a real cormorant, fishing under water. You are indeed a lady's man. But why are you so depressed? What harm, if you have three wives? It is all right. I am not a jealous girl. But, please, don't make a row of it.....Now, Settji, I want a new model car. My old Austin often goes out of order. Would you please draw a cheque of rupees twenty thousand at least? I can't buy a good one at a lower price"

"Sure, I will do, as you like", said Trikramdas. "I am going out. I am now leaving for Delhi".

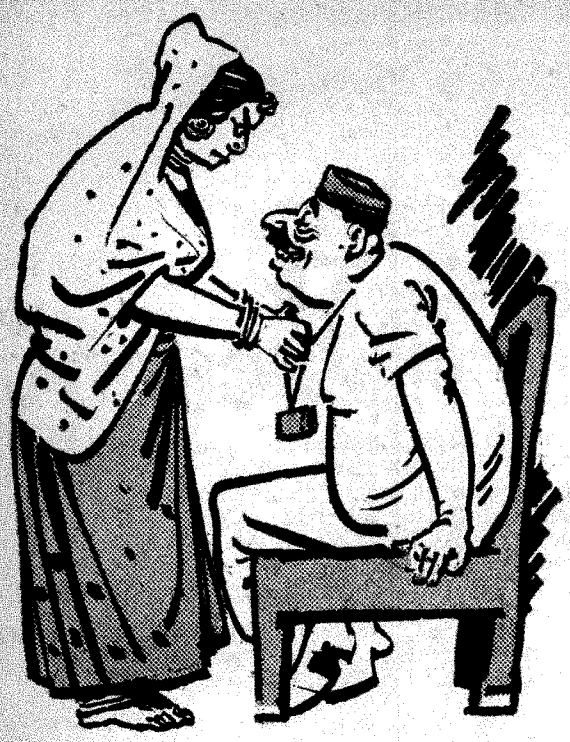
Trikramdas returned to Delhi and reported everything to Khajanchand in details. He then took Khajanchand to his drawing room and requested him to wait.

Trikramdas went direct to the inner parlour of his house and called Anandibai to his bed chamber.

"Well, no trace of you for the last three days? You have been much reduced also", Anandi asked in anxiety. "What ails you? Is there any further trouble with the Government?"

Trikramdas hung down his head and then was slowly out with his secret.

Anandibai was stunned for a moment.



She fastened it to her husband's neck.

She placed her hands on her waist and then darted an angry glance at Settji. "What do you say ?"

Settji got frightened. "Be quiet, Anandi, quiet please. Everything will be allright", he said appeasingly.

They say Bengali is rich in literature but it is not as rich in the vocabulary of abuses as Hindi. Anandibai began to bound about in fury throwing her hands and feet in the air. At the same time she started scolding her husband with the choicest abuses in her language. They poured out of her mouth like the stream from a hose-pipe. Anandibai was blind with her rage. She lost her equilibrium. Seeing her passion gradually rise Settji folded his hands in avowed supplication and said again : "Please excuse me. Anandi. Everything will be okay. !"

"Shut up, you a street dog, a musk-rat of the drain pipe," thundered Anandibai. She sprang upon Settji like a fierce tigress and scratched his two cheeks with her nails. She retreated a few steps. She then took a bunch of heavy gold bangles ten in number—out from her left hand and threw them aiming at her husband's head. Blood trickled out of his forehead. He cried in agony and fell on the floor. Anandibai, too, crying louder retired to her own Puja hall. There she lay down on the floor and began to sob bitterly ! There was a hue and cry in the whole house. Relatives rushed there to console Anandibai. And Khajanchand went out to fetch a doctor for Trikramdas.

Seven days passed. Trikramdas got round a good deal. He was sitting in an easy chair on the balcony of first floor and was smoking a hubble-bubble. His head was in a bandage and his face was plastered here and there.

Khajanchand came to him and inquired about his health : "How do you feel now, Settji ?"

"Better", Settji replied. "Look here, dear Khajan ! I don't like to prolong my connection neither with Rajhansi nor Balaka. You better start immediately for Bombay and Calcutta and settle the matter amicably. I will pay the cost. Those two girls of Bombay and Calcutta only want my money and not me. But Anandi wants me. Well, do you get the smell of a delicious dish ? It is the chow-chow Anandi is now preparing for me. Look at this comforter also. She has knitted the woolen scarf for me."

"Good news, indeed" Khajanchand said : "Settji, don't worry, please. I will settle everything Meanwhile please go on a pilgrimage with Anandibai and visit holy places like Mathura, Brindaban, and Dwarka. She will then recoup her high spirits."

Thanks to the good nursing of his wife, Trikramdas soon recovered. Through the good offices of Khajanchand also he settled amicably with Rajhansi and Balaka. Zulfiquar Khan, too, was appeased. Moreover, Anandibai purchased a thousand-rupee worth talisman from Calcutta's biggest astrologer - monarch, Jyotishchandra Jyotisharnava. She fastened it to her husband's neck. Marvellous is the effect of that charmed talisman. For, Settji keeps telling his bosom friends that in her service to her husband Anandi surpasses all women. That is to say, all but Anandi are ugly women.

Translated from the original Bengali by Gouri Sen

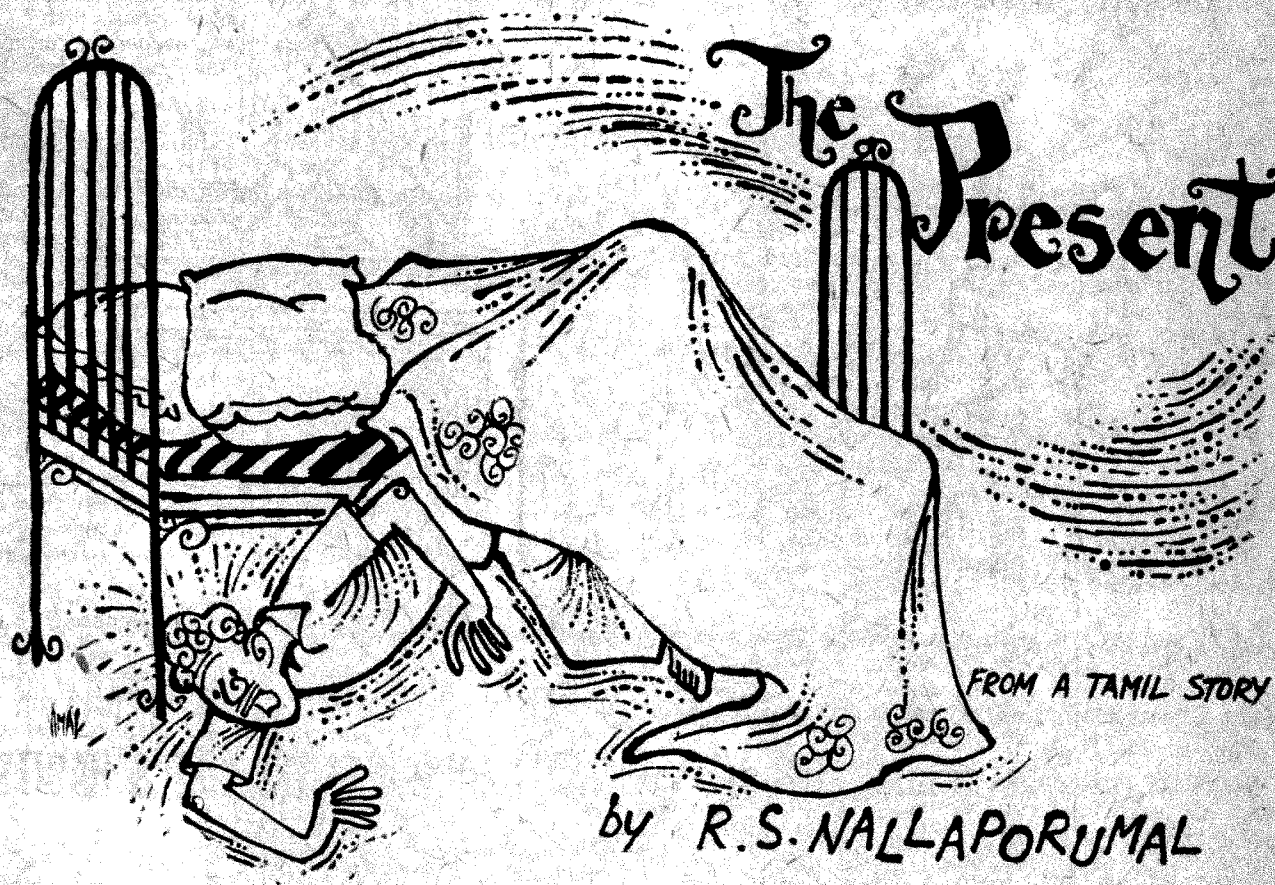
THE CROCODILE, ITS LIFE & HABITS

(Continued from page 137)

he was dead, had deposited him in his under-water cave. His comrades who had witnessed the attack, now followed the crocodile as soon as it reappeared. This fisherman appears to have had extra-ordinary luck. Not only did the crocodile deposit him in this larder and depart, but the cave appeared to have a few feet of bathing space above the surface of the water. No sooner did the fisherman recover, than he started shouting for help and his comrades hearing his cries, soon located the spot and digging down into the cave, rescued him. Unfortunately the man did not survive. Shock, loss of blood and gangerene, contracted on the long jurney to Hospital, brought about his death a few weeks after his rescue.

The fishermen have a theory that if attacked and seized by a crocodile, an infallible method of escaping from its jaws is to dig the fingers into its eyes. The pain not only blinds it temporarily but causes it to open its jaws, thus giving its victim an opportunity to escape.

I have heard people sarcastically refer to crocodile tears. Strange as it may sound there is a basis of truth in this term. The crocodile does actually shed tears when seizing its victim. The tear glands of the crocodile are so situated that when attempting to seize an animal far beyond its capacity to hold it is forced to distend its jaws to their utmost capacity. This brings considerable pressure on the tear glands, so that the liquid literally gushes out. Hence the sarcasm, "crocodile tears" — false sympathy.



VELU who was lying on a cosy cushioned bed in a beautiful cot, did not get sleep. He was restless. He had not purchased that cot and that cushion. They were presents given to him by a big merchant for the help he had rendered him. But there was anxiety in his heart. Was it a present or a bribe? He was in the region of doubts. Would a bribe become a present? Yet his was a hard-boiled heart! He did not funk. His heart did not fear.

All on a sudden, the messengers of **Yama** came round his bed! They carried Velu away!

"Where are you taking me to?," asked Velu.

"To hell," replied one of the **Yama's** messengers.

"Alas, what wrong have I committed?"

"We do not know anything. The order is to consign you to hell".

"Don't you know that you should not punish a man without proving his guilt?," shouted Velu much exasperated.

"We do not know all these. You just come without creating a scene," snapped a messenger.

"I will file a writ in your court and I will successfully try conclusions with you," so saying Velu followed them.

On the third day after his arrival in hell, a great crowd milled around the Court of **Indra.** Even **Ramba** and **Urvasi** had come to enjoy the **tamasha.** Velu was his own advocate. Manu appeared for the celestial government. (Manu was the codifier of Hindu Law.)

"What is your case?," asked **Indra.**

Velu spoke: "They have put me in hell without any justification. Verily they should have sent me to Heaven. Not only am I a great lawyer in the human world but also a renowned politician. I am a representative of the people who voted for me in lakhs. To put me in hell is not only against the law but it is against **Dharma** as well."

"What do you say for this?," asked **Indra,** pointing toward Manu.

Manu said: "My Lord, he has committed many sins. Firstly he is a rich man....."

"But in this celestial world, too, they enjoy themselves like anything, they enjoy much more than the rich men of Earth," averred Velu.

Indra intervened: "Order, Order, you should not snap in and shout. Let Manu proceed."

Manu continued his brief:

"My Lord he has committed breach of faith. He has an oily hand. He is a toddy bibber. He has deserted his love....."

"Stop. I deny all your accusations," shouted Velu.

"How do you deny?" asked Manu.

"All these may appear as sins to you. But I performed all these as public good."

"Did you not cheat your friend Subbier? Was it not a breach of faith? Was it not a guilt?" asked Manu

"Who is that Subbier?" asked **Indra.**

"My Lord, this petitioner and Subbier were friends. This man desired to stand for the election. He had no money, however. He was just leading a **hand-to-mouth** existence, was hard put to it to keep

the wolves away from his door and had not even the deposit money on him. Under these crucial circumstances, Subbier came forward, of his own accord, to throw succour to this man. Only because of his help, this man came out victorious in the election. To that Subbier, he proved ungrateful....."

Velu intervened:

"Subbier helped me. I did not forget his help. I was grateful to him. I too helped him in turn. The help I rendered him is interpreted by Manu as a betrayal."

"What was his act of ill-faith ?" asked Indra.

" Subbier conducted a business. He took him as a partner. Not even a paisa did this man put in it as capital. Subbier took him as his partner only with a view to giving him a helping hand. But in a year not only did this man make him lose and lose heavily but made himself its sole proprietor, deceiving him in the process" said Manu.

The wrath of Indra now knew no bounds. He looked daggers at Velu but Velu did not get cold feet.

"Lord, I did that, only having Subbier's good at heart. I did that because I thought that Subbier should not fall into the abysmal sin of forgetting the Almighty by amassing fabulous wealth. There is no selfishness involved in this act of mine, Therefore there is no guilt," reiterated Velu.

Indra's face brightened: He saw eye to eye with the view-point expressed by Velu.

"My Lord, he is a politician who has purchased a car within five years of his election. Before the election, he found it hard to have even a single meal. In five years, he has come to own a car. He has feathered his own nest!" said Manu.

"Hold on. It unmistakably proves my ability if I, who was foodless, have purchased a car in five years," said Velu.

"Yes, Yes, I congratulate you on your ability," said Indra. Manu was put out.

"My Lord, he got that car as a bribe," said Manu.

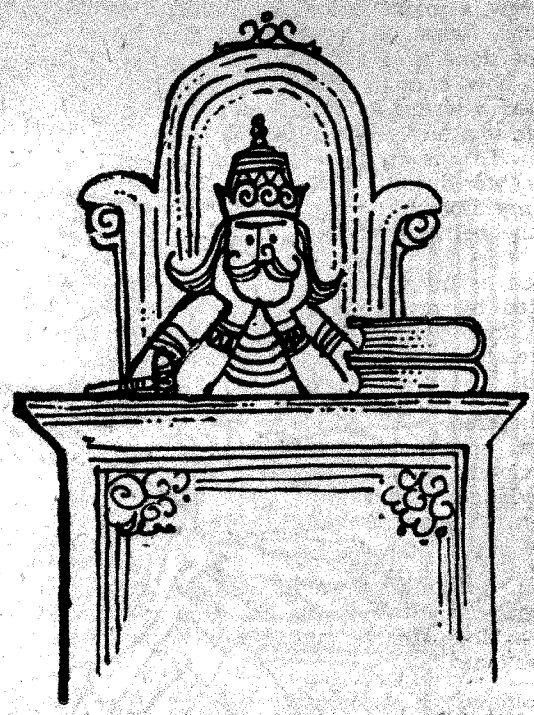
Indra, thoroughly irked, bounded out of his seat.

"A bribe? A politician getting a bribe?"

Indra roared and threw out angry glances at Velu.

"Manu considers a present as a bribe. I did not, of my own accord, demand anything. As enjoined by Lord Krishna, I have been doing everything without

How do you deny ?



caring for **quid pro quo** and **sans** attachment and **sans** hatred. A merchant wanted a licence. I helped him to get it. In gratitude, he gave me this present. Can you equate a present with a bribe?" asked Velu.

"No, No," said Indra.

"He conspired to throw out his political leader to install himself in the **gadi** of leadership" said Manu.

"Who is there, my Lord, who does not hanker after position ? I have filed this writ because I yearn for the blessings of position in heaven! Even on the earth people go on telling the story of the efforts made by you, my Lord, to attain your present position !" said Velu.

Indra's face fell. His figure perspired. He hung down his head. Silence prevailed. Manu disturbed this:

"He drinks. It is an egregious sin," said Manu.

"What nectar and ambrosia are in this celestial world, toddy is on Earth. Devas forget themselves by taking ambrosia. To forget myself I took to toddy. Is this a guilt, deserving the punishment of hell," blurted out Velu.

"Do you deny cheating many without returning the loans you took from them?." said Manu.

"I borrowed money from many people. That is a fact. But how did I spend that money ? Did I spend it on me and for my sake ? My lord, how did the Saint Manickavasagar spend the wealth of the King Pandian ? How did Ramdas spend the money of the Nabob ? On temples. The temple is a treasure-house of art. I, too, spent the borrowed money on art. Drama is an art. The dance of Lord Nataraja of Chidambaram is a drama! I started a drama company with the borrowed money. The Company failed. The fault is not therefore, mine ! I have, in effect, earned blessings for those from whom I had borrowed" said Velu.

"Blessings ?", asked Indra.

"Yes, Yes, I dedicated their wealth to art. Because I spent their money on art, the blessings should go to them."

"Yes, Yes," chimed in Indra.

"Is it not a guilt to jilt the girl you loved ?" asked Manu, infuriated.

Velu threw a majestic look at Indra.

"My Lord, what is a wrong? That which should not be done in a society, if it is done, is a wrong. But how can an occurrence that happens daily be called a wrong? That I loved a classmate in my College is a fact. But a College love vanishes in a second! This is an aspect of modernity. It is a law of the world too. Will a law of the world be a guilt, my Lord?"

"Is not the betrayal of love a guilt?" asked Indra.

"My Lord, is my crime more heinous than the one committed by my Lord by going after a girl who did not love you at all, thereby making her husband mete out the severest punishment to her?" pleaded Velu.

Indra shivered. Ahalya, who was witnessing this tamasha, ensconcing herself at a place with ladies, just slowly left the assembly without anybody's knowledge. Indra was just sitting, just looking down. Silence prevailed. Manu continued his speech:

"Did you not marry another girl, throwing over your first wife within a year of your marriage? Was it not a sin? In her anguish, that girl had committed suicide!"

"I just offered an opportunity to a soul on the earth to go to the celestial world soon without living long carrying the burden of sins. Would that soul have obtained release from the worldly attachments had I not taken as my wife another girl? In every act of mine, therefore there will be a good enshrined".

"You are a confirmed womanizer", cried Manu.

"How can I be considered a criminal, my friend, how can I be considered a criminal when Rambhas and Urvasis are having their days on the earth! Why prohibition for me when Arjuna is in heaven?" asked Velu indifferently. Urvasi and Rambha who had been enjoying the fun going on there in the Assembly, just disappeared now from their seats. Even Arjuna who was there just noiselessly escaped.

"My Lord, he is an advocate on the earth. He can easily make the best out of bad bargain and turn everything to his good. His tongue can make a hell of heaven and a heaven of hell. You should not believe him at all. He is an arrant knave who was, by the deterous gift of his tongue, instrumental in saving a murderer from the jaws of punishment. His only place is in hell and hell alone," asserted Manu.

Velu looked at Indra.

"My Lord, who is to give punishment to a man for his commission of a wrong?", asked Velu.

"God", said Indra.

"When it is so, what right has a man to punish a murderer? I pleaded for the release of the murderer, because God alone should punish a man and also because the earthly judge should not commit sin by sentencing a man to punishment," said Velu.

"You gambled. Do you deny even this?" asked Manu.

"I do not deny, my friend, I do not deny. Yudhisthira of the Pandavas gambled. But now he is in heaven? Then is it a crime for me to gamble?"

"Yudhisthira has experienced the rigours of punishment for his gambling on the earth itself!"

"I too gambled, and I lost by thousands. Is not this loss a sufficient punishment for me? Injustice, my Lord, atrocious injustice! I have proved all the accusations of Manu false! I should be in

How can I be considered a criminal .....

heaven. I imagine that I will not appear a criminal to my Lord's mind", said Velu.

Indra sat bolt upright and spoke:

"Because Velu has proved himself not guilty by denying all the accusations levelled by Manu against him, and also with a view to safeguarding the interests of those who are in hell, I order that Velu need no more be in hell," so Indra delivered the judgment and quickly went away.

Now nothing but confusion ensued. Everyone had his own comment to make on the judgment. Velu who now extricated himself from the clutches of the messengers of Yama hastened towards Heaven; When he neared Heaven, however, a watchman stopped him!

"I am Velu. Allow me to enter. That is the order of Indra", said he.

"The order is that you need not be in hell. It is not for permitting you into Heaven", said the Watchman.

Stumped, Velu found himself in a quandary!

"Indra has outwitted me. All those in Heaven are traitors. Good men like me have no place in it? Where can I go now?" cried Velu.

"You may go anywhere you like," said the watchman and pushed him out. Velu was now fast coming down to the earth, head down and legs up.

"Alas, Alas, is there no one to create a heaven for me as it was created for Trisanku" cried Velu. In a second his head touched the ground.

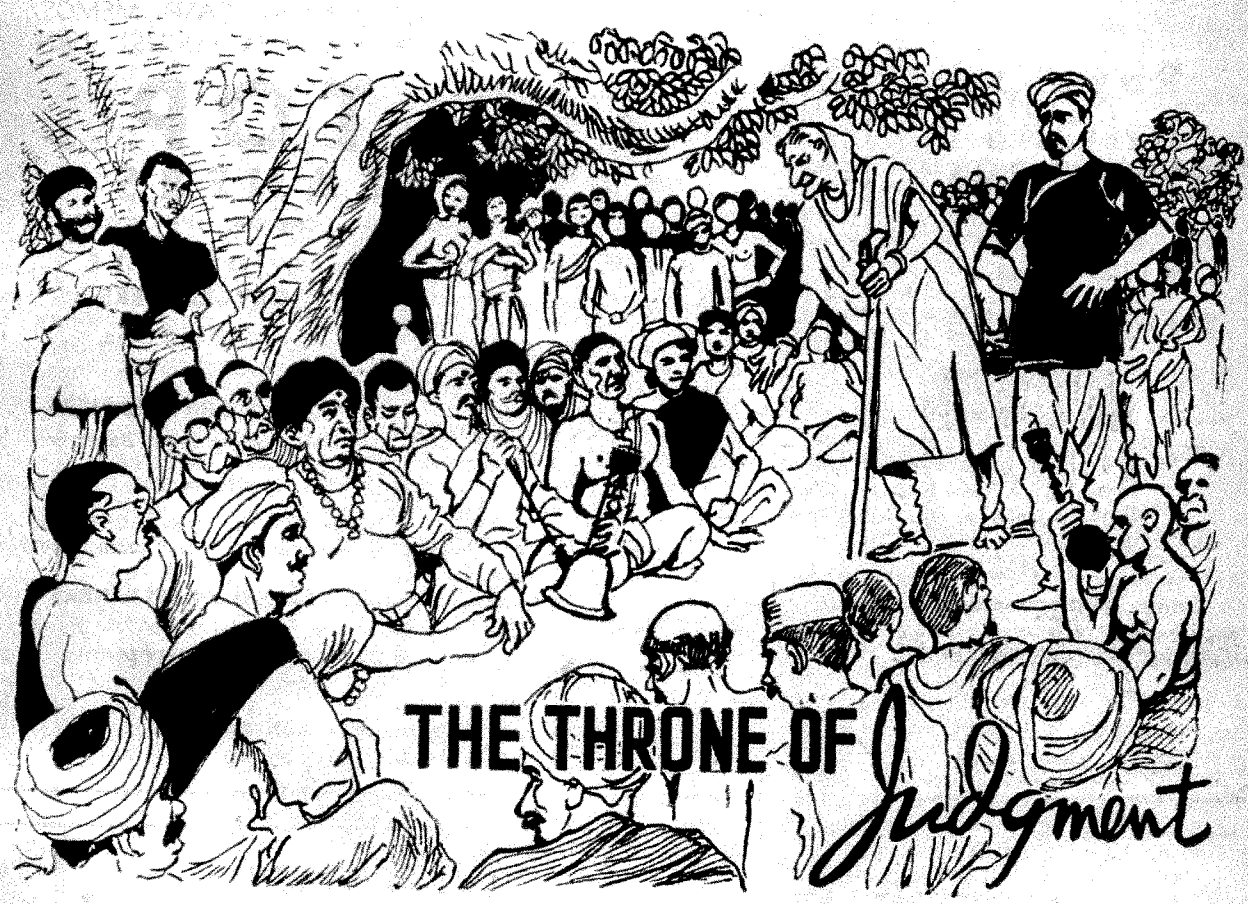
"Alas, I am dead!" cried he.

"Nothing is dead," said Velu's wife. "You do not listen to my word if I tell you that you should not sleep on this spring cot! It will happen only like this if you have it because someone has given it to you *gratis*."

Velu had fallen on the ground from the cot. He opened his eyes, very widely, and saw. Yes, it was a Earth!

"Hey! this spring cot throws out the man. I should return it to the man who gave it and ask him to give me some other thing instead," slowly murmured that politician, scratching his head with his fingers.

—*Translated by S. T. Kasirajan*



THE THRONE OF Judgment

A Hindi Story

By PREMCHAND

JUMMAN Shekh and Algu Chaudhury were close friends. They carried on farming in partnership. They were, also, partners in money-lending. They had full faith in each other. When Jumman set out on Hajj, he entrusted the welfare of his family to Algu's care, and whenever Algu had an occasion to go out, he would rely on Jumman for safe conduct of his house-hold affairs. They had no inhibitions in the matters of eating at each other's place—a question they kept outside the purview of religion. Their friendship was founded on reason. That undoubtedly, is the quintessence of friendship.

The origin of this friendship could be traced back to the days, when the two associates were mere boys and Jumman's revered father Jumrati imparted them education. Ungrudging and unstinted service to the teacher redounded to Algu's credit. He spared no pains to wash the teacher's plates, dishes and cups. His pipe (hukkah) was not allowed to have even a moment's respite, for every adjustment of the pipe offered Algu had an opportunity to be away from his books for, at least, half an hour. Algu's father was a man of old ideas. He set more store by the loving care bestowed on the teacher than the education imparted by him. He held that learning was not to be acquired only through efforts; it was, in fact, the teacher's blessings that bore fruit. His benedictions were more than enough. Even if Jumrati's benedictions and supervision proved unavailing to Algu, he would rest content that he had left no stone unturned to have his son properly educated. There was no learning in his lot; how could he have it?

But Jumrati Shekh, himself did not subscribe to the view of teacher's blessings. He relied more on his rod and it was the self-sense rod that accounted for the veneration for Jumman among the people in the neighbouring villages. A sale-deed, drafted by him, could not be challenged even by a clerk of a judicial court. The postman, the constable and the peon of the Revenue Department of that circle—all sought his favour. So, if Algu was in a position to command respect on account of his wealth, Jumman was equally respected for his unvalued learning.

Jumman Shekh had an old aunt (mother's sister). She had a small property, but none of her close relations. She bequeathed it to Jumman, hoodwinked by his high-sounding promises. So long as the will was not registered the old aunt found herself rolling in comfort. She was given delicious food to eat. All sorts of dainties were, virtually, showered upon her; but the very seal of registry sealed up all hospitality. Jumman's wife

Kariman began to offer her a sauce of pungent remarks in addition to bread every day. Jumman's heart, too, was hardened. Now the poor old lady had to bear such words almost regularly.

"How long will this hag live? She seems to have bound us hand and foot only for a patch of uncultivable land," Kariman would say, "she does not relish bread without dal. A big landed property would have been, by now, bought for the money that has been literally wasted on her."

The old aunt heard it and put up with it for some time, but when it was past endurance, she made a complaint to Jumman about it. He did not deem it proper to interfere in the management of the Local Self-Government—The Housewife. She dragged on her miserable existence for some time more. At length, the aunt, one day, said to Jumman, "My son, it is not possible for me to pull on with you. Let me have my pittance in cash. I shall manage to cook for myself apart."

Jumman replied brazen-facedly, "Do rupees grow on branches of trees?" The aunt put in meekly, "Should I not have even a meagre subsistence?" Jumman, then replied in a serious tone, "Who knew that you came down after a quarrel with death?"

The aunt flew into a rage and threatened to have recourse to Panchayati arbitration. Jumman laughed, just as a hunter does, when he finds his game proceeding towards his net. He said, "Yes, to be sure, you should go in for arbitration. Let the thing be decided once for all. I, too, do not like this constant trouble."

Jumman had not even the least shade of doubt as to who was going to profit by arbitration. There was no one in the neighbouring villages who was not indebted to him for his experiences. Who was there so rash as to antagonise him? Who was strong enough to grapple with him? Surely angels from heaven would not descend as members of the Panchayat.

The old aunt went about in the villages, propping herself up with a stick in her hand. She was double with age. It was difficult for her to move even a single step: but the problem was there. It had to be solved.

There was hardly any one to whom she did not relate her sad story. Some served her with lip-sympathy, only to get rid of her immediately and some cursed the order of the day for that injustice. Some said, "You have one of your feet already in the grave. You may die any moment, but your desire knows no restraint. What should you have now? Just have your meal to keep body and soul together and be absorbed in meditation What have you got to do with farming at this stage?" There were yet some who found a good occasion to indulge in pleasantries. There were very few really kind-hearted and justice-loving people, ready to champion the cause of the poor, and to pay any heed to the words of the afflicted lady or to console her. Algu Chaudhury was the last man to whom she came. She dropped her stick down and after some amount of gasping and hard breathing, spoke out, "My son, please, come to attend the Panchayat for a while."

Algu — What will you gain by calling me when so many people from different villages are coming?

Aunt — I have acquainted all with my sorrowful tale. Now, it is up to them to come or not to come.

Algu — I shall come, if you so like, but I won't utter a word.

Aunt — Why so, my son?

Algu — It is a question to which I have no reply to make. I wish it to be so. Jumman is my old friend. I cannot alienate him.

Aunt — My son, will you not speak out the truth for fear of estrangement?

Even the entire wealth of the dormant sense of ethics may be lost but a challenge makes it alert. None can, then, vanquish it. Algu could not answer her question, but these words kept on ringing in his ears—"Will you not speak out the truth for fear of estrangement?"

One evening the intended arbitration started under a tree. Shekh Jumman had already carpets spread out. He had made arrangements for betel-leaves, smoking and the like. Yes, he himself, along with Algu Chaudhury, sat a bit apart from others.

"Do rupees grow on branches of trees?"

Whenever anyone came to join the Panchayati judgement he would receive him with a low bow. The sun had already set and a noisy discussion among the birds on the trees started. Now, on the ground, too, the business began. Every inch of the selected site was occupied, but the bulk were mere spectators. Of those invited, only such men had thought it worthwhile to come as were, in any way, at loggerheads with Jumman. Fire was burning in a corner. A barber went on adjusting clay pipes. It was difficult to ascertain whether more smoke issued from the cowdung-cakes, burning or from the tobacco-pots. Children were running hither and thither. Some were abusing one another and some were weeping.

There was din and bustle everywhere. Thinking this assemblage to be a programme for a feast, the dogs in the village were gathering fast.

After the Panchayati arbitrators had taken their seats the old aunt addressed herself to them with all humility, "Gentlemen, three years back, I bequeathed my property to my nephew, Jumman. You must be aware of it. Jumman undertook to provide me food and clothes till death. I spent a year with him so painfully; but this constant misery is past endurance. I get neither food to eat nor clothes to wear. I am a helpless widow. I am not in a position to go to the law-courts. There is none but you whom I should approach with my pitiful tale. Please, show me the way I should follow. If you find any fault with me, let me be subjected to slapping. If Jumman is to blame, let him see reason. Why should he be guilty of such an inhuman conduct. The words of the mediators will be divine law to me."

Ramdhan Mishra, a number of whose tenants had been persuaded by Jumman to settle in his village, said, "Whom do you name as the arbitrators? Let it be decided here and now. Whatever the arbitrators say will be binding on the parties concerned."

At the moment, Jumman spotted out mostly those in the assemblage, who were not on good terms with him for some reason or other. He spoke out, "The order of the arbitrators is an injunction of God. Let aunt select any one she thinks fit. I have no objection." The aunt cried out, "O creature of God, why don't you propose the names of the arbitrators. Let me, too, have an idea."

Jumman spoke out angrily, "Now don't force me to speak. You have gained the vantage point. You may choose any one you like."

The aunt, at once, understood Jumman's hint and said, "Son, fear God. The arbitrators are neither anyone's friends nor foes. Why say so? If you do not have faith in any one else, it matters little? Do you accept Algu Chaudhury? Have it as you will. I nominate him as the chief Panch."

Jumman Shekh was, now, beside himself with joy, but suppressing his feelings, he said, "Let it be Algu, as you say. As for me, there is no difference between Ramdhan and Algu."

Algu did not like to be involved in this trouble. He tried to forge a way out. He said, "Aunt, you know there is a great intimacy between Jumman and me."

The aunt spoke out in a serious tone, "My son, nobody barters away his soul for friendship. God is enshrined in the heart of a Panch. The words that drop from his lips are prompted by God Himself."

Algu Chaudhury, now, became the chief arbitrator. Ramdhan Mishra and other adversaries of Jumman cursed the old woman much inwardly. Algu said, "Shekh Jumman, you and I are old friends. You have always stood by me in my need. I, too, have been trying to serve you in my humble way; but at this time you and your aunt are equal in my eye. If you have to say anything to the Panchayat, do that."

Jumman fully believed that he had, now, gained the upper hand. Algu was only making a show by talking in that way. He, therefore, submitted calmly, "Aunt bequeathed her property to me three years ago. I was bound to supply her with food and clothes till death. I swear by God that I have, in no way, put her to trouble till to-day. I regard her as my mother. I am duty-bound to take care of her, but there is some difference of opinion between her and my wife. Am I not helpless in this? Aunt demands monthly expenses by way of partition. The arbitrators, very well, know the extent of the property. Its yields are not enough to allow me to offer her monthly subsistence in cash. Besides, there is no mention of monthly expenses in the will, otherwise I would keep aloof from this trouble. Now it is upto the arbitrators to make any decision they like."

Algu Chaudhury had been in constant touch with law-courts. He was, therefore, fully aware of legal points. He began to cross-examine Jumman. Every question put by him lacerated Jumman's heart. Ramdhan Mishra was greatly attracted by these questions. Jumman wondered what had happened to Algu! Only a while before, he was sitting with him talking in quite a different fashion. In a split moment, he was so changed! Who knew what old scores he was paying off? Was their friendship of such a long standing not going to avail him in any way?"

Jumman was absorbed in a reasoning like this, when Algu pronounced the judgement: Jumman Shekh, the arbitrators have given this case a serious thought. They have deemed it right that the aunt should be given monthly expenses. We are of the opinion that the yields of her property justify a monthly amount. This is our decision. If Jumman does not see his way to accepting it, the bequeathal should be deemed null and void."

The moment Jumman heard this pronouncement, he was speechless. What should he think it to be, but an evil augury of days ahead, when his own bosom friend acts like an enemy and does not stick at cutting his throat even? He, whom he reckoned upon unreservedly, deceived him like that. It is on occasions like these that friends are tested. This is how friendship operates during these modern days of absolute enlightenment. If people were not so debased, why should the country be visited with calamities. Cholera, plague and such other fatal diseases are only punishments for sinful acts.

But Ramdhan Mishra and other arbitrators were praising Algu Chaudhury from the very core of their hearts. They said, "This is arbitration, indeed! The whole thing has, now, been rendered as clear as crystal and as smooth as glass. Friendship cannot form an impediment to duty. It is only such souls of rare veracity as sustain the earth or it would have long been annihilated."

This judgement shook the friendship between Algu and Jumman to the very foundation. They were, no more, found talking to each other. Such an old tree of friendship could not withstand even a single gust of truth. To be sure, it grew on sandy ground. There was, now, much of ceremoniousness between them. They began to be more pretentious

to one another. They met one another as usual, but just in the same manner as a sword meets a shield.

His friend's crookedness always caused heart-ache to Jumman. He was always anxious as to how he should have a chance to avenge himself on him. One has to wait long for achieving something good, but it is not so in case of evil things. Jumman got an opportunity to retaliate very early. Algu Chaudhury had, the year before, bought a fine pair of oxen from Batesar. The bullocks were of western breed, with long horns. For months together people from the neighbouring villages kept pouring in to have a look at them. As luck would have it, just a month after Jumman's fateful arbitration, one of this pair died. Jumman told his friends, "This is punishment for faithlessness. Man may have the patience to endure, but God sees through the motive, good or bad." Algu suspected that Jumman had got the animal poisoned. Algu's wife, too, charged Jumman with the responsibility for the mishap. She said, "It is all Jumman's doing." Chaudhury's wife and Kariman had, one day, wordy warfare on this subject. Both the shrews caused a river of words to flow. Metaphors, similes and other figures of speech were freely used. Jumman restored peace some how or other. He scolded his wife into reason. He, also, dragged her away from the cock-pit. On the other hand, Algu Chaudhury employed his argumentative club to do the job.

Now the single ox was of no use. In spite of the most careful search, no match for it was available. It was ultimately decided to sell it. There was one Samajhu Sahu in that village. He used a cart to which he yoked a single ox. He carried a load of gur and ghee to market and brought oil, salt and the like therefrom to be sold at the village. He was greatly attracted to this ox. He thought if he could but have it, he would make three trips a day easily. He could hardly have one a day till then. He eyed the animal, tested it by yoking it to a cart, got it physically examined by experts, and had its price fixed. Then he brought it home. The price was promised to be paid in a month. The Chaudhury, too, was hard-pressed. He little cared for the loss.

After Samajhu Sahu had had this bullock, he started subjecting it to overwork. He would complete three trips a day; at times even four. He would not care for feeding it. He was concerned only with his trips. On reaching the market, he would place some dry chaff before it. Hardly did the poor creature have any rest, when he would, again, yoke it. While with Algu, it had had a merry life. It was seldom put to the yoke. It would be, then, very frolicsome and cover miles at a stretch, running. There the ox would get clear water, pulse, chaff and oil-cake for its food every day. Besides, it would have, from time to time, even ghee to taste. Every morning and evening it would be well groomed. On the one hand there was that life of joy and comfort; on the other, this twentyfour hours' drudgery. Hardly had a month passed when the ox was literally crushed. It shuddered at the very sight of the yoke. Now it was difficult for it to move even a single step. It was reduced to skin and bones, but being of a fine metal, it could not endure whipping.

One day, the merchant put double load in the cart in the fourth trip. Being very weary on account of the day's hard labour, the animal, now, found it difficult even to move. But the cruel master began to use the whip freely. The ox, therefore, had no option but to move at the very cost of life. It ran a while to cover some distance and then had a mind to have some rest, but the merchant wanted to reach home in no time. So he whipped the ox a number of times relentlessly. The animal, once more, tried to pull, but there was no strength left. It fell down to the ground, never to rise again. The man beat it mercilessly pulled it up by the legs, but can a lifeless body rise up? Then the merchant felt, a little bit, anxious. He examined the animal carefully, untied it and separated it from the vehicle and now began to think how to pull the cart back home. He cried himself hoarse for some one to come and help him, but the traffic in the country-side closes like the eyes of a child with the setting of the sun. Not a soul was within sight. There was no village nearabout. Out of anger, he beat the ox once more and began to curse it saying, "O wretch, if you had to die at all, you had better do it on reaching home. This father-in-law of mine is dead on the way. Now who will pull the cart?" The merchant was, in a fury. He had sold several bags of gur and some tins of ghee. He had about two hundred rupees hard cash tied round his waist. Besides, there were some bags of salt, lying in the cart; so he could not go away, leaving it unguarded. He had, therefore, no other alternative than to lie down on the bags in the cart. He decided to sit out the night there. He smoked and sang alternately to divert himself. The merchant, in this way, tried to ward off sleep till the dead of night. He thought that he had been up all the night, but just before sunrise, when he broke his sleep and placed his hand on the waist for the money, he found the purse vanished. In this very confusion, when he looked around, he found some tins, too gone. His grief knew no bounds. At dawn, he reached home, weeping bitterly. When his wife heard this sad news, she first wailed and then began to curse and call Algu Chaudhury names saying that the villain had given them such an ill-omened ox that all the earnings of their life-time were lost.

This mishap took place months ago. Whenever Algu Chaudhury demanded the price of the ox, Samajhu Sahu and his wife would fall upon him like infuriated dogs and start raving, "What a fun! We have been robbed of all our life's earnings. We are undone. Yet you think only of the price. You gave us a dead ox, but now you demand the price. You deceived us outright and befooled us by selling that ill-omened ox to us. Do you think us to be down-right fools? We belong to the business community. Try to find out such fools elsewhere. Go and wash yourself in a dirty pond, before receiving the price. If you are so impatient, take away our own ox instead, use it for two months instead of one. What more do you expect to have from us?"

Those who did not wish well of the Chaudhury were so many. On such occasions, therefore, they would assemble and support the ravings of the merchant. But to lose one hundred and fifty rupees in that way was not easy. Once he too, flared up. The infuriated merchant went about searching for a lathi. In the meanwhile, the fair sex, too, took the field. From words they were about to come to blows. The merchant's wife ran into the house and banged the door. Hearing the uproar, good people in the village came up. They expostulated with the two. They persuaded the merchant to come out of the house. They advised them that it would be bad for them, if they went on like that. They should have a Panchayati arbitration and accept its decisions. The merchant was agreeable. Algu, too, gave his consent.

Preparations began to be made for the impending arbitration. Both the sides set about strengthening themselves. On the third day after

this, the arbitrating assembly held its session under that very tree. It was the same time of evening. Some distance away in the field, a community of crows met in a parliament of fowls. The subject debated was the ownership of peas—do crows have any claims on peas? They were determined to agitate till the question was solved.

A flight of parrots in the trees about were very keen on solving the question as to what right human beings have got to call them ungrateful, when they themselves do not hesitate to cheat their friends.

When the members of the panchayat were properly seated, Ramdhan Mishra said, "Why make delay? Let the arbitrators be chosen. Chaudhury, speak out the names of the persons whom you like to arbitrate."

Algu submitted in a mild tone, "Let this be done by Samajhu Sahu." Samajhu rose up and lashed out, "Jumman Shekh on my behalf."

No sooner had Algu heard Jumman's name than the beating of his heart grew abnormal, as if some one had slapped him abruptly. Ramdhan was Algu's friend. He realized the whole thing at once. He asked the Chaudhury if he had any objection, but he said that he had none.

The realization of our sacred duty and responsibility most often sanctifies our attitude and the resultant behaviour. After deviation from the right path, when we start going about groping for it, this very realization acts as our guiding star.

The moment, Jumman Shekh occupied the exalted position of the chief arbitrator, he realized his great responsibility. He felt that he, at the moment, occupied the highest position of duty and righteousness. Whatever dropped from his lips then, would have the sanctity of divine utterances which must be totally free from his mental blemishes. He would not budge an inch from the truth.

The arbitrators now began to interrogate the two parties. Both went on reiterating and trying to substantiate their own claims for long. There were no two opinions as regards the payment of the price of the dead ox by Samajhu. But two gentlemen pleaded for the leniency to him, for the death of the animal had caused him trouble and loss; whereas two others wanted Samajhu to be punished in addition to his paying the price, so that it might serve as a deterrant to others as regards cruelty to animals. At last Jumman pronounced judgement, saying, "Algu Chaudhury and Samajhu Sahu, the arbitrators have made sifting enquiry into your case. It is Samajhu's duty to pay the price of the dead ox. When he took the animal it was free from any kind of disease. Had the price been paid at that very time, Samajhu could now lay no claim to getting it back. The ox died because it was subjected to unjustifiably hard labour and poor feeding".

Ramdhan Mishra said, "Samajhu had killed the bullock not unwittingly. A fine should, therefore, be exacted from him".

Jumman said, "That is quite a different question. It does not come within our pruview". Jhagru Sahu said, "Some leniency should be shown to Samajhu". Jumman finally said, "That depends upon the sweet will of Algu Chaudhury. If he is lenient he desrves thanks for his nobility and magnanimity."

Algu Chaudhury was, now, beside himself with joy. He rose up and shouted out, "Victory to the panch the god like."

This sound was reechoed from all sides.

Everyone present eulogised Jumman's policy. It was justice indeed. It was something beyond human comprehension. God is enshrined in the hearts of arbitrators and prompts them to deliver nothing but the right and just.

A little later, Jumman came to Algu and embracing him, said, "Brother, I had been like a blood hound to you eve since you arbitrated in my case, but to-day I have come to realize that when one occupied the position of Judge, one is nobody's friend or foes. One's aim is nothing but justice. To-day I feel that God speaks through the tongue of a Panch". Algu burst into tears. This saline water washed clean the hearts of the two. The fading creeper of friendship regained its usual verdure.

—*Translated by Satya Narayan Roy.*

The fading creeper of friendship regained its verdure.

Puja Holidays

IT was half-past four and still there was no sign of either Bimal Krishna Bhowmick or Raju. They were to have met me at the Alipore Zoo. The restaurant there was to be our randezvous.

Bhowmick was our host at Calcutta and Raju was my colleague. It was because of Bhowmick's pressing invitation and his promise "to take us where ever we wished-whether to hell or heaven in Calcutta" — we consented for a short stay there. And of course we wanted to see a bit of both the worlds in Calcutta.

I had already waited for more than half an hour and it had made me somewhat restless. But there was not much to do there except to watch, idly, either the inmates of the zoo or their visitors! It was then it happened.

As I was looking around, I suddenly accosted two little girls eyeing me intently. They were probably twins and it seemed a bit difficult to distinguish one from the other at first sight. They were so much alike and even of the same build. Their ready smile, their lovely dimpled cheeks were just captivating. In other words it was the kind of kids one would like to have and fondle.

The moment they knew they had caught my attention they looked at each other and again looked at me and broke into broad smiles. I was now sure they were just waiting to be taken into my arms. I had, I thought, probably reminded them of someone who was so near and dear to them.

I just could not resist those kids any longer. The moment I stretched out my arms they at once flung themselves into them crying excitedly "Daddy".

I did not quite remember what happened next during the few minutes that followed. Having no daughter of my own, all I remembered was a smothering of kisses from those little ones with the complaint "Daddy, why don't you come home? Mom is always crying for you!"

Then I heard a soft voice calling out: "Jharna! Jyotsna! Where are you?"

I woke up from my reverie.

"We are here, Mom!" cried out one.

"With Daddy," piped the other.

"What are you saying, Jharna?" exclaimed the voice which was obviously their mother's. Then there was the swish of a sari and as I looked up I saw face to face, a young woman, in her mid twenties, chic and seductive. She seemed a bit startled on seeing me with the children clasped in my arms but recovered herself immediately.

"You look so much like him! You are his double, I must say", was all she managed to mutter.

I could discern all her shock, surprise and pain in those few words. She hardly took her eyes off me. I felt a little embarrassed.

"I have probably been mistaken by the kids for their father," I said in low a voice. "I did not want to kill their joy so soon and so suddenly."

Her reaction was rather unexpected. Tears welled up in her eyes. "Yes, they have indeed mistaken you for their Dad whom they have not seen for the past two years. Please, for my sake, will you keep up that pretense at least for a while?" She begged me.

"Why Dad! Why don't you speak out?" exploded the one who looked the elder.

"No, Mom! You don't quarrel with him and send him away again. We want him back." pouted the younger one.

I was puzzled at the unexpected turn of events and the little human drama that was being enacted there. There was intense pain on that young woman's face as the children spoke. She wiped her tears, bent down and took the children in her arms and gently told the younger one. "No, Jyotsna! I shall not quarrel with Dad any more."

The elder one was smarter. She disengaged herself from her mother, ran to me and threw her

The moment I stretched out my arms .....

arms around my neck and said sweetly. "Daddy, do come home, Mom is daily crying for you!"

"No, Jharna! How many times have I told you not to talk like this?" said the mother sternly. She was admittedly embarrassed by the children's frank disclosure.

"I am unable to distinguish between Jharna and Jyotsna," I cautiously remarked hoping to divert her attention and ease the embarrassment in which the children had placed her by their utterances. She did not reply but only looked at me sadly. The distress in her eyes was obvious.

For a while I stood confused. Here I am, waiting for my friends to pick me up and take me around Calcutta but am mistaken for somebody whom I never knew and am called upon to play his role! My pocket was no doubt bulging on that day for I had with me a month's pay and the advance of home-leave fares I drew only the other day. Was it somebody's ruse to relieve me of my hard earned money, I wondered.

But there was not much time for such deliberations. The children, so charming and innocent looking, were holding my hands fondly and looking at me expectantly. Their mother whom anybody would like to possess and call her his very own was entreating me to play the role of the children's father. I became interested. I was looking for some material for a short story I had promised for the annual number of my favourite magazine. "Well," I said to myself if this is a ruse and even if I am made to cough up the money I have with me now, I shall still take it as the price of the story I am going to write."

Suddenly there was a downpour and all of us scurried to the nearest shelter which happened to be the restaurant. I sat down with the children on either side and their mother opposite. The children were happy and excited and had obviously been anticipating a re-union with their father. I had now fully determined to play the role of their father come what may.

I ordered some snacks and ice-cream which the children greatly relished. But they hardly took their eyes off me. Then I watched their mother's reaction.

I had not so far asked for her name nor had she told me that herself.

I wanted a little briefing as well. So I leaned across the table and asked her. "How would Jharna's father address you? You haven't even told me your name and yet you want me to play the role of your husband and their father!" Now was I game for anything.

"That was my fault" she readily confessed. "My name is Maya Mukherjee. Jharna's father used to call me either Maya or Maya Rani. You may do likewise."

"I am afraid I will have to do that if I were to play the role effectively." I said.

"May I know your name please? You haven't told me yet! she whispered.

"I didn't tell you because you didn't ask for it!" I said as if I had been hurt by this lapse. "Well, anyway, my name is Devdas. I am a Government servant who is now in Pakistan Okay?"

"Surely you aren't the same Devdas — the short-story writer?" she gasped.

"It is I", I replied somewhat self-consciously but I really felt flattered that even my infrequent short stories should have made some imprint upon her — somebody whom I did not know until half an hour ago and whom I never expected to meet. Then I asked her, "Did you like my short stories, Maya?"

"That I shall tell you later," she said smilingly and I could straightaway guess what she would tell me. But she also warned me in the same breath. "Don't forget that you are to play the role of their father well!"

"It means the role of your husband as well even it is only for a short while, isn't it?" I interjected.

She looked at me enquiringly for a few seconds and then said with dignity, "Well, if that is the price you want, you take it!"

"No, not unless you give it yourself" I bargained.

The children had by now finished their second helping of ice-cream. Then Jharna, the elder child spoke first "Dad is always like this. Whenever he starts talking to mother, he just forgets us!" The tone was a little complaining but quite understandable.

But Jyotsna unexpectedly came to my rescue, "No, Jharna! Let him talk to Mom first and then we shall have him all for ourselves. Okay, Dad?

I looked at them approvingly and they went into raptures. I looked at Maya. She seemed to be serenely happy. I could detect a feeling of fulness in her. Our eyes met and she said with a deep sigh. "No price is too much for their happiness, Mr. Devdas! I shall willingly pay the price you wanted and I shall have absolutely no regrets".

I was touched to the quick. At once I hastened to say "No, Maya! I never meant it and I just said it for fun. I am so sorry I have hurt your feelings". I was full of remorse.

Don't feel bad, Mr. Devdas. I think I know you better through your short stories. The moment I know you are Mr. Devdas, I wanted to bare my heart to you. Even if you had really meant it, I wouldn't have hesitated to pay the price you had asked for. Look at my children! How happy they are! Do you think I can purchase this happiness for nothing? You have certainly not hurt me. You had just asked what I expected of you! After all aren't you a short-story writer?"

I looked through her eyes. There was no hurt, no injured pride to be seen in them. Maya must have been indeed a sporting girl.

"The showers have stopped. What should be our next programme?" I enquired.

"Are you free for the evening?" She questioned me back.

"Well, I shall make it so since you and children desire it". I offered.

"It is really so kind of you, Mr. Devdas, I do not know how to thank you sufficiently," began Maya.

"Look, Maya! I am now going to play the role in right earnest. Now then, you will do as I tell you, all right?"

She smiled at me and said. "The real He-man!"

"Jharna, Jyotsna!" I cried out. "Now we are going to the films and then back home, Okay?"

The children's enthusiasm knew no bounds. With Jharna and Jyotsna on either side and Maya following me a few steps from behind, we made straight to the theatre where they were screening the latest Walt Disney's film. I forgot all about Bhowmick and Rajù. Nor did I know that they did turn up at least and saw me going with Maya and children and followed us right up to the theatre and then left. This Maya had noted and told me late that night. I concluded from her description the two men that they must have been Bhowmick and Raju.

II

When the show was over, I hailed a taxi and we drove home straight. I, being new to Calcutta, let Maya give directions to the cab driver.

It was a mixed locality where various religious groups inter-mingled without much ado. Nobody seemed to bother the other. Maya led the way and I was following her with both the children on either side chatting animatedly. To everyone who stopped her, Maya had a ready smile, and a sweet word to say. Must be quite good at Public relations I thought to myself.

As we entered the flat, I looked around. It was a small two-roomed flat but self-contained. Every square inch of the space has been thoughtfully made use of. There was even a telephone.

The ayah was first to greet me. "Welcome to you, Debendra Babu! I know you will come for the Puja. I have been telling the children so!" She hardly finished when Maya cut in. "Please, Aruna, Babuji is tired and the children are hungry. Do give them something to eat, quick".

Aruna shot a quick glance at me and then there was surprise in her eyes. When they met Maya's she had already been warned. I did not fail to notice that.

It was the first day of Puja. The meal was excellent and the hospitality was nothing but lavish. The children ate little because of excitement. More than the food Maya's attention was just flattering. For her part, she seemed in an equally excited state. She had to be cajoled to take her food in her own home! What had brought up this metamorphosis? I wondered.

I felt I was getting into deep waters. But at the same time I did not allow myself to forget that I had already made my decision.

When the meal was over, Maya put the children to bed but they would not go to sleep so easily as she wanted. They wanted me near them all the time. It was getting late for me too. I had half a mind to take leave; yet I know I will be asked to stay I was afraid of being misunderstood by Bhowmick, yet Raju was there to come to my rescue. So I felt re-assured.

The issue then solved itself suddenly. It was again Jyotsna who settled the issue!

"You will sleep with us. Daddy! You won't go anywhere!"

It was a command.

I looked at Maya. She merely asked me, "You have heard what Jyotsna said?".

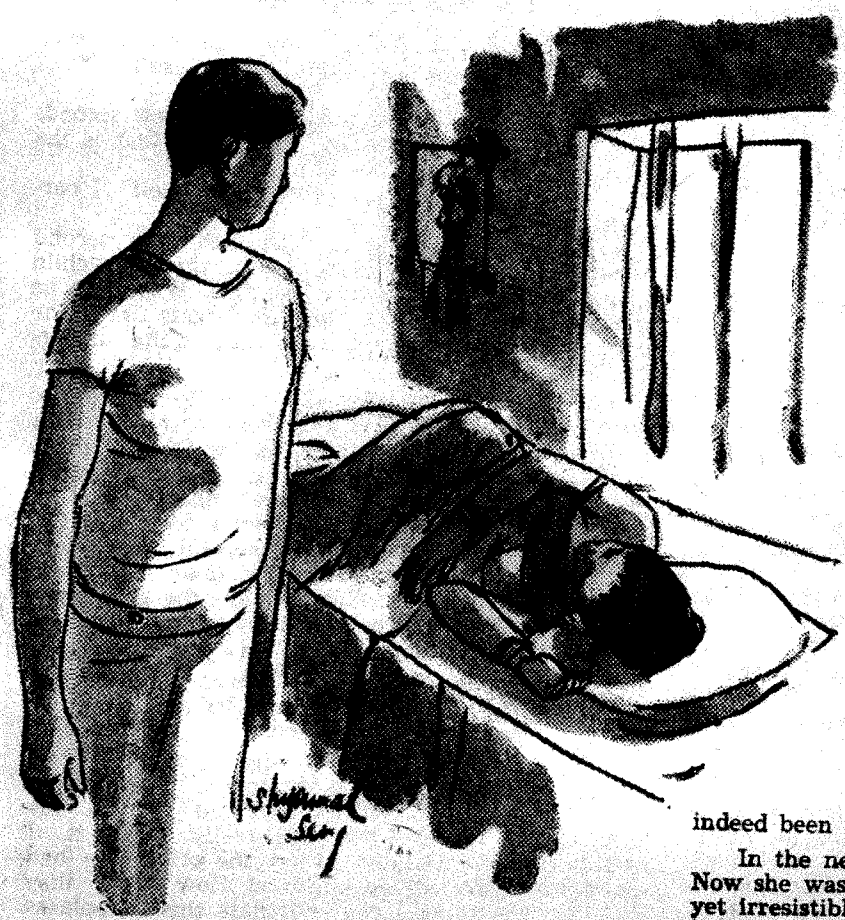
"The man who came to dinner....." I began to mumble. Maya cut it short. "Don't bother. The children need you. Hope nobody will miss you for the night".

"No, except you and the children", I made myself bold to say.

* * *

When I woke up at the crack of dawn, I was feeling strangely exhilarated—with Jharna and Jyotsna on either side of me clutching my hands securely. I felt a twang in my heart. Poor children they must have indeed been missing their father very much.

In the nearby cot lay Maya sleeping serenely. Now she was without any make up, dressed plainly yet irresistible. Who was she? Who was her husband? What would he think if he happened to see me sleeping with his children and his wife nearby in the same room?



..... *Maya sleeping serenely.*

Maya did not tell me much about herself the previous night. The children went to bed late and kept awake for long. They were not quite sure whether I would stay during the entire Puja holidays.

I wanted to speak to Maya all alone but the children would not let me do so and Maya, for her part, gave me little opportunity. By the time the children went to sleep, it was already very late and I had little mind or inclination to ask Maya any questions. But one thing was evident—that Maya wanted to detain me there as long as possible.

Next day, after a hearty break fast—for Maya had spared no pains—we were relaxed. The children left us free for the first time—they had now gone to tell their friends that their Daddy had indeed come for the Puja holidays.

Maya was free from household chores and the children came and sat by me. "Are you happy now?" I asked her.

"Don't you see it yourself, Mr. Devdas?" She replied.

"No! I am now Debendra Babu. You may call me Devdas if you like".

"You are dead-serious in your new role, I am afraid", she protested coquettishly.

"Just to please you and the children", I retorted.

She had no ready answer to give me. She looked at me steadily and said, "Since yesterday night I was feeling wonderful. Life no longer appears to be the grim struggle which I thought it was till I met you. Why don't you stay with me always, Devdas Babu?"

"And what that mean?" I smiled at her.

"Happiness and security — for me and my children. But I know I am asking for the impossible," she said with a deep sigh.

I had to admit the truth of it. But I did not dare to say so openly. She was already sad. I did not want to make her sadder.

"Well, Maya! You have not told me anything about you so far. How long are you going to keep me in suspense?

"Till to-night," she replied with a roguish smile.

* * * *

As the next two days happened to be the Puja holidays, I wanted to go out and attend to some important private work. I had my bank drafts to encash, railway tickets to purchase—I was on my way home — and gifts for my sons to buy.

But Maya would not trust me. She must have feared I might slip away. With reluctance she agreed to let me go but took care to send the children along with me!

With Jharna and Jyotsna on my hands I could not do anything except to buy them each, as my Puja gift, an attractive dress from a shop which happened to be kept open and we came back in time for lunch.

We had a quiet lunch and it looked a perfect picture of domestic bliss.

It must have been a long siesta. When I woke up, I heard Maya with her back turned to me talking to some body pleadingly. I wanted to know what the conversation was about so I pretended to be still asleep but my ears were turned to the talk that was going on. As the conversation dragged on, I could not shake off my drowsiness. Then I fell asleep again.

When I woke up it was nearly 6 p.m. Jharna saw me first. She kissed me affectionately and asked "Daddy, may I get you some coffee, please?"

"Please do, Jharna" said I and looked around.

Maya was not there. Jyotsna was struggling with some home work even on a holiday. Jharna was busy giving instructions to the ayah.

I got up, had a face wash and sat to write a letter to my wife to say I was not coming to her for Diwali. The plea I just put forward was not convincing enough; yet I know she would not question me. I knew her unwavering faith in me.

As I finished the letter as if she had anticipated my want, Jyotsna came near me and pulled out the chest of drawers and fished out a few odd things out of which she took out an envelope handed it over to me, and went back to her home-work.

Meanwhile Jharna brought my coffee. As I sipped it lazily, I ran my eyes through the papers left by Jyotsna with the carelessness which only a child would be capable of. Among them one caught my attention all at once. It was a copy of the recent court judgment against one Durga Rani Choudhury. I immediately remembered the case and as I went through the proceedings I realised that Maya Mukherjee was none other than Durga Rani Choudhury. My heart almost missed its beat. When I accepted Bhowmick's invitation with alacrity, she was the one person whom I wanted to meet very much in Calcutta. But I was already staying with her without my knowing it!

When I had done with the copy of the proceedings, I put it back quietly from where Jyotsna took it out and awaited Maya anxiously.

Maya came home very late. As the children were impatient and restless, I took them out for a short-while and learned two home truths, — that children do not ask to be born; and there is no substitute for parents.

By the time Maya came back, the children were fast asleep. Out side it was drizzling though lightly. Maya looked extremely tired and exhausted. I even felt that she was avoiding to see me face to face. All I could notice in her was an extreme sadness.

The ayah brought her a cup of hot coffee which she declined. I took it myself and handed over to Maya. She took it without protest.

I sat by her and took her hands into mine. She didn't resist me. I wanted to comfort her. I hugged her gently and asked, "Where had you been, Maya Rani? I want you to tell me the truth!"

Maya did not reply for while. Gradually she picked up courage and said softly, "I am a working-girl, Devdas. I have to work hard if I am not to starve!"

"Who is that employer who expects you to work even during Puja holidays?" I demanded

"Devdas! I am an artist and work as extra in the films. I also accept casual engagements for dancing performances. This is a busy season for me. You see! I have two kids to maintain!"

"I see," I said gruffly Maya watched my reaction nervously.

"Forgive me, Devdas! I shall tell you everything but please, please let me take my own time." she begged.

I left her at that. For the second successive night I slept in the same room.

It must have been past mid-night. There was a gentle knock at the door. I pretended to be fast asleep. Maya cautiously got up and looked around and ensured that I was indeed asleep. Then she slipped out and opened the door.

The man who came seemed to be in a hurry. Though they talked in whispers I could very well

make out that he was the man who rang her up during the day and talked about "appointment." But Maya was firm. She plainly told him that Jharna's "father" had come and she won't be able to keep up any appointments. The other man was desperate. I could hear him clearly cursing me for coming in the midst of a "busy season." Maya cut short everything by closing the door with a bang. A little later I heard a car speeding away.

I got up from the bed as if I had just woke up. Maya came and sat by my side and looked at me with concern.

"I had a bad dream." I began.

"I too had my own. They won't let me free even for a day. The human vultures!" She was fretting.

"What happened, Maya? Who was that midnight caller!" I enquired. Her face fell. "I shall tell you that to-morrow Devdas." She replied.

"Why not to-night? Why not now?" I insisted.

..... she buried her face in my chest

"If you can understand your own characters, why not me, Devdas? I am not going to hide anything from you. I shall make a clean breast of everything. But please do let me take my time" she pleaded.

* * * *

The next evening Maya suggested that we go out alone. The children behaved extremely well and did not even protest when I told them of our plans.

We attended first a film show featuring a top-notch star and emphasizing the sacredness of marital union. Later she took me to one of the lesser known and what seemed to me not a very respectable hotel where she said she worked as a casual artiste. From there we proceeded to some mixed locality and stopped before a big house which seemed to have come to life only just then. A liveried Gurkha smartly saluted us and showed us in. Maya seemed to be in her elements now. Her nervousness, which I noticed when I questioned her as to why she had been late yesterday was no longer there. She seemed to be in complete possession of herself.

* * * *

As we entered, we were greeted by half a dozen attractive girls — mostly in their teens and early twenties. Maya selected a quiet corner and we settled ourselves comfortably there. A bearer came and took orders for drinks. The other girls gave us an understanding smile and left us alone.

A little later I heard a couple of cars drawing up the portico. Two men entered followed by a bearded man who seemed to be the boss of the show there. The two men sat for a while as the girls watched them. A little conversation took place and soon the two men went upstairs followed by two of the prettiest of the lot. It did not take me much time to guess that it was a brothel and a well-organized at that. The girls there were not of the common prostitute type. Evidently they were call girls drawn from middle and higher income groups.

Maya was now sitting so close to me that I felt a little uncomfortable. It was she who broke the ice first.

"Why do you think I have brought you here, Devdas? She asked me without a trace of guilt.

"I am trying to guess it, Durga," I said deliberately, At once she recoiled as if she was stung. There was a look of terror and of extreme fear in her eyes.

"Don't be afraid, Maya!" I assured her, "I think I am beginning to understand you," and drew her closer to me.

She gave me a poignant look. Then she buried her face in my chest and began to sob. It was one of the most embarrassing moments of my life.

One of the four girls, who were apparently waiting to be picked up by customers, came down to me and said, "Debendra Babu, ever since you left her she is behaving like that. You mustn't leave her again. She is such a tender flower." Then she helpfully suggested, "Whenever she gets into that mood, Jabbar Saheb sends her back. I think you had better take her home."

At the mention of Jabbar Saheb, Maya clutched my hands firmly. Her hands were trembling with fear. I thought she was going to faint.

I summonned the bearer and ordered some brandy. Maya would not take it first but I forced her to take it. She was evidently in a state of near collapse and I knew it was high time I took her home.

* * * *

The ayah did not show any surprise. She helped me to put Maya in bed and then retired. The children were fast asleep each cuddling a teddy bear. As I saw them in that state I had to agree with Maya that no sacrifice was too great to ensure the happiness of those two little innocent lives.

Maya showed signs of revival after a little while but would at no stage leave my hand which she was clutching tightly. As the night advanced, I was so exhausted I felt I had no strength left even to change my dress. With difficulty I took off my shoes and leaned against a pillow still resisting overwhelming sleep. Maya in her semiconscious state nudged closer to me. I was so exhausted that I cared little for anything. Then I also fell asleep.

* * * *

With the chirping of early birds came the chatter of children. Jharna and Jyotsna were already awake and talking to each other and giggling. I

felt a bit ashamed to be seen in the same bed with Maya still clasping my hands tightly. But the children apparently did not see anything unusual in their parents sharing the same bed. To them I was their father. I did not want to smash that image.

Thus another night passed without Maya telling me her story.

* * * *

The Puja holidays were over. I had not seen Bhowmick and Raju ever since they missed the randezvous at Alipore. According to our original programme Raju was to return to Pakistan the next day after seeing me off at Howrah.

I felt guilty in not calling upon Bhowmick all these days. But at the same time I felt I had very strong reasons not to call upon him also! Bhowmick was the sort of person who would not hesitate to ask inconvenient questions about Maya in his wife's presence. It was the thing that I precisely wanted to avoid.

I rang up Bhowmick at his office. He replied at once. His first question was, "So the Durga Puja is over?"

"I don't quite understand you, Bhowmick," I said hesitatingly.

"No! You won't! I said "Durga Rani Puja," Clear?

"What you mean by this Bhowmick?," I asked him irritated

"I meant Abdul Jabbar's best call-girl. Understand?"

Maya was listening to the entire conversation. I felt my head was reeling. I put down the receiver abruptly.

* * * *

I took my decision. I sent the children out and told Maya plainly that it would be the last night I would be spending with her and then be off whether she tells me her story or not.

* * * *

We went to the bank first. As I was encashing my drafts. I saw Raju too there. Our eyes met, but he did not even pretend to know me. I could see intense hatred and contempt in his eyes. If stares could burn, I am sure he would have reduced me and Maya and her children to ashes long ago. I had no doubt felt a little uncomfortable at his silent watch but decided to ignore him.

Later we did a little shopping — mostly toys for the children — and returned home.

Jharna and Jyotsna were hardly able to control themselves when they learnt that I was leaving them the next day. It was indeed a pity to see those two children yearning for their father's love yet denied the same.

I did not wish to stir out that day. Maya and the children hardly spoke to me; yet my mere presence there made all the difference. Maya felt secure and the children were reassured.

After tea, Maya came and sat before me. She was gorgeously dressed and I thought she was preparing to get out. An intense jealousy took possession of me. I brusquely caught hold of her hand and rudely demanded, "To whom these are meant for?" I completely forgot that I was not her husband.

Maya gave me one of her bewitching smiles and said "For Devdas — the short-story writer and Debendra Babu's double."

It had an electric effect upon me. I felt ashamed; I immediately calmed down.

Was she trying to pay me by her "service"? I asked myself. When I gave her that morning all the money I had encashed, she vehemently protested. When I said that it was for Jharna and Jyotsna from their adopted father, she just kept quiet and accepted it without muttering a word.

"Is it the price you promised to pay me?" I asked her.

"No!" She said with emphasis. "I was yours just for the asking all these days. But you behaved in an exemplary manner. You are too much of an idealist, Devdas." She finished.

I chuckled. Could she be ever aware of my inner fury? It was the greatest moral test I had so far faced. But for my wife's unwavering faith in me, and the thought of it I would have fallen a victim of Maya's charms the very day I met her.

The thought of my wife and her unshakable faith in me made me feel much better. I was now sure that no amount of Maya's charms would shake me off my feet.

"Why so thoughtful?" She asked.

"I was thinking of tomorrow when I would be leaving you all-?"

"I am going to tell you my story to-night," she said in soberly and sadly and looked at me.

I took her in my arms. There was no passion in it. Maya began to cry as if her heart would break. The children looked puzzled and unhappy. "I know" I said with understanding.

III

After dinner, we relaxed for a while. The children were extremely happy at the day's outing and Maya was repeatedly thanking me for the "most wonderful evening". She said it was most memorable.

"I wish I could die now. I shall have no regrets — if only you could take charge of Jharna and Jyotsna," she added feelingly.

I didn't say anything. I looked at Jharna and Jyotsna. They were sleeping with not a care in the world. Was I sapping the will of that girl to fight for her existence in this cruel world? I shuddered at the very thought of it.

The clock struck ten. There was a draught of chill wind from outside. I turned on the radio. It was pouring out some sad, sentimental, love-lorn song. Maya was sad, but as usual sweet and charming. I met her eyes and I felt I never had a woman look at me so listlessly. She was feminine, so warmly feminine and gracefully feminine. I began to be afraid of her for the first time.

She partially closed the window's to protect the children from the cool draught. Then she pulled out the chest of drawers and took out the copy of the judicial proceedings which I had already seen and gave it to me.

I watched her again. As I said, "Thanks, I have already seen the newspaper report of it, Maya," I vividly recollected the news item in which was given a graphic description of what transpired in the Court of Law when Durga Rani Choudhury, a call-girl, narrated, before the Magistrate, how poverty drove her to lead a life of shame. Her frank confession was "I am just helpless. Even if I want, I just cannot give up this immoral profession as I would not be able to get a square meal for myself and my two children." It shocked and saddened me.

"Must I go through this, Maya? You had better give me the account yourself" I suggested.

"Must I?" She hesitated for a while and then spoke, "Yes I shall do so, Devdas Babu. The sooner I get it off my chest the better. Otherwise I shall collapse."

The radio was now broadcasting a sad orchestral music. Maya Mukerjee alias Durga Rani Choudhury began her sad but sordid story. It was the story of a woman who sold her body to save her children.

"When I got married ten years ago, Devdas Babu," She began, "I was as hopeful and excited as any other young girl. I dreamt of a happy little home, mind you, a happy little home and a couple of children and a loving husband. I did not ask for

a luxurious life; a life that was above want—that's all I wanted.

"But the man I married — he was an apology for a man. He was more interested in the dowry I brought with me than in me. To him his mother and unmarried sisters meant much more than I. He would not take me out even on the Puja day! Can you think of that! That was the mouse I had married.

"When my parents died, and, when he knew that I could not get any more loot for him, he began to treat me cruelly. His sisters even tried to poison me. It was His mercy that I didn't conceive through that man.

"But the neighbours were so kind. But for them I would have killed myself long ago. Then one day, at the pressing invitation of a college girl who was my next door neighbour and my confidante, I went to see a film. When the film was over, it was raining cats and dogs. Transport became a problem. All the buses and trams were so crowded that it was just not possible for us two young girls to get into them. We were afraid to hire a taxi either. Apart from the fact that we could ill afford that luxury, we were too scared to get into one without a male escort. I nearly died of fright.

Maya was almost in a stupor. I did not want to interrupt her.

"Well then, when we finally managed to reach home, my husband, my mother-in-law and sister-in-law were all waiting to pounce upon me. My heart sank. As I was about to enter the house, my husband brutally barred me and kicked me out. My mother-in-law threw out my suit case which contained my few earthly belongings. 'You enter this house only at your peril,' shouted all of them in unison and then slammed the door with a bang. I stood there all alone, shivering in the early winter rain, with none to come to my rescue.

"The College girl who got me into this trouble was nowhere to be seen. She had just vanished.

"I did not know how long I had been lying outside in the drenching rain. When I came to my senses, a middle-aged man was holding me and asking me, 'Where is your house? Can I help you?

"I could only cry my heart out.

"He did not ask any more questions. He gently lifted me and led me in the rain carrying my suit case.

* * * *

"I changed to dry clothes. Debendra Babu, he said it was his name, had some biscuits and a steaming cup of tea ready for me. I ate them greedily. I was so hungry. Then I fell asleep.

"I got over my shock soon and took stock of the situation. My going back to my husband was out of question. If he were man enough, he would have never left me like that.

"The only relations I had — my parents — were dead. I had no choice but to face the cruel world all alone.

"Debendra Babu was emotional but exceedingly kind and considerate. He fed me, clothed me. He was a man with a broken heart. And I needed a prop. Well, I would spare the details. After some time, one day he proposed and I said 'yes' and we began to live as husband and wife. He was an artist and a poet but not very well-to-do, yet we did not starve. Jharna and Jyotsna were born in quick succession. I was happy and content with my lot.

"Well as a girl, I showed some promise as a dancer and an actress but when once I was married off I thought that was the end of them. But that was not to be; when Debendra Nath came to know that I could dance and act, he went wild with joy.

I was to play the role of a court dancer .....

He wanted to make a top star of me in the film world.

"With two children to bring up, I did not, at first, quite relish the idea; yet at the same time, I had no strength of mind to let go a "golden opportunity" as I thought it to be at that time. The lure of money and the glamour of better life was too strong for me to resist.

"Well, I picked up threads and was progressing astonishingly well. Debendra Nath's joy knew no bounds. My cup of happiness at last seemed full.

"True, there was a serpant in my paradise but at that time I did not see it.

"One day Debendra Nath came home highly excited and said that I had been given a stellar role and that we were to sign a contract the next day. It was only after signing the contract I was told of the role.

"Its details shocked me beyond measure. I was to play the role of a court dancer and just as Salome did, I was to cast off one after another all the garments, I was wearing and dance through the finale in the flimsiest underwears.

"I felt deeply humiliated. But my husband saw nothing wrong in it. He said it was art for art's sake!

"That was the beginning of the end. I kept

mum and played my role to the best of my ability but the film unfortunately turned out to be a big flop. Debendra Nath was disillusioned. He took to drinking and began to quarrel with me frequently without rhyme or reason."

Maya held my hands tightly. She was tense and excited.

"Well, to cut the long story short," she continued nervously. "One day he went out in a huff after a big quarrel. I waited for him to come back as usual but he did not come back this time. I got alarmed and reported the matter to the police but they were not of much help. Even now they say they are still investigating!

* * * *

"Our funds had almost exhausted and when we were facing certain starvation, Jabbar came to my rescue. He engaged me as a dancer and musician but it was not quite a paying proposition. I did not get sufficient engagements, to keep the wolf from the door. The profession was already overcrowded, and there was too much of competition; besides the demand was slack. In the circumstances I had perforce to switch over as a call-girl out of sheer necessity. "I know it is a shameful profession," she said passionately, "but tell me, Devdas Babu, who would give me and my children a square meal every day?"

"That's what you have told the Magistrate. Isn't it?"

"Yes, Devdas Babu. I did not become a call-girl just for the fun of it. Do you know that I have to part with, everyday or rather every night, half of my earnings, sometimes upto Rs. 60/- to Jabbar?"

I wanted to listen to Maya's story no doubt. But this was not what I had bargained for.

Maya was weeping copiously. I could not bear it. "Enough of it, Maya" I said and took her in my arms. And then I asked her, "Do I mean anything to you?"

"You are everything to me, Devdas Babu. I shall never forget this Puja. If only you could stay on with me, I shall give up this profession and slave for you. My children's future — it is the only thing I care for in this world. To achieve that I shall not hesitate even to immolate myself. Devdas Babu!"

"I could very well guess that, Maya! I know you are not the type to sacrifice yourself in search of a vague ideal."

"Can you get me a regular job? I can sing well, dance well. If only I am assured of a steady employment....."

I did not wait for Maya to finish. "I am already thinking on those lines, Maya." I said, "I have a few contacts. If I succeed, you must turn over a new leaf. Will you?"

"I promise" She said with determination.

* * * *

Though my train was only in the afternoon, I took leave of Maya and children in the morning. I had certain obligatory calls to make, to apply for cancellation of leave, raise enough money for my return journey to Pakistan and for expenditure en route.

As I prepared to leave, the children started crying. Maya, with flowing dark hair and tiny tears at the corners of her eyes and dressed in the manner of a typical Bengali housewife was so comely that I found it difficult to believe that she could also be a call-girl.

I promised Jharna and Jyotsna that I would come again for the next Puja. Then I hugged them and kissed them. Then I left with a heavy heart.

When I arrived at the Sealdah Railway Station, I found I still had about some thirty minutes to let go. I leisurely walked and got into one of those green painted, ramshackle compartments. Then I closed my eyes out of sheer fatigue.

When I opened my eyes again, I saw Raju seated in the same compartment, but he did not speak to me. Bhowmick was standing on the platform and as usual smiling mischievously.

I wanted to show my annoyance with him. So I kept quiet. But he was not the type to be cowed down. He also kept quiet.

Then I heard Raju muttering to himself "That whore again" and all at once I saw Maya accompanied by Jharna and Jyotsna making a bee line for me.

I got down from the compartment. Bhowmick looked astounded. Maya, charmingly dressed as usual, gave me, with a happy smile, a big basket. "What's all this, Maya? I asked her.

"Some fruits and sweets for your onward journey, Devdas Babu. I made them all myself for you." Then she gave me one of her steadfast looks that would crack down any man's will.

I avoided her eyes and turned on my attention to Jharna and Jyotsna who were clamouring to give me something.

"What's in it, Jharna? I enquired. "Sweets for Dad," cried both of them in chorus.

"You are not to open it till you reach the border," enjoined Maya.

I accepted the gifts without further ado and put them inside. Maya took the dust of my feet. The children kissed me affectionately.

The train to Pakistan pulled out. Bhowmick was watching all these in shocked silence.

* * * *

At Ranaghat, the compartment nearly emptied itself. There was no-one in the compartment except me and Raju who still kept his silence.

I felt hungry. I examined the food basket so thoughtfully brought for me by Maya. There were luscious luchis kept in a food flask and still warm. Then there were some delicacies made of coconut and cool rosagollas in an earthen pot and some out of season fruits.

I invited Raju to share the meal. "What?" he sneered, "to eat the food made by that whore?"

My blood boiled. I felt like knocking him down. By the time I finished counting ten, I became near normal. But he had killed my appetite for food.

* * * *

At the Indian border check-post there was a long, long wait. I lazily opened the gift parcel given by Jharna and Jyotsna. The contents shook me. Apart from two expensive chocolate bars, there was a bank draft for the exact amount I gave Maya that morning. I was shocked and surprised. Raju looked bewildered.

"Is she a sinner after all?" Raju asked me after a long pause.

"No," I said with emotion. "She has been more sinned against."

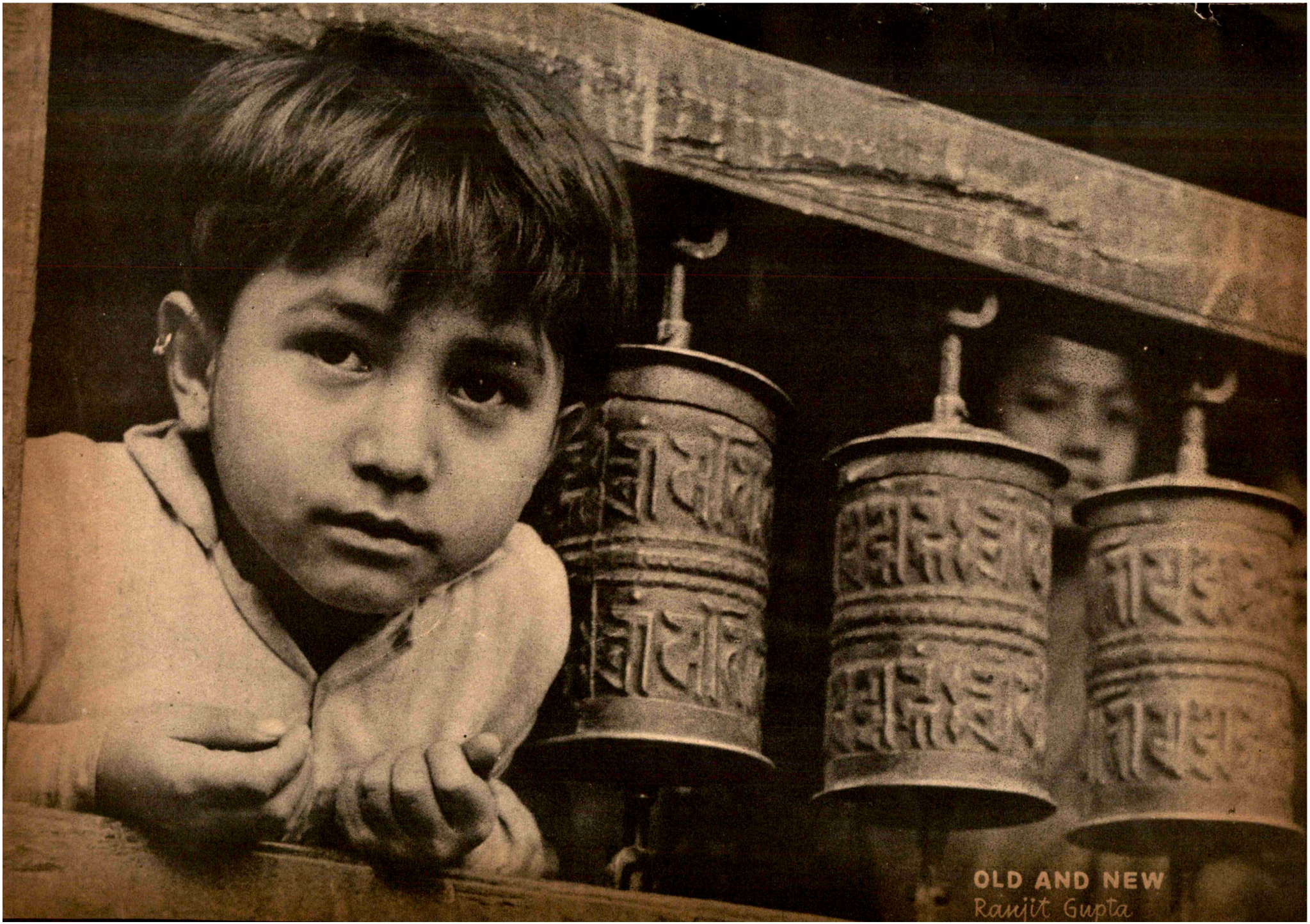
* * * *

At the Pakistan border check post the wait was not so long. The train began to move. "Let us have something to eat, Devdas," Raju suggested.

Without a word I took out the food flask and served ourselves with the luchis which were still warm and fresh and the other eats. Raju tasted a few morsels of them. Then he said appreciatively, "These are really delicious, Aren't they?"

I gave him a faint smile in agreement.

Outside the moon was shinning brightly. The green, ramshackle train was speeding ahead under full steam.



OLD AND NEW
Ranjit Gupta

BATHING SPREE : SAHASRA DHARA, DEHRA DUN

PRISTINE GLORY : KONARAK — Pratima Dasgupta

THE IMPRESARIO
Shyamal Basu

COME FROM THE DEAD

By TARASANKAR BANDOPADHYAYA

THE wife of Chandrasekhar Babu, the litterateur, burst into his room and asked him straight away — "What is this? What do these scribblings mean? You might be a writer, perhaps popular, but are you to wound readers' feelings in whatever way you like?"

Her face was reddened with anger. She held in her hand a copy of the Puja Number of "Navajuga."

Chandrasekhar Babu had crossed the frontier of his middle age—old age was creeping in. His wife too was middle-aged. Her hair was just greying. Their family was a big one. With all the children, grand-children, nephews and servants it was at times forty strong.

Chandrasekhar Babu was sitting in a thoughtful mood. He was weak and felt washed out. He had fought many a life's battle, in which, they say, he was victorious. For some time past, his eldest son-in-law, a man in a high Government post, was laid with suspected cancer. In people's eye this was the only blot in his happiness. None believed that he had any other worry except the illness of his son-in-law. From the worldly point of view, no cause was found to exist. But it did exist. He was called a man of emotion and perhaps that trait tended to make him worry-minded.

A theist all through, he was in his middle age confronted with a sudden accession of agnosticism. Everything appeared to be sham. Everything was meaningless. Today also he was cogitating over it. It found a place in his story—"Heart's Blood"—published in the Puja Number of "Navajuga."

Chandrasekhar Babu looked at the face of his wife. Simultaneously his two eye-brows were contracted. It was idiosyncratic. He queried, "What?"

The wife rejoined. "I had a morbid fear of your contracted eye-brows. But no more of it. I would no longer fear it."

—"You might. But what of that?"

"What have you written here?"

He lowered his eyes and glanced at the marked paragraph in the copy of "Navajuga" thrown to him. He said with a faint smile. "Is it a lie? Just recollect: did you not utter all these words? You are a pious woman. Say it yourself."

This time the wife wept out. Her lips quivered. Tears rolled down her cheeks. She replied in a choked voice—"What you did that day in a fit of anger enraged me. You have taken those words as true uttered in an angry mood. Though I am a mother I have forgotten all about my dead daughter. Yes, said that. Man is apt to forget. One cannot live if one is to carry on throughout one's life the recollections of the dead one. But can you tell me that the dead man will come back if kept embalmed in saline tears? Has the dead one at any time come back? On the contrary we shy at a shadow seen in the night—. We think it has come to take us away."

Suddenly she burst into quick tears. "When any one will read it, he will be under no illusion as to

he identity of the father or the mother. All through ny life you have been besmirching me in your umerous writings—"

She did not stand there to finish her words. She came out and as she was ascending the stairase, she finished her utterance. Chandrasekhar Babu was rooted to his seat with a vacant look at he offending passage. Truth is stranger than fiction. n the present case the story was a true one from tart to finish. Every word and every line of it was rom fact. Curiosity led him to experiment how far is a writer he could base his story on reality and vrite it out. There was something more. It was replete with the mortal agony that recently overtook his mind as a cruel truth which had the visage of dreadful agnosticism. But in the story the dart was not aimed at his wife alone. It included everyone of the world. His self-reprimand was far exceeding.

He chid his wife for being oblivious of her dead child. "Oh, what a blessed mother you are! You do not care to know in what poor corner the memory of your own child is lost."

Her excuse found expression in the words she uttered. They were blazing in printed letters before his eyes on the opened page of "Navajuga." But on the next page, he whipped himself. It was wholehearted self-condemnation. It ran thus:

"When his daughter-in-law found the photograph discoloured, she put it aside and did not hang it up. His wife did not look at the photograph as she did not find any semblance of her daughter, in shape and grace, in it. But what about him? Fie! He could not scoop out any spare time! He was running fatuously lured by fame."

He reprimanded himself. Repeatedly. 'Fie upon you! You have set yourself adrift in the whirlpool of self-aggrandisement. You cannot protest against it. Nor have you any excuse for it. Nothing at all. You did not think of making out any time for the renovation of the photo. You found no time. You will perjure yourself if you deny it. It proves at the same time that all your talk about love, affection remembrance and your endeavour to score a triumph over Time are artificial, specious, bootless!' Simultaneously his inner soul cried out — "No — No — No. Don't say more. Don't say more."

There was a plethora of reproaches. On the day of occurrence he was overwhelmed by deep self-pity. He penned the lines without reserve. What happened afterwards was still more cruel. In it was revealed the harsh sober truth of the world. It was truth in all nakedness. There was no nectar on earth but mere death—sure and inevitable. There was erosion, bit by bit erosion—then dissolution—dissolution in the big void of agnosticism. He had disclosed in the story why nectar brought the notion of God along with it, God too was a myth if there was no nectar.

That day he was overtaken by the feelings of self-mortification and became impatient. He reprimanded his wife and the whole world. But today he remained unmoved at the mortification of his wife. He gave a faint smile and accepted that cruel truth and looked at the sky lying outside through the front southern window.

It was the onset of winter. The Puja festivity was over a month ago. The perspicacity of the autumnal sky was just giving way to gloominess. The smoke from the factory chimney at the back of his house was being scattered over on the southern side under pressure of the northerly wind.

It was just at this time that Bulu breathed her last. It was the beginning of Agrahayan, the 3rd Agrahayan. The name "Bulu" as a shortened form from "Bulbul". She spoke sweetly and distinctly. Her articulation was so distinct that he would term it as a message and not as string of words. Everybody would ask her "What is your name, pretty one?"

Her complexion was dark and her eyes were slightly squinted. Dimples appeared in her two cheeks when she smiled. She would smilingly say, "Father calls me Bulbul, mother calls me Bulu. My real name is Srimati Sandhya Bandopadhyay." She died when she was five years of age. Long before that, she articulated quite distinctly. All the niceties of alphabets, single or mixed, were clearly and correctly pronounced by her. Bulu died in 1932.

Bulu was his most favourite child. She was very mild-tempered and timid. Chandrasekhar Babu named her Sandhya. When she was three Bani was born. She had shining colour and beauty. In the family circle words went around about the inferior complexion of Bulu. Those words were not hard enough but were replete with sympathy and compassion. But Bulu felt her own inferiority in that expression of compassion. Because he was a litterateur, Chandrasekhar Babu could feel her sorrow. He discovered a wonderful beauty even in that blackness. His eldest son was the favourite of his aunt, and second son was the favourite of his mother. His eldest daughter and the youngest Bani usurped the two sides of their mother. But this weak and tender girl cleaved to her father. For her clear articulation Chandrasekhar Babu taught her to recite poems.

In 1930 when Chandrasekhar Babu joined the Civil Disobedience Movement, he had to shoulder the leadership of the movement of his place. Under its spell Bulu was taught to recite from Rabindranath's "Katha O Kahini." He came out of his house in early morning and would return home at midday. Bulu was the first to rush towards him and to clasp him with the word "Papa" in her lips. His wife was silenced by apprehension, his aunt was mortified and irritated through it and his mother was complacent. Still the family affairs urged her to say—"Just ponder and proceed. In your early years your education was hindered by your contact with the revolutionaries. You know the whole story."

His two boys were then 12 and 8 years of age. Though interested in their father's work, they were afraid to approach him. His eldest daughter was 6 years old but she was more timorous. Bulu alone would rush forward to meet him. Thereafter he went to jail. The day he came out of it, all the members of his family went in a hired bus to receive him. That day Bulu was sitting in the lap of her aunt. It was Bulu who greeted him first and leapt into his bosom. How bitterly she wept! What an uncommon beauty did her father discover in her face that day. Even to-day that picture of hers floated before his eyes. It was winter. He still remembered that Bulu had a green-coloured warm coat on.

Soon after, Bulu was attacked with typhoid fever. Chandrasekhar Babu was by her bed-side all the time. She recovered from her illness but for some strange reason, she lost her voice. She gazed at the face of all with piteous eyes. Tears would roll down. The financial state of Chandrasekhar Babu's family was not sound. Still the top-ranking doctor was called in from the district headquarters. He remembered how he told the doctor that his patient was called Bulbul for the sweetness and the distinctness of her pronunciation but that voice was destroyed for ever.

The doctor asked him not to lose heart.

The assurance of the doctor was fulfilled. Bulbul regained her voice after a few days. Again she

started chirping. But the fever left a mark. It affected the colour of her body and her eyes. She became darker and more squint-eyed. At such a time a strange thing happened and made Bulu cling to her father more closely.

One afternoon her elder sister, Ganga, took her to a festival in the Thakurbari of one of their rich relatives. Just when they stepped into the temple someone shouted out — "Look! whose daughter is this one! the girl over there!"

Bulu was flabbergasted. Ganga replied, "Grandma! she is my younger sister, Bulu."

"Your younger sister? so black? my God! I just thought she might be the daughter of some low-caste people."

She was then joined by one of her flatterers— "Oh my God! How will Chandrasekhar Babu give this daughter in marriage! There is ugliness and ugliness. But she surpasses all!"

Bulu made for her home forthwith. Her elder sister too followed her. Bulu could not shed tears before them but with the crossing of the temple yard, she started weeping bitter tears. She did not stop and went on crying till her father returned. Chandrasekhar Babu stopped her with great difficulty. He told her—"Sable colour is a sign of merit."

She shrugged her shoulder—"No, Papa." Chandrasekhar Babu put in "What about me?"

Bulu was taken aback. Her father too was dark-complexioned.

Chandrasekhar Babu proceeded on — "I, too, am black. Am I not good?"

She rejoined — "Yes, Papa — You are black and I am also black."

—"Oh yes. It must be so in the course of things. You are my mother! I am your son. The other people are devoid of sight. They can't discern what a wealth of sweet beauty lies in you."

She replied — "Yes, Papa, you are black and I am black. Mother is beautiful, so also my elder sister and my brothers. You are my son."

Yes, papa, you are black and I am black .....

After that time, she clung to her father more closely. She started a play. She acted as the mother and Chandrasekhar Babu had to act as her son. This play did not take place before all but in a solitary atmosphere. There is a scope for rest at noon, whether in winter or in summer in our rural life. It is not a mere siesta. Many would enjoy a short nap, specially in summer. The play was commenced in summer time. The two sons of Chandrasekhar Babu would go to school and his wife would take rest in the ground floor along with her other two daughters. In the early thirties wives did not meet their husbands at noon. Bulu would sleep with her father. Her repast over, she would wait for her father and when he finished his meal, she would then close the door and would start the play.

The whole house fell asleep in the heat of summer noon. Bulu would take up the role of the mother and Chandrasekhar Babu acted as her son. She was presented with a small piece of sari by Chandrasekhar Babu. It was yellow-coloured. The border was patterned like a creeper wrought in white thread. She would wear it and skirt her head and rub the face of Chandrasekhar Babu with the pillow towel. He had to lie down on the bed and her palm served as a shell spoon to feed him. Then, she would close up to give him suck and say "Take it."

Then she passed her fingers over his body to "rub" mustard oil for a bath. A hole on the floor became the bath tub, "Water" was poured on him with her cupped palm. When the bath-scene was over, he was given a wiping with the towel and his hair was dishevelled and rearranged with her hand. Then he was fed and asked to go to sleep.

By this time, his eye-lids were heavy and he was dozing. It would not do to go to silent sleep. He had to say — "Lie down and give me a suck."

She would reply — "You naughty child! Does one take a suck after meal?"

Chandrasekhar Babu would feign tears. She would then lie by his side and consoled "Don't cry. Take it. You are very naughty. I am to do household work. I am to take my meal. Quick, go to sleep quickly."

She would lie beside him and sing a lullaby intoning it sweetly and distinctly. Chandrasekhar Babu would mingle his own intonation with it. Sleep would in the meantime overtake them both.

In the afternoon when they rose from sleep they became separated. Chandrasekhar Babu would go out for a walk, Bulu would reach to their parlour to play with her sister. In the evening he attended the theatrical club and the library. He was almost their helmsman. Bulu would sit by the side of her grandmother and listen to her yarns. Very few people could approach her in story-telling. She could tell fairy tales or tales from the Puranas. Young and old, all listened to her, bewitched by her narration. Bulu would also listen to it. But she never fell asleep when story-telling was going on. She would fall asleep when the stories were finished and she woke up when Chandrasekhar Babu took his meal after his return. She wanted to sleep in her father's bed.

Chandrasekhar Babu would lull her to sleep and put her on the bed of her mother. He had a single bed of his own. Even four days before her death, she jerked her feverish frame erect as soon as Chandrasekhar Babu entered the room.

She was attacked with malaria. At that time malarial fever was deeply rooted in the air and soil of Bengal, specially in rural areas. On that occasion both his wife and daughter were attacked at the same time. But Chandrasekhar Babu did

not seem to care—he could not find time, he was producing a play of which he was playwright, director, stage manager, prompter and all.

This constituted the gravamen of his charge against himself. He asked himself — "Where is leisure, outside or inside the mind? He could not get it as he employed his mind in outside urgency. He was not anxious for his Bulu. Obligation was something more imperious than a thought on Bulu. He neglected the nectarine vessel of his fatherly heart and became crazy with quaffing to his heart's content the cup of the wine of merriment held up before his mouth by the stir and bustle of the festival.

On that day after the play was over, its festivity was prolonged further till the next night. He returned home after its finish and pushed the door. The door was so kept as his wife was also ill of fever. Bulu woke up and muttered — "Papa" — "Mamma."

"Papa, — water."

He held the glass of water kept by his bedside to her mouth and touched her body.

He was startled. His finger seemed to burn. The fever was so high.

After her drink Bulu urged her father to keep her in his bed and not in her mother's.

Chandrasekhar Babu did not fulfil her wish. He lulled her to sleep and laid her as usual in her mother's bed.

Next day the doctor examined her and said: "Though the fever persists she is well. There will be remission either in the afternoon or early next morning."

All through the day Chandrasekhar Babu was in deep sleep as if to pay off the debt of vigils of several nights.

The maid servant woke him up in the afternoon. His wife was shivering with fever sleeping by the side of Bulu. The maid servant was asked by her to call up Chandrasekhar Babu as she felt that Bulu's fever was high.

They were on the ground floor. Even though there was fever, all the inmates at that period would make their beds in the ground floor and sleep there.

Chandrasekhar Babu went downstairs. He was startled when he felt the pulse of Bulu. He found the pulse intermittent. He himself ran to the doctor living in Bazarpara. He was not at that time so famous but he was honoured for his service to the village and villagers and for his personality. The doctor came along with him and frowned as he examined her. He gave her an injection. Death turned its back on that day but exactly after two days it re-appeared. The illness deceitfully took the crooked path. It could not be better described than deceit. Next morning there was full remission. Everybody was assured. The fever of Bulu's mother stuck on. The doctor thought it would take sometime. As for Bulu, rice was prescribed for the next day in place of soup as she was very much weakened.

Really she had no fever. Yet she lay still and motionless. She became speechless as if struck with coma. There was a tired look. She did not turn her face even at the voice of Chandrasekhar Babu. Still Chandrasekhar Babu could not size up the situation. After his afternoon rest, he got downstairs and became ready for the walk. He was seized with fear when he touched Bulu's body. Such a cold body! Where was the heart? He felt the pulse quickly. What ? It was intermittent again. The thin pulsating thread of the pulse, off and on, lost its clue. He ran towards Bazarpara again.

The doctor took up his bag and left the place, Chandrasekhar babu did not fail to guess the hint.

The doctor arrived and repeated the injection. The pulse looked up. But before half-an-hour there was a spasm, and again she became pulled down. Her father again felt the pulse. Again the pulse was intermittent. Her finger tips were icecold. He again ran for the doctor. The doctor again injected her.

Bulu uttered in a piteous tone "Papa ... Mamma... No more injection."

Finishing her words, she vomited several times. The doctor was frightened and again felt the pulse. His face turned pale.

He left the instruction — "Please send some one for medicine. No more injection."

He took up his own bag and left the place. Chandrasekhar Babu did not fail to guess the hint.

After that, Bulu called his father alone several times. But Chandrasekhar Babu could ill prepare himself to sit by her side.

When after a long time, he tried to recollect the event, he sensed an anxious feeling or similar agony in his heart. His eyes were being filled with tears. As if the assured belief in some meaningless blind faith was departing from his heart. He cried "Oh! God."

God was a myth.

He believed in God all through his life. Meanwhile, he tried to be an atheist but failed in the attempt. After that, he abandoned that course and kept alive his belief in God with deeper zest and belief by taking resort to daily worship, by watering regularly the root of that rootless tree. But that belief did not survive the incident taking place two months ago over the memory and photo of Bulu on which he wrote the story of "Heart's Blood" in the "Navajuga". His wife made tearful complaint against it and the writing was lying open before him and its leaf was being fluttered by the wind. Dead belief in God is not lost and obliterated in the rottenness of oblivion like the memory of a lost one. Dead belief in God is like the broken image of God in a stone. It cannot be effaced by breakage.

Till to-day he was worshipping under the force of long-formed habit but it was lifeless like the blue of the sky. Many know now-a-days that the azure colour of the sky is imaginary. Still the people will gaze at it and poets write on the cerulean heavenly vault.

Bulu died at 10 that night. It was his first affliction in life. He became almost mad. The shock turned the course of his life. He forsook politics, theatre and for sometime he took to research in after-life. At night he would pass his time in the cremation ground. He frequented Sannyasins. He would pass time night after night by sitting in the play-room of Bulu. When he opened his heart, in literary composition, life's main gate was opened up to him on the path of literature. That story came out under the title "The Cremation-Ghat" in the first issue of the Bangasri Magazine. Later on, he changed the title into "Evening Primrose." The hero was a theatre-mad vagabond. It contained his own accusation against himself, his craze for the theatre when Bulu was on the point of death. The name of the daughter of this hero was "Evening Primrose." The souls of the readers of that story was touched by the agony of his heart.

The story ended thus — "The hero returned home in the morning passing his night in the cremation ghat. The evening primrose was still in bloom in the house. He said to his wife — "Look! The evening primrose —. ".

His daughter planted that flower plant. With tearful eyes his wife smiled a smile of expectation — "She will come again."

Chandrasekhar Babu was then over thirty. Perhaps on that day he expected such a return. At least there is no scope for any doubt that he wanted to believe in transmigration of the soul.

It was the photograph of that Bulu. No picture was taken of her when she was alive. When her body was carried over to the cremation ground, it struck him. Perhaps in future her face might not be recalled. A village photographer was called in and he was told to go to the cremation ground to take a picture.

The photograph was taken by laying her dead body on a bed in front of a bush. He wanted to show her sleeping in a bower. But the cruel truth of a dead body could not be hid.

He brought it to Calcutta and had it enlarged. With the death of Bulu, Chandrasekhar Babu came over to Calcutta with his grief-stricken wife and children. He found it impossible to stay in his house without Bulu. He stayed in Calcutta for a month. There he gave the picture to a photographer. He was asked to make it a living picture. The photographer tried his best. This first impression of the altered photograph soon gave place to the shock of reality. The paleness could be removed by colour but where the eyes are closed, how much of the real man resides therein? Life is life so long as those two lamps are burning. Even the blind has that flame. It leaves the dead eyes.

He hugged the picture several times on the first day.

He hung it up on the wall in his village home. He would look straight to the picture arising in the morning. Her eyes were closed. Whenever he entered the room in day time, he stood once before it and adorned it with flowers. Occasionally he would weep.

Forgetfulness is the triumph of death over life. But Chandrasekhar Babu inwardly resolved not to lose Bulu in his life. She was kept alive by the nectar of memory. He would not accept defeat before Time, and would not lose Bulu.

* * * *

Change came over Chandrasekhar Babu's life. The dark, cloudy days of his life were gone. Clear autumn days dawned. They brought him fame and money. The great city as the centre of activity drew him out from the village. In the bed room of his hired house he hung up the picture of Bulu. Not a day passed without flower-offering to or a talk with the picture. She appeared again and again in his writings. He lived in this manner for 10 years and then shifted to a house of his own. Bulu's picture was also put up there.

Whether or not there was any nectar on earth, he was sure it could be found in life and he infused this belief in his writing. He became more famous. He became stricter with the avowed pursuit of his life. But suddenly, after 12 years, in 1962, he discovered that his Bulu was lost in obscurity. He could not guess when during this interval of 12 years, the thousand-petalled lotus of agony withered away and the precious gem dropped down to the bottom of the ocean of oblivion.

Somewhere in his house one afternoon the sound of an organtuned harmonium wafted up. He had freshly arisen from his siesta. That mechanical sound evoked the memory of a distant past in his blood stream and in every brain-cell. He became quite oblivious of time and place and felt that he was harked back to his childhood. In the quiet of such an afternoon of that day, a table harmonium was being played upon for the first time in his village. In his childhood, such a tune entwined all his nerves, pulses and brain-cells in a strange magical bound for which he had to purchase an organ in his early youth to learn singing, but his efforts proved unrewarding.

He followed the thread of the tune and came down to his sitting room. It was not an organ but an organ-tuned harmonium. It was being played upon by his youngest son, Sudhanya. This new harmonium was purchased for his daughter. It reminded him of the harmonium which he purchased in his early youth. It was brought into the house along with other articles. It was left in a corner. Its stands were broken, the polished coverings on the keys were worn-out and the bellows were punctured. But on that day it was found missing in its place. It was found out in an overturned condition in a corner of the stair-case leading to the terrace. When the lid was lifted it was found that all the reeds were gone. The little ones of the house had broken the organ, took out the reeds and made them playthings. They were now all lost only the shell remained. He lost the poise of mind, took the remains with his two hands and threw into the dustbin. Then in a strange way, but he was not aware how, it crept in, there was a flashing revival of the memory of Bulu's picture.

It struck him that day that for a long spell of time he had not seen the picture. It was long time, no doubt but he could not recall how long. His Bulu, his lost jewel, had been really lost. He ran upstairs and stood in his sleeping room and looked all around. Where was Bulu's picture? It was nowhere, nowhere, nowhere!

There was a sarcastic laughter of Time, silent and formless, in that vacant spot, so harshly real. He looked inwards. He tried to call up in his remembrance the face of his daughter Bulu. Again that void. He had forgotten her face. It was totally obliterated. Really there was the death of Bulu.

His inner soul cried out piteously. But it did not bring any release. The truth of reality smashed down to dust all his concepts. It seemed to say — "Just close your eyes and see. You are misled. You are a worshipper of untruth. Just see the empty and false fruits of your pursuit."

He visualised it in the case of Bulu's picture. At last that picture was found in the same condition in which the organ was found. It was a mere

semblance of a picture that was pale and discoloured. The glass was broken, the chemical paint was worn-out. It was kept on a heap in the lumber room.

He wrote thus in the story in "Navajuga" — "Oh the world! Oh the cruel law of time! Oh, the selfishness of the present! Wipe out for good — wipe out the past. Inquilab, Zindabad!"

He wrote elsewhere — "His voice broke down under the weight of his crying! Oh! Oh! Is this the pursuit of life? He failed to keep alive in his memory his dear one snatched away by death. Bulu died through a cruel joke. Death took place while she was under his control, in his presence and in his hand. Could anything be more ridiculous ? What is a worse defeat? There is no nectar; nothing like it. It is all bosh. Man is a beast! He too a beast!" It did not end here.

Still he would not accept defeat. He roved through the circle of photographers in Calcutta to have the photo renovated. They relieved it.

Man is born to die. He devotes his span of life to waging a false fight with death like one mad. Thousands of years have gone by, uncounted men have crossed the bar. They searched for nectar and died for want of it. In spite of all these man cannot believe that there is no nectar.

Perhaps this time, under the present belief he put the photograph by the side of his deity in his place of worship.

The deity was not something more. The deities or gods were pictures, some stock and stone, some earthen or copper idols. The photograph was put by their side. After several months he noticed that it had become bloated. A spoonful of water was poured daily on it. This was the reason why it looked bloated.

He raised it through restless anxiety. The frame too was bloated. It gave in. The glass fell down and was broken. The picture too came down. A splinter glass pierced into his chest. He was stunned. He realised and visualised the hard truth that the nectar he sprinkled had made the picture rot instead of brightening it.

Splinter glass pierced into his chest. He was stunned.

When he became conscious of his wound it was found to bleed.

He had to stop his worship and asked for tincture iodine.

* * * *

He wrote about it in the "Navajuga". It was a frank composition. He scourged himself more. The entire world was reduced to untruth. As if the facial grace of everyone including himself had been effaced out and the ugly expression of the beast had come out. What was called humanism in the present age in place of manliness was dissected by him and he exposed its interior, — a frame of straw and rope shaped by the falsity of man.

None wanted to know the real state of the mind of Chandrasekhar Babu. The horizon he discovered in life suddenly burst a covering and it became more distinct. Standing on the desert he discovered or saw with his piercing eyes that around the horizon an inexhaustible current of water was murmuring down. He espied the semblance of a green belt on the banks. He imagined that the travellers of the ages who trod on it, of at least those who proceeded onwards without halting fixing their gaze on the horizon must have reached that destination. By the side of the river, a habitation of matchless beauty must have sprung up. Those who failed to see this horizon or disbelieved it though looking at it and took to other routes by turning their backs thereon or by bypassing them were the people whose skeletons filled up the desert. But today he was awakened to the belief that the horizon, the river, the lush greenery —everything was mere illusion and myth. The non-believers alone had known the truth. They did not take to the desert path but danced on the sand as long as they could and enjoyed life by eating, drinking and being merry and smilingly sighed their last breath. They did not become mortified and sad. They did not heave deep sighs.

The telephone rang. He held the receiver — "Hallo "!

—'Hallo'! who are you ? Whom do you want ?

—I am Romen, Romen Bose. Is Chandrasekhar in ?

—Chandrasekhar speaking.

—How are you ? Why this voice ?

—"My voice" Chandrasekhar laughed. He heaved a deep sigh and said — 'What shall I say ? It will be a lie if I say nothing has happened. Brother, I am very much broken-hearted. I feel I have been worshipping the untruth all these days. I spun falsehood and told lies to the people.

—I understood it when I read "Heart's blood." It appealed to me. But why have you written in that vein ?

— At least, I learnt a truth in my life and told it to the people. A partial penance."

—No ! no ! no ! It does not behove you to say so or to write so. Do you know? Whatever you might accept as reality, in truth man is quite naked but you do not call nakedness truth.

Chandrasekhar laughed and said — Certainly you have not included in it the nakedness of saints like Tailanga Swami ?

—No. Certainly not.

—Then? But when it is falsified and is on a par with the nakedness of a lunatic and it exhibits its teeth in cruel laughter, is there any other way than to cry hiding the face with two hands?

Romen Basu kept quiet for some time and said "—Well! yes! How is your son-in-law?"

—I am afraid today to tell you the serious truth.

A deep sigh floated over through the receiver and then came the word — "Well".

"Well". Chandrasekhar Babu put down the receiver.

Romen Basu was an intelligent man — learned too. At the same time he was good-hearted — a rare thing in these days.

Chandrasekhar Babu's wife re-entered the room. "Won't you take your food ? Or will you give it up ?"

Chandrasekhar smiled — At least I am not going to give it up. on the contrary, the reverse is the truth. I am to eat in a goodly manner. But my stomach revolts. What am I to do ?

Sometimes in a heated brain he thought of putting up in a hotel.

The wife went out to bring his food. Chandrasekhar came outside. — "No, he will give up writing. He ought not to write".

Suddenly he re-entered the room. He dialed the phone.

"Hallo ! Sahitya Bitan ? Is that Bidhubhusan ? I am Chandrasekhar. Hear me. I won't be able to write any more. No. No. Forgive me brother. I am defeated. Release me. I entreat you".

After a few days, Chandrasekhar rang up Bidhubhusan.

—Bidhubhusan ! I am your brother.

—Please tell me, brother.

—Listen. Do you require any writing ?

—Are you writing it ?

—"Yes. I have got a plot ? But what I have written in the "Navajuga" —

—"Heart's blood"?

—Yes, the first part of the story will contain the summary of "Heart's blood". There will be something more thereafter — but it will be a mere story.

—Certainly I will publish it. Have you finished it ?

—No. I will begin it.

He put down the receiver and drew out some paper and took up the pen.

Strange is the world ! Strange is man ! The event of the last night struck him as uncommon. Day by day, he was being shattered down and his son-in-law meanwhile expired. The son-in-law could not be saved on any account. Utmost attempt was made but everything ended in failure. While he was in such a state of mind, suddenly the telephone rang up last night.

—"Hallo !" It was the voice of a shy maid.

Chandrasekhar Babu had the receiver in his hand—"Hallo" ! Whom do you want, please ?

—Is this the house of Chandrasekhar Babu, writer ?

—Yes, whom do you want?

—I want him.

—Yes, speaking.

—I am a young girl, I like you very much. I love to read your writings. How can I talk to you if you begin with 'please' ?

—Well. I drop it.

—Do you know how near and dear you appear to me ?

—It is my fortune.

—I avow the truth. It seems to me that in my past life perhaps you were my father.

—I bless you, mother.

—I am reading in the B.A. class. We are to read your writings. Besides, I have gone through all your books. I forgot — all about my meal and bath, these two months.

Her voice was tremulous with emotion. It did not please Chandrasekhar Babu. Still he could not stop it. Her emotion was mounting high. Chandrasekhar Babu had to find out an answer. It was found out. He replied — "You are a rare reader of mine. Did every piece please you ?"

—Everyone of your writings. Again, your story "Heart's blood" published in the Puja number of "Navajuga" pleased me exceedingly. I wept as I finished reading it.

—"You wept ? Chandrasekhar Babu became a bit alert. She was an extraordinary girl. People became emotionally agitated when they read "Heart's blood". The whole world evaporated into the big void of nothingness in it. One might weep after reading it but how could it please one ?

—Yes. I wept. I felt like running to you at that time.

Chandrasekhar Babu kept quiet. He could not tumble upon any answer.

The girl from the other end proceeded — I am quite eager to go to you. I read in the Bethune College. While I was passing over the Tala Bridge today, I thought of getting down. But it struck me —if you think otherwise.

—I won't think, otherwise.

—Then I go to you ?

—Yes, come.

—Tomorrow ?

—Come ! Then I put down the receiver.

—Please, you have not asked my name ?

Chandrasekhar Babu laughed and said—I have just forgotten it ? What is your name ?

—I am called Bulu.

Chandrasekhar was startled — "Bulu"!

—Yes, my real name is Sandhya Bandopadhyay.

—What ! wonderful !

"I am called Bulu! My real name is Sandhya Bandopadhyay ?"

The sound of sob wafted down from the other side. Simultaneously, the sound of putting down the receiver was also heard. The girl could no longer control herself.

This was his Bulu — Sandhya Bandopadhyay. There was no agreement but still he fancied that it must be so — it must be so.

Her lost child Bulu — Sandhya — had come back to him, restored to a new life by the nectarine agony of his heart. He was seeing her and he was weeping and was thinking how unique was the human heart with its nectar. A girl had hurried forward on hearing the story of the agony of a father's heart which was being consumed by the inextinguishable fire of mortal affliction. He fancied she was no other than his daughter, she came to pour out—

No, why should it be thus? Today he would accept the doctrine of transmigration of souls.

This one was his daughter whom he called Bulu whose real name was Sandhya — Sandhya Bandopadhyay. It was a greater truth than the truth of reality itself.

This was the story which Chandrasekhar had begun to write out. It was not a story, yet a story. Really it was not a story at all but at the same time, it was a story too.

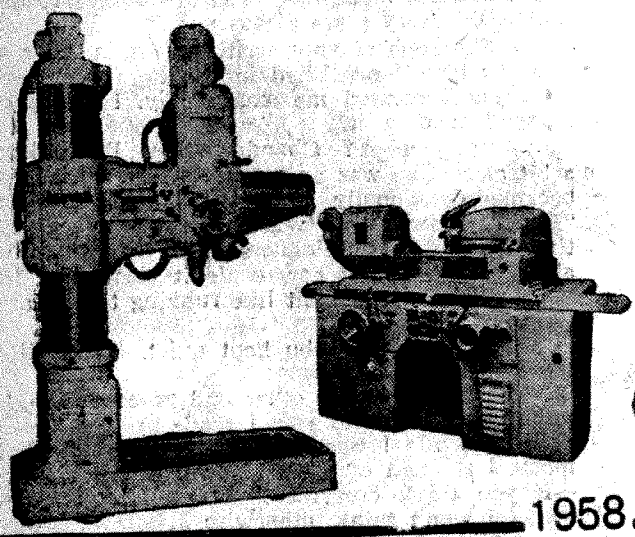
On that day, his grandson was performing the monthly ritual of his deceased father in another room. The priest was reciting the mantras :—

"All the winds blow in happiness.
All the streams exude nectar".

But no one in his house would admit her to be Bulu, their Sandhya.

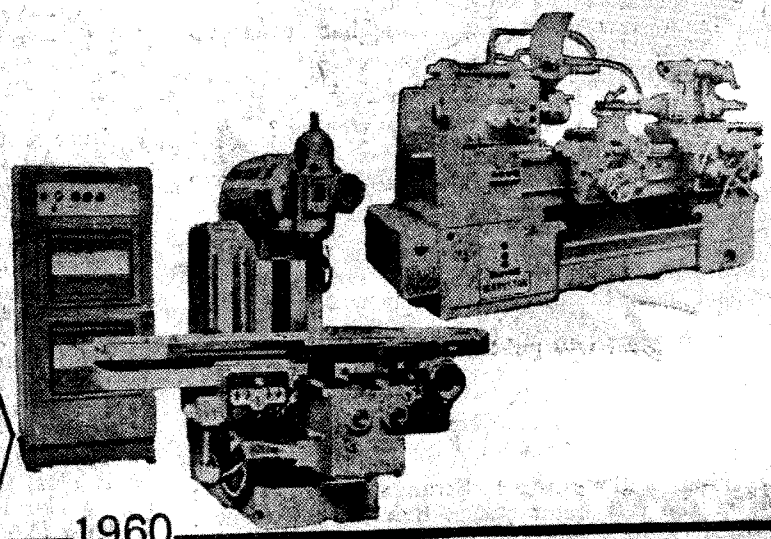
Let them rest with their negative attitude.

Translated by
Satyendra Mohon Mukhopadhyaya

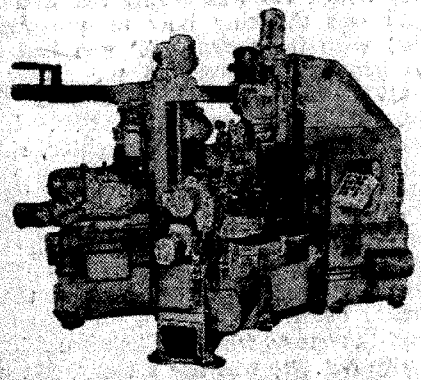


hmt

HIGH POWER
AND HIGH PRECISION
GENERAL PURPOSE MACHINE TOOLS
FOR THE TOOLROOM AND
1958 FOR PRODUCTION



MULTITOOL AND
PROGRAMME CONTROLLED
SEMI AUTOMATIC
MACHINE TOOLS
FOR BATCH PRODUCTION 1960



1963 AUTOMATION BY
UNIT HEAD MACHINES
FOR MASS PRODUCTION

prosperity through industry

hmt HINDUSTAN MACHINE TOOLS BANGALORE
PINJORE KALAMASSERY HYDERABAD

By PROBODH KUMAR SANYAL

A good number of families had come to the health resort that year. Not all of them were Bengalees; some well-to-do Bihari families had also come and occupied houses on high rent here and there. It was a small town in Bihar and enjoyed reputation as a health resort. Firstly, here the water from the wells was rich in mineral content, particularly lime and iron to tone up the poor digestive system of Bengalees. Secondly, the houses stood wide apart with smooth open space in between them through which zig-zag paths led to a distant sylvan valley. The air was light, healthy and appetising. The climate did not allow acidity or indigestion to develop. Naturally the place was much liked by the Bengalees. The leisure that one enjoyed here in quiet surroundings was another of its attractions.

The river Sone was not far from this place. From cities and towns like Patna, Bhagalpur and Kiul, big boats came sailing here frequently. Also pilgrims passed through the place on a visit to the shrine of Mahadeoguni or the Sone Fair and en-route they had opportunity to visit Hanumangunj, Dariagunj and a few other places.

Throug the waterway, a few days ago, came on a big boat, Mr. Chowdhury and his wife who occupied a rented house. Mrs. Chowdhury's health, except for periodical attacks of a kind of headache, was otherwise good. In the opinion of her medical attendant, the river breeze incidental to a journey by boat should do her a lot of good. Abhavati or Mrs. Chowdhury, however, did not agree with her medical attendant.

"The headache will leave me as soon as I am out of Calcutta. I see no point in spending a lot of money on a journey by boat," she had told her husband.

"Why do you say so. How can that be," her husband had opposed her rather impatiently. The "head has to do with the entire body. Head can't be ignored. Money is small consideration before your health, Abha."

"The climate of the place should be enough to effect a cure. We don't have to spend much if we go by train," she suggested.

No doubt journey by train was less expensive but Chowdhury did not pay heed to it. He seemed to know more than his wife about her health. He also knew some wives preferred to endure discomfort to save their husband's money.

"All my pleasure from this journey depends on keeping you cheerful. I can't quite explain my feelings to you, Abha. In fact I get inspiration for all

my work finding you hale and hearty," he had added.

Although their house was situated in the centre of an open space, it was surrounded by gardens of the neighbours. With the break of dawn, the crimson glow of the rising sun invaded their bedroom. It was the beginning of the month of October and at this time, dew drops glistened on the meadows. The glare of the morning sun on the sandy river beech could also be seen. By the time the husband and wife returned from their morning walk they would find their neighbours out of bed.

The Sen family from Calcutta had also come. But here too, they could not discard the kind of living to which they were accustomed in Calcutta. They held their morning and evening sessions of gossip and indoor games regularly in the Verandah of their house. They didn't care to go out for morning and evening walks. The women kept themselves busy with household work, running errands for their males and catering to their various needs all through the day without giving a single thought on their health for which they were supposed to have come. They continued to be pre-occupied with, as slaves of their old habit, cooking, and cleaning the utensils. They had no time to enjoy a care-free leisure.

"But how do you expect them to live differently? Household work and especially cooking cannot be dispensed with for the family wherever one may be," observed Abha.

"I know that too. But why this elaborate programme of cooking when you come out for a change of climate to improve your health? The food should be just simple and wholesome on an occasion like this. If you have to keep yourself busy over it throughout the day, what chance is there for rest and relaxation? How would your health improve? Isn't it a shame the way their males oppress them? While they themselves have a good time, their womenfolk work like maidservants. This change of place for them is no better than coming out of one house to enter another. Don't you think this is sheer injustice. Abha?" commented Chowdhury.

The fact is, Chowdhury was somewhat finicky by nature. For his wife's comfort he had sent the cook earlier by train and brought two servants with him. Arriving here he had engaged a gardener to look after the flower trees and plants in the garden. He didn't allow his wife to have anything to do with cooking or other household chores.

From dawn to dusk, Abha had all her needs attended to by others. The experienced cook and the two trained servants did their jobs faultlessly. Except rambling about and enjoying uninterrupted leisure in the house, she had nothing else to do. This is just what a husband should provide for his wife at a health resort, thought Chowdhury. Bengalee wives generally lacked attention from their husbands in matters of health. That his wife did not have a grouse on this score, gave him much satisfaction.

"Have you ever noticed," confided Chowdhury one day to his wife "how Mrs. Chatterjee moves about shabbily dressed? If she were my wife, I should have committed suicide. But then Chatterjee lacks good taste, has little education — altogether an outlandish sort of a person."

"I wonder that it didn't escape your notice. But may be they are not financially well off," remarked Abha with a smile.

"Far from it, my dear," said Chowdhury. "They have come here by train travelling second class to show off they are monied people. I see Chatterjee smoking tins of cigarettes. Can't he purchase a good sari for his wife? Why, it is not only Chatterjee. Look at that well-known Bose family of Calcutta. Their eldest daughter limps in a pair of undersized high-heeled shoes. Can't they purchase a pair of slippers for her worth two rupees? Their two little boys don't have good shirts to put on. The family may have a big name but no decent living to its credit."

Abha was fairly used to hearing such caustic comments about others from her husband. It was however not untrue that theirs was a peaceful orderly life with little want. They had brought over a costly gramophone which under Chowdhury's instructions was played on by a servant every morning. As a matter of fact, Abha's mornings broke to the music of Bhajan and Kirtan songs from gramophone records. The chirping of the birds on the meadows could be heard through the open windows. The gardener regularly placed sun flowers on a vase in the room. Some rose buds were about to appear to make the garden look gay.

Although some families were rather their close neighbours, Chowdhury did not feel inclined to be familiar with them. He was averse to hob-nobbing with all sorts of people. His mental make-up did not allow easy adjustment with people outside his class. Aristocracy is almost always confined to its own class and its ways are different.

On that day the husband and wife were discussing the subject of sticking to their class when absent-mindedly they had walked up a fairly long distance. It was nearing evening. The water of the Sone looked red from the rays of the setting sun. Small kerosene lamps had already been lit in some of the boats on the river carrying merchandise.

Chowdhury liked this part of the countryside. Married four years and not having a child, he felt better to pass time with his wife in lone surroundings. They halted under a shady peepul tree and sat under it on the soft grass. To-day they had actually walked a good distance from their house. Instruction, however, had been given to the servant to bring a tonga to this side if their return was delayed.

From the other side of the river touching the horizon, the bright moon had moved up in the sky. A light cool breeze blew against their faces and eyes to produce the effect of a kind of mild intoxication. To-day Abha looked splendid. Even though she was a wife, her walk through the moonlit night to a lonely river bank made her look like an enchantress. She was so close to him, yet as if the shadow of a remote mystery hung upon her filling Chowdhury's mind with emotion.

Abha was not much educated but that didn't matter. Chowdhury did not marry her for education. The spell of a visit to Europe in youth was on him for some time, for he had seen how beautiful young girls of the west enjoying full freedom moved about, but it wore off after he came in contact with Abha who did not let him feel he missed anything for having her as his mate. Free from sophistication she retained much of the generous wealth of beauty of her youthful days.

Like a river in monsoon Abha's figure looked full to the brim but with no strong current in it to incite one to plunge headlong into it. A quiet charm

radiated from her entire being in which Chowdhury bathed sometimes with deep delight.

"Hello Abha", asked Chowdhury.

"Yes, my dear", replied Abha.

Placing one arm round his wife's neck Chowdhury enquired, "Do you want to go anywhere from here".

"Wherever you would like to take me to", replied Abha. "I have still one and a half month's leave to spend. We can go round in Rajasthan via Delhi and Agra. Would it be all right?" proposed Chowdhury.

"It's no doubt a good idea", remarked Abha. "Do you remember Abha, you had said before we started you would purchase a sari from each of the places we shall be visiting?" continued Chowdhury.

"Aren't you just mad! Casually I might have said such a thing, but do you think I actually meant it.? No, there is no need to waste money in this way", remarked Abha.

"That won't do", said Chowdhury rather complainingly. "You always have expenses on your mind and nothing else." If you had known what pleasure it gives me seeing you always dressed up elegantly, you would never have said so".

Abha passed the fingers of one of her shapely hands through the hair on her husband's head in silent appreciation of his remarks. Then in a soft undertone she said, "If I didn't have good saries, I should have asked from you but I have quite a number of them already".

They were quiet for some time.

"What are you thinking about, my dear", asked Chowdhury. "Well", said Abha. "When we were leaving for this place your younger sister asked for two balls of wool but I forgot to get them for her. Isn't it a great shame?"

"Why do you feel like this?" Why should you have to give whatever is asked from you?" Why this reckless charity, Abha", said Chowdhury almost excitedly.

"It's just a trifling gift", replied Abha.

Abha smiled beautifully "Is it a question to be asked after such a long time?"

"I don't take it the way you do", rejoined Chowdhury. "If ever you are in want, will anybody come forward to help? Everyone, I find, tries to exploit you for your good nature. No, you have done nothing wrong. If you want to retain your control on anybody don't give away things quickly. It is good to make a show of charity but never a wise policy to give the thing actually away."

Abha had known her husband intimately for four years. This queer argument of her husband did not surprise her. She said nothing.

Both of them were again quiet for sometime. The moon shone brighter now. Chowdhury drew away his wife's head on his lap. Resting one hand on her he said, "How happy I feel, Abha. You are lying on my lap like this and it is heavenly bliss for me. The light of the moon on your body makes you look like a fairy. Oh, when I think of my good fortune, I feel pity for the husbands of Bengal".

"By the way, Abha" asked Chowdhury, "have I made you happy?"

Abha smiled beautifully. "Is it a question to be asked after such a long time?" she said.

"Have you really loved me" enquired Chowdhary.

Clasping her husband's waist with her arms Abha said, "How could I speak it out?"

Chowdhury bent down and kissed his wife on the cheek. Abha's eyes closed.

In the bright light of the moon, a tonga was seen coming towards them. No doubt their servant had brought it. Abha hurriedly sat up and said with some concern, "Oh, we are rather late today for your evening tea."

"What a glorious night. But the fool of a servant has spoiled everything for us" remarked Chowdhury sullenly.

The night had well advanced when they returned to the house. There was light in their bedroom and the perfume of the burnt out incense sticks placed in the room early evening lingered still. Seeing them return, the other servant started playing on the gramophone from another room a record in Ashavari tune. The cook had left for preparing tea.

Chowdhury walked up to a table in the room to find if any letter had come by the afternoon mail. No, there was none. But suddenly his eyes fell on a letter on the table and at once his face went pale. This is the letter he had written today to his office which was to be posted before the mail left. His boss was to go on tour within two or three days. Now there was no chance of his getting the letter before he left. Chowdhury felt he had been let down badly.

"Rambirij" he shouted.

"Huzoor", answered the servant as he appeared before the master.

"Why haven't you posted this letter by today's mail"?

"Memsahib didn't tell me to post it, Huzoor" replied the servant.

"Send your Memsahib here, you rascal", shouted Chowdhury.

The servant gave the message to Abha and took cover elsewhere.

Abha hurriedly entered the room and asked her husband, "what has happened?"

Chowdhury was trembling in rage. Pointing his finger at the unposted letter on the table he asked sternly, "Why hasn't this letter been posted, Abha?"

"Oh my God", exclaimed Abha. "I forgot all about having it posted".

"Do you realise what this forgetting means," pointed out Chowdhury, "I had come here on a false pretext. In that letter I wanted to inform my boss I was seriously ill. A medical report in proof of my illness is also enclosed."

Abha stood abashed for a time. "It surely is a big mistake of mine. I am sorry for it", she said.

"As a consequence of your mistake," continued Chowdhury, "We will now have to return to Calcutta in a day or two, Oh, with what hopes I came!"

"Don't feel upset so much. I am quite well now. Let's go back to Calcutta", she said trying to console her husband.

"This is not your first mistake, Abha", went on Chowdhury. "Don't you remember that other mistake of yours, what loss I had to sufler for it!"

Abha now looked up to her husband full in the face and replied calmly, "It was not much of a loss. Only you were put to some inconvenience for a while."

"But why should I be put to inconvenience through your mistake", demanded Chowdhury.

My charge against you is you have failed to do your duty.

"Listen", answered Abha, "House-keeping involves such little mistakes. Why didn't you tell me in the morning it was that urgent to post the letter by today's mail ?"

"Well, it's my business if I did or didn't I am not bound to explain everything. It is enough I asked you to get the letter posted today. My charge against you is you have failed to do your duty", said Chowdhury in a manner so as to hurt her.

"Don't try to snub me unnecessarily. It is just by chance that the letter hasn't been posted. Why didn't you have it posted yourself ?" remonstrated Abha.

"Why should I have to? Why you are here then"? said Chowdhury raising the pitch of his voice.

"You know that too well. Don't please keep saying it", returned Abha.

"That I should be put to difficulty is what you want, remarked Chowdhury.

Abha grew excited. She blurted out "what I want or don't want, you needn't bother".

"What's the big idea?" asked Chowdhury. "Why shouldn't I bother to know ? What haven't I done for you ?"

"Whatever you have done is for your own sake, to please yourself, to satisfy your personal interest. No more of this talk, please", replied Abha in a decisive voice.

Chowdhury thumped the table with the palm of his right hand and screamed out, "What a shameless woman I am married to. What meanness....."

"You are meaner", replied Abha. "For you don't even know what gentlemanliness is. No husband ever quarrels with his wife over such a trifle".

"It may be a trifle with you, but certainly not so far as I am concerned. You are utterly indifferent to me, your disrespect for me is deep-rooted," returned Chowdhury.

"Well. I have no better respect for you than what you think I have. You may do whatever pleases you," said Abha in exasperation.

Pacing to and fro in the room, Chowdhury flared out saying, "I know how to curb this impudence of yours."

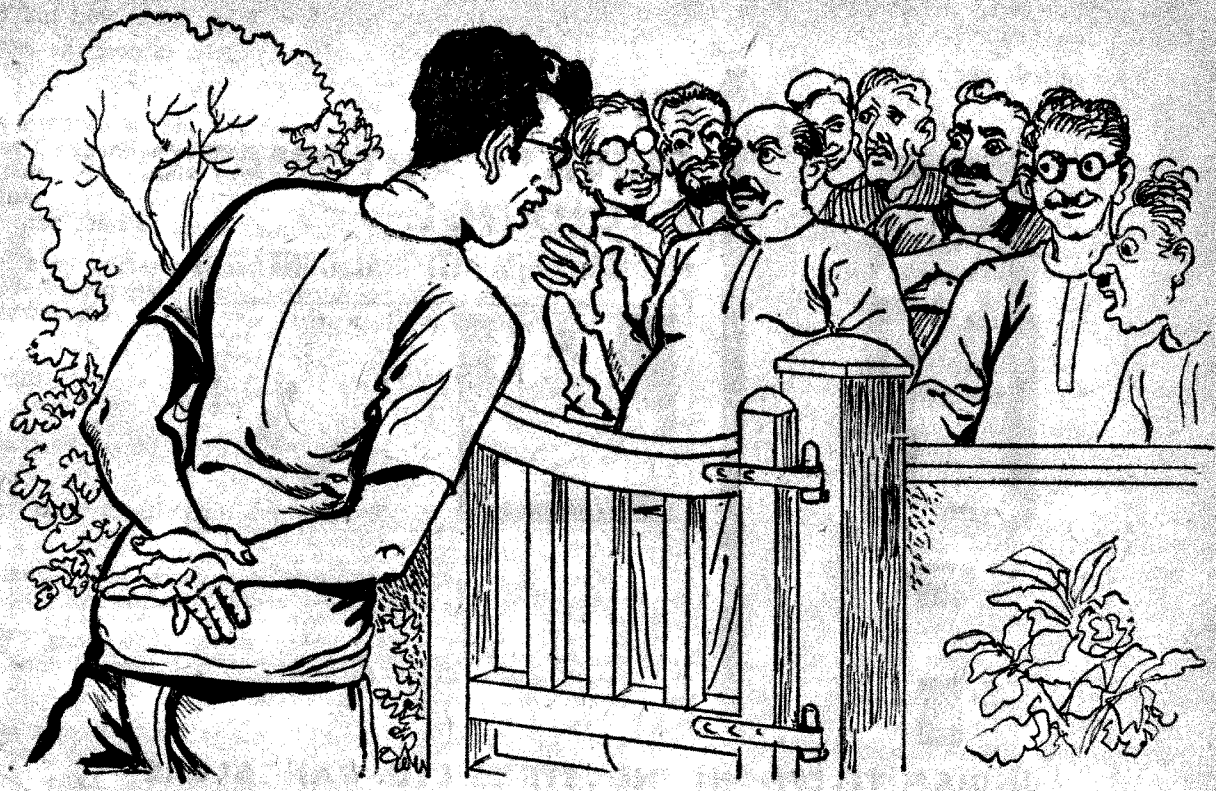
"Not that you never tried before, but I also know your little tricks. That's why I could see through you cajolery and make out what it was meant for", retailed Abha.

"Be careful," warned Chowdhury, "be careful, I say".

"I am quite careful about myself. Don't you try to scare me like this. If you have to show your red eyes, do better show them to your servants," returned Abha.

"Do you think I give you any higher place," howled Chowdhury. "The shoe, you know, is for the foot and not for the head. Too proud of your beauty, aren't you ? Well such beauty as yours can be purchased in Calcutta for a few chips. You mean woman, do you think I can't ? Yes, I can—definitely. It isn't any hard job for me to keep you where you belong to. Why it's a great folly to have even pity for a person like you. One should never believe a serpent :"

Some neighbours had in the meantime collected in



"What brings you all here ?"

front of the garden gate of their house. Seeing them, Chowdhury came out of the room. He was panting.

He walked up to the gate and asked in a high-pitched voice "What brings you all here?"

A gentleman from the crowd answered with a soft smile, "We are all your neighbours, Sir. We heard shouts and thought something might have gone wrong. So we called".

"It's a lie", said, Chowdhury excitedly. "Do I not know it's one of your funny ways? You have collected here only to see the tamasha when a husband is having a heated discussion with his wife. Don't you feel ashamed? Aren't you gentlemen".

The gentleman was stupefied for a while. Then he said apologetically, "We are going away, Sir, kindly excuse us".

"Do please go away and attend to your personal matters", replied Chowdhury.

Re-entering the room he found Abha lying on the bed in an exhausted condition. "Look", he said, "I have given those fellows a bit of my mind. If I shouldn't quarrel with my own wife, should I quarrel with theirs?"

But what's the matter with you, Abha?" enquired Chowdhury with anxious concern as he leaned over her.

Abha lay still with her eyes closed. Chowdhury rushed out of the room to get a little cold water with which he gently massaged his wife's forehead.

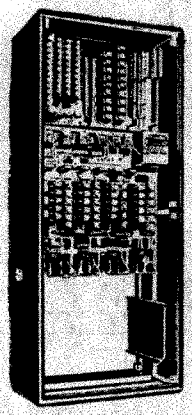
"Isn't it that damn headache again Abha", enquired Chowdhury softly.

"Yes", muttered Abha.

"Now you can see for yourself. I know you are not quite well. That's why I wanted so keenly to avail of a long leave to come over here", deplored Chowdhury. Then with one hand he began massaging his wife's forehead and with the other kept a punkhha blowing to let her have a soothing breeze.

(Translated by Binay Chakravarty)

ASP.ITI.51



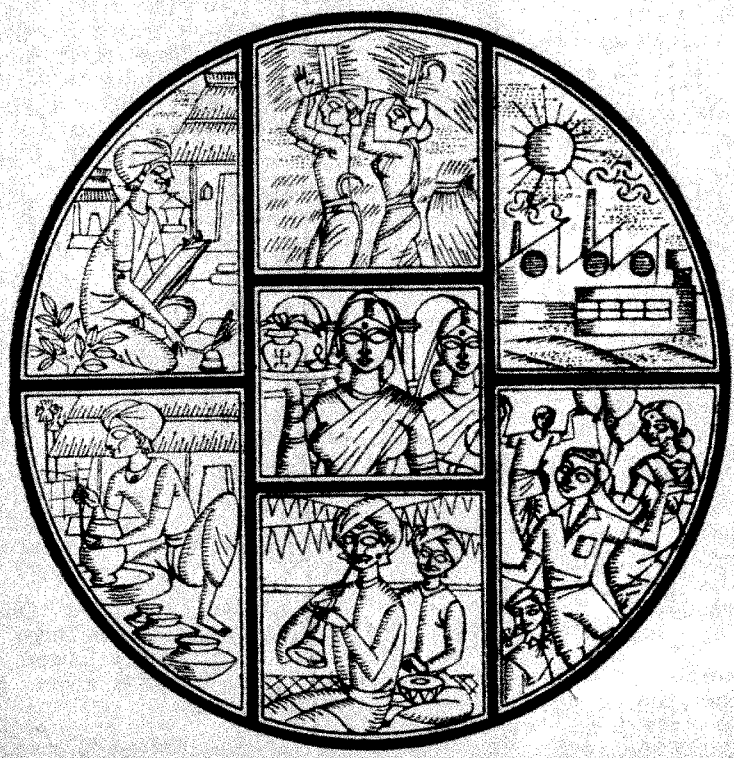
The Pioneer Manufacturers of Telecommunication Equipment in India.

ITI
PRIVATE AUTOMATIC EXCHANGE
FOR MAXIMUM INTERNAL CONTACTS

Fifty or hundred or more-you can have any number of internal connexions with an I.T.I. PAX. In fact, with the special facilities like Key Calling, Priority service and Tie lines an efficient and elaborate network can be built around an I.T.I. PAX=Whatever the size of your organization and its special needs, I.T.I. offers tailor-made PAXs to suit YOUR requirements. PAXs are available with 10, 25, 50, 100 or 200 lines.

INDIAN TELEPHONE INDUSTRIES LTD. BANGALORE

Sales & Service Offices: Bombay, Calcutta, Delhi, Madras.



To millions working
in the fields or in cities,
in craft or industry,
To millions of children
This festive season
means a joyous home coming
or going places,
eagerly looked forward to,
despite the hard times.
We offer to you
our greetings for
the Autumn Festival.

EASTERN RAILWAY

MISTER BHATIA

By MOHAN RAKESH

BHATIA insisted that he should be addressed with a mister in front or esquire at the end of his name. Nothing short of this would satisfy him. Whenever he had money, he went to a matinee film show. He went alone but always purchased three tickets. As soon as the booking closed, he would start looking for prospective buyers for the extra tickets. He did not part with them for just anyone. He would wait for two unattached girls and sell them the tickets, keeping the middle one for himself. This was his way of ensuring pleasant company.

Instead of taking eggs for breakfast and tomatoes, he preferred to have a sky blue letter pad on his desk, with his name embossed in deep blue. The pad bore the words 'K. C. Bhatia (B.Sc., LL.B.)'. The degrees were shown in brackets because he had not acquired them. He however felt that he had spent enough time in their pursuit and had therefore attained the requisite standard to entitle him their use.

Three years ago Bhatia weighed a hundred pounds. Last year he weighed only ninty five. This year he is only about eighty. For the last two years he has been without a job. For a whole year he tried to get one. Then he gave up.

When I met Bhatia, he had only two possessions; his body and a rented one room flat. Even though it was a single room, Bhatia will not hear of anything less than a flat for it. Bombay is terribly short of accommodation. He therefore managed always to get a paying guest. I also met him when I moved into his flat as his paying guest.

I had been in Bhatia's flat barely a week. One morning when I got up, I found him sitting at his desk surrounded by papers allround, deep in thought, as if he was trying to solve a mystery. I stared at him trying to fathom his predicament. He was oblivious of my presence. I did not therefore consider it proper to disturb him and started browsing through the morning paper. Hardly had I picked it up when Bhatia threw away the pen he was holding and shouted, "Here it is, at last." And he thumped the table loudly. "What have you found, Bhatia?" I asked putting down the paper. "The horse," smiled Bhatia, pressing his upper lip between his teeth, "the horse." "The horse?" I asked puzzled. Bhatia did not reply but pointed to a paper in front of him. I looked at it over his shoulder and found 'GIZALA' written in bold type. I looked again at him unable to understand it all. "Gizala will win the second race today," explained Bhatia laboriously, "and what a win it will be. It will upset all calculations, all hopes, all guesses. It will be the greatest upset of the season. It will give hundred and thirty rupees for every ten. Do you want to come?" Without waiting for an answer, he started sauntering up and down the room. Then he stopped in front of the mirror, looked at himself and ran the comb through his unruly hair. Putting it down, he felt his over-night beard. Then he put some cream on the brush and went out to fetch water.

I went through the newspaper. On the eighth page was a write-up about the races and photographs of horses. There was a longish account of 'Lady Cleopatra' and forecasts about 'Meghpuspa,' 'Nasarullah' and 'Rangarao.'

Bhatia brought the water. "Do you go to the races every week?" I enquired. "I go whenever I have the money", he replied without looking towards me. "Have you ever won?" I asked. Bhatia opened the drawer and took out a towel. Wrapping it round his neck, he said, "There is a win for me today." Just then there was a knock at the door. Bhatia opened it. In came a darkish looking man —

short and thin — with a small moustache. He smiled displaying his dirty teeth, nodded half-heartedly towards Bhatia and took out the book he was carrying under his arm. "Next month," said Bhatia, without giving the visitor a chance to speak. The visitor broadened his smile, wiped the chair and sat on it without taking notice of what had been told him. Running through the pages of the book, he said, "This is the fifth month running." "I know" replied Bhatia impatiently, "I must have the rent this time," said the visitor again. Bhatia put his hand in his hip pocket, took out a five rupee note and flung it towards the visitor. He got up yawning and said, "Shall I come next week?" "No," said Bhatia, sharply, "on the first," and started moving the razor quickly on the lower part of his chin. A thin scratch appeared on it. As the visitor's steps faded in the distance, Bhatia grumbled, "The rascal, the unmitigated swine, ..." and came and sat near me. Taking out a wad of five-rupee notes from his pocket, he spread them on the bed like a pack of cards.

"What are you going to do with this money?" I asked.

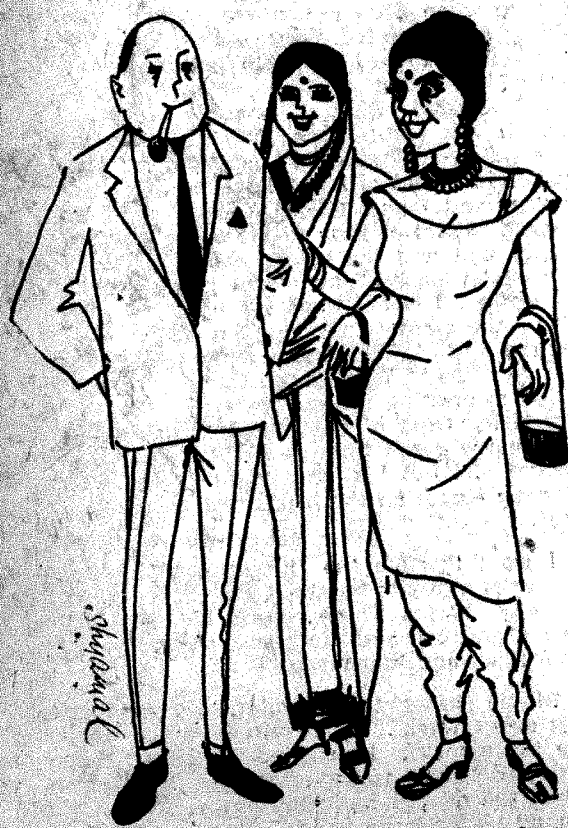
"Within six hours," he replied, "they are going to multiply. They will be two thousand." And he slipped them back into his pocket. "Where did you get all this money?" I enquired knowing that yesterday he had a bare rupee and some annas. Bhatia gave a self-satisfied smile and said, "Got them from Gopu Mal."

I had met Gopu Mal once or twice. He was a very short, fat man with a hoarse voice. Had he been an inch or two shorter he could have easily been mistaken for a dwarf.

"Are you going to put all this money on Gizala?" I enquired. "Yes," he replied with a very American accent, and started polishing his shoes.

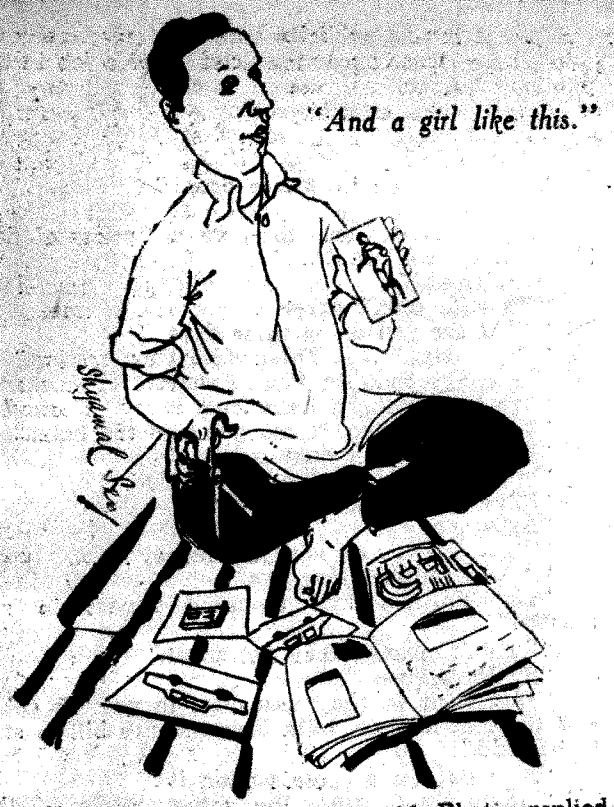
* * * *

Bhatia turned out to be right. Gizala came first in the second race. Those who put their money on it got a hundred and thirty five rupees for every ten. But Bhatia had a tragedy. During the first race he met, accidentally, one Captain Kashev. In the stampede for tickets, the Captain stepped on Bhatia's toes. Besides a profuse apology, he offered him a cup of tea. There Bhatia met the Captain's wife Sharda and his sister Leena. Leena was a vivacious young lady. Poor Bhatia became an instant victim to her charms. Passing him the cup of tea, she said, "Gizala cannot win the second race". Those seductive lips of hers could have made anyone believe anything. Bhatia did not even express an opinion about Gizala's chances and readily agreed that it had none. Leena confided that Nasarullah will be made to win. Captain Kashev said that he was going to put five hundred rupees on it. Nasarullah did not get even the second, third or fourth place. Captain Kashev lit a cigarette and sighed. For Bhatia the only consolation was that he had lost on Leena's advice. He was prepared to lose his whole world at her bidding. Leena was very sympathetic: she even admired his knowledge about horses and their chances. Bhatia's heart was sinking at his loss but he kept smiling. When he reached home he abused them all — Leena, Captain Kashev and Nasarullah — as much as he could, to get even with them. The night he spent restlessly turning sides. Even in the next morning he lay in bed till late, without bothering how he was going to spend the day. I left him to his thoughts and went out. In the evening when I returned he was all decked up to go somewhere and was signing cheques for large amounts in a fat cheque book. As he saw me come, he motioned me to sit down and handed me a cheque for ten thousand rupees. "What madness is this," I asked. Bhatia replied in a very serious tone. "Don't think I am drunk." "Then it is even worse," I retorted, as I sat down. Bhatia gave a loud laugh. Have you seen the date on the cheque?" I looked at the cheque again. It was dated fifty years hence. "How did you manage to get this cheque book?" I enquired. "Found it in the flat, replied Bhatia. "Have you an account with this bank?" I asked. "No," replied Bhatia and disclosed that the cheque book belonged to Bhatnagar who stayed as his paying guest before me and who had to leave Bombay after a year of unsuccessful attempts at finding a job. As he told me this story, he wrote out another cheque for a lakh and twenty five thousand rupees in favour of Miss Leena Kapur. "What is this going on?" I enquired. Bhatia carefully folded the cheque, unfolded it, looked at it again and then folded it back. Then he took out a blue envelope from his pocket and removing a letter, put the cheque in it. The letter he handed over to me. It was from Captain Kashev asking him to come and discuss the next race and have dinner. "Are you going?" I asked. The question was superfluous. "Of course," replied Bhatia, "but the Dhobi has not brought my trousers. I shall have to iron this one and use it." And since the trousers were fairly dirty, Bhatia started a discourse on his philosophy on dressing. "If the shirt is nice and clean and well starched, one can do with dirty trousers. The eyes of the beholder notice first the shirt." I nodded and said, "That may be so but your shirt is also coming off at the shoulder seams." Bhatia gave a philosophical sigh and replied, "The jacket will cover it."



Leena was a vivacious young lady.

The dinner was at 7.30, but Bhatia had ironed his trousers, polished his shoes and had got ready at 6.30. To while away the time, he went down and brought the evening news. At 7.15 he had a last look at himself in the mirror and went to the party. He returned quite early. When I came back I found him cutting pictures from an illustrated magazine. "What is this latest craze?" I enquired. Bhatia replied, "I am trying to figure out what my life will be six months from now." "What, by cutting



"And a girl like this."

pictures from a magazine ?" I said. Bhatia replied, "Do you know my friend what my life will be six months hence ?" I looked at him seriously. "I shall have a drawing room like this," he continued, as he handed me the picture of a drawing room with the most ultra modern furnishings, "and a car like this". I had in my hand the picture of an American car which looked more like a luxury liner. "And a girl like this." He looked at the girl's picture fondly again for a while before handing it over to me. It was one of Rita Hayworth's film poses. "Where do you expect to find a girl like Rita Hayworth ?" I asked. "Right here in Bombay," he replied, "Not one but by dozens. All I need is money." "And where will the money come from ?" I enquired in a serious tone. Bhatia pointed a finger towards his head and said, "Out of the efforts of this fertile brain." "Then you are bound to get Rita Hayworth," I replied ironically and tried to get up. "Sit down," said Bhatia, "I'll tell you the whole thing. We are planning to issue a race card." "And who are we ?" I enquired. "Captain Kashev and I, of course," replied Bhatia with an expression as if he considered me unusually dim. "The Captain will finance the project and the brains will be mine. They are terribly impressed with my calculations. I am telling you. Within months things will be different. People will swear by Mr. Bhatia's tip."

And he cut the picture of a radiogram from the magazine and put it by the side of the drawing room. "That girl Leena is a perfect disciple. I am wondering....." "They seem to be making quite an investment," I observed. Bhatia remained serious and said, "Cultured she is but not one of those ravishing beauties. She is all right from present standards but I wonder if she will fit into my life six months from now.....you know what I mean..... may be she will." "This new life of yours, when does it start ?" I asked. "Wait and see," replied Bhatia, leaning forward, "Give me a year and I shall have an office in fort area. There will be four messenger boys and half a dozen typists. Outside there will be a sign board 'K. C. Bhatia Esquire.' There will be dancing every night at the Taj and dinner at the C.C.I." "Where do you intend starting your office to begin with?" I enquired. "Right here," he replied and started looking around the room. "We shall put a partition in. On one side I shall sit. The other will be used by the typist. The corridor will be the waiting room. As for Captain Kashev....." and he looked towards the balcony. "When does this project starts ?" I asked. Bhatia looked at the ceiling as if the answer was to come from there. Then he said, "Very soon. Probably from the first."

Bhatia had tea with Captain Kashev the next day. They went to pictures after that. Since it got late Bhatia stayed the night at their house. Next morning he returned at seven and went straight into bed. Addressing me he said, "See if I am running temperature". And he raised his arm towards me. "Did you have something that upset you ?" I asked in jest. Bhatia remained serious. "No it was not the food," he replied, "The bed they gave me was far too warm, soft and comfortable. I could'nt sleep a wink all night and felt as if I was running temperature." "There is no fever," I replied. Bhatia heaved a sigh, and started humming a tune. I went on looking at him and enquired after a while, "Did she sing last night ?" "Sings well," he replied. "Then you are progressing," I said. He smiled condescendingly. His eyes had the gleam of a Romeo.

From next day Bhatia's desk started piling up with books on races, newspapers of all sorts and forecasts about horses. The whole day Bhatia used to spend chewing his pencil and studying history of past races at Bombay and Poona. The evenings he spent with Captain Kashev. When he returned he complained of the same fever.

On Sunday I left early as I had to lunch with a friend. Bhatia was busy with his work. When I returned in the evening, the whole room was full of smoke. Bhatia sat in the balcony putting light to heaps of paper and the wind scattered the burning bits all over the room. "Intend putting the house on fire", I enquired moving towards the balcony, "Why don't you put some kerosene and show it the light ? Will be a quicker and a cleaner job." "I am burning some useless papers," said Bhatia annoyed. "So I can see", I replied, "And the rest these burning papers will finish." Bhatia realised the danger for the first time. He closed the door of the balcony and started stamping on burning bits of paper. "Why this sudden impulse for destruction ?" I enquired. "I should have committed suicide today," replied Bhatia. "What happened ?" I asked. "What has not happened ?" sighed Bhatia," I am crushed, killed and buried." "But pray tell me how ?" I asked. "Captain Kashev has been transferred to Delhi," said Bhatia. I sat by his side on the floor for I felt that this was really an occasion for mourning.

"When is he leaving ?"

"This very week."

"What happens to the race card ?"

"They are all before you." And Bhatia pointed towards the burnt bits of paper in front of him.

Bhatia sighed again and said, "If she were also going, it would have been easier to commit suicide."

Just then the door opened and Gopu Mal entered. "Have you brought the money ?" he enquired and looked listlessly at the burnt bits of paper around. "Haven't been able to get it" replied Bhatia without looking at him.

"Not even today ?"

"No".

"When will it come"

"You will have it the day I get it."

"But when ?"

Bhatia kept quiet. Gopu Mal looked towards me and said, "This man is mad". "The fault is with my stars", said Bhatia. "Just the same." observed Gopu Mal and after a while added, "Why don't you listen to me and get married. There will be a girl and three thousand rupees in cash and clothes. Shall I

arrange it?" "Get married? I?" Bhatia's eyes were red with rage. "I shall get married when I have an income of three thousand rupees a day. There will be a Gopu Mal in front of me and one behind me. You think two hundred rupees is a problem for me? I can throw these in your face any time I like." "Why don't you do it today?" asked Gopu Mal equally sternly.

"Today I haven't got them."

"When will you have them?

"Don't know."

And Bhatia went to the mirror and started running the comb through his hair. Gopu followed him.

"What do you want?" Bhatia asked annoyed.

"Want to look at your face."

"And what is unusual about my face?"

"That's what I want to find out too."

Then Gopu Mal walked away.

* * * *

I had to leave that flat soon after. Bhatia got an offer of five thousand rupees for vacant possession. I did not meet him for nearly six months after that. One day I came across him in a bookshop. He had brought three books to sell — one was on ball-room dancing, another on the art of publicity and the third an insurance guide. The shopkeeper offered him three rupees. "They are brand new," argued Bhatia. The shopkeeper left him to attend to another customer. "Will you pay four rupees?" asked Bhatia. The shopkeeper paid no attention to him. "Let'us settle it for rupees three and a half," said Bhatia, after waiting for a while. The shopkeeper still paid no attention. "O.K. pay three" said Bhatia ultimately and handed over the books. The shopkeeper gave him three rupees and kept the books aside. As Bhatia came out of the shop, I followed him. He was a picture of misery: There was no crease to his trousers, his cheeks were dry and sunken, the collar of his shirt was missing. I put my hand on his shoulder and asked, "How has life been treating you?"

"Fine", he replied, with a forced smile.

"Why were you selling the books?"

"Oh just like that. Needed some money."

"Have you been learning dancing?"

"No, only tried for a day or so."

The smile vanished from his face.

"And then?"

"Gave it up."

"I am crushed, killed and buried."

"What is this publicity stunt?"

"There was once the chance of a job in the publicity bureau."

"What came of it?"

"Didn't get it."

"What else?"

"Worked as an insurance agent."

"No success?"

"A friend decided to give a policy of five thousand rupees but....."

"But what?"

"His wife didn't agree."

"What are you doing these days?"

"These days? ..... These days I am resting."

We had reached the Flora Fountain Tram Stand.

"Are you taking a tram from here?" I asked.

"Yes," he replied, "I am going to the hotel."

"Which hotel?" I enquired.

"Imperial Guest House," he replied.

"Have you given up the flat?"

"Ages ago."

"What did you do with the money?"

"It was finished long ago."

"You finished five thousand rupees in six months?"

"I didn't spend : they got spent."

"By themselves?"

"Part went to the races, part to pay off debts and the rest in hotel bills. This month's bill is still to be paid."

"How do you propose paying it?"

"Intend liquidating the other assets — the watch and the ring."

I hadn't noticed the watch and the ring before. An 'L' stood prominently engraved on the ring.

"What does 'L' stand for?" I enquired, "for love?"

"I had got it made for Leena," disclosed Bhatia turning aside.

"You didn't give it to her?"

"No.....she....."Bhatia thurst his hands in his trouser pockets defiantly and moistened his lips with his tongue. I kept on looking at him.

"She used to say that she will wear only an engagement ring."

"You have got engaged, have you?"

Bhatia turned his side again and renewed moistening his lips. "I got engaged only this month ....she got engaged years ago".

"What?" I asked amazed.

"She got engaged to an Air Force Officer."

"But you said....."

Bhatia bit his lower lip. For a moment both of us were quiet. Someone shouted very near us "Kole Moti race card, Race card Kole Moti." Bhatia took the most worn out note of the lot, purchased the card and started looking at it. "Do you still go to the races?" I asked. Bhatia gave an assertive yes.

"I meant....." I said.

"How do you think I am going to get back, otherwise, the money I have lost?" replied Bhatia, his contours hardening.

"But where is the money to get it back?"

"That's all fixed. It will be here in fifteen days."

"Have you won a lottery?"

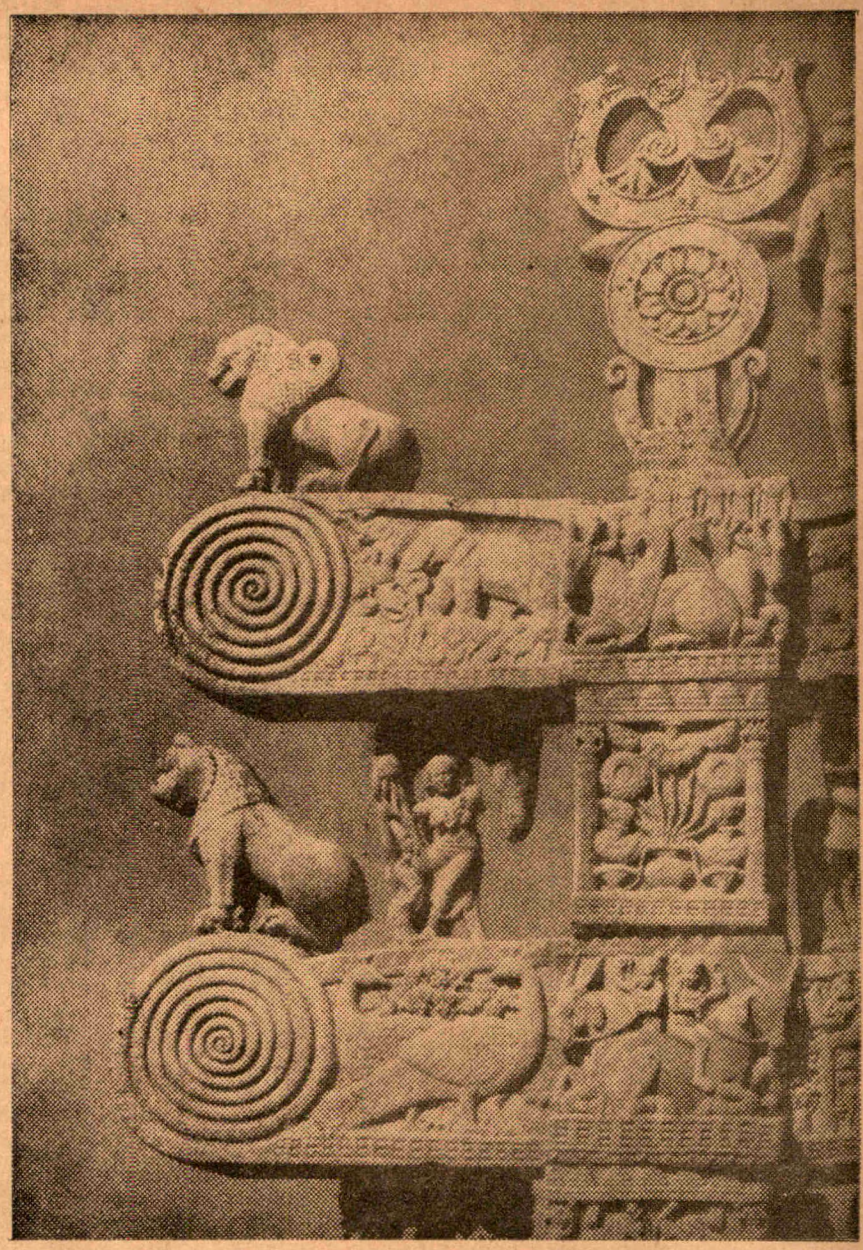
"No, I am getting married. It will bring three thousand rupees in cash."

I looked at the swelling nerves in Bhatia's forehead and asked, "Have you seen the girl?" Bhatia nodded. "What is she like," I asked again. "O.K." replied Bhatia and his face hardened more.

The Kolaba Tram had arrived. Bhatia put forward his hand. Shaking it I said, "When is the party?" The tram started moving. Bhatia ran to catch it. As he got in he shouted, "On the first." And his eyes got glued to the race card in his hand.

—Translated by Madan Gupta

BUDDHA IN THE TRADITIONS OF EARLY BUDDHIST ART



By
KALYAN K. GANGULY

IN the expansive cultural horizon of India Lord Buddha is a luminary of the brightest magnitude. Missions carrying the message of Buddha's peace and compassion had for many centuries roamed the length and breadth of India and from here had gone to distant lands defying barriers of formidable mountains and tossing seas. The tremendous impact of Buddha, born a prince of a tiny Indian kingdom, on the masses, took the expanding west with surprise. While some admiring Europeans hailed Buddha as the light of Asia, to many others he became a veritable challenge in superiority. Intensive efforts have been made to show that Buddha was a protest against the traditional way of life held sacred in India. Whatever progressive move there was in the teachings of Buddha, and which held some influence in India for a time, was ultimately thrown over board. Buddha had failed in his efforts to reform India, and India gained little from him. Historically speaking Buddhism practically disappeared from India as a separate creed by the time the Muslims came.

But in the final analysis, Buddha and his preachings were not lost to India! Buddhism, at least in the early days, did not estrange itself from the older traditions. If there is literary evidence to prove this, early Buddhist art can probably bear this out with a much greater emphasis.

Buddhism was not merely a spiritual force, it had been an enthusiastic patron of art as well. Buddhist art was not only the vehicle of a sectarian thought, it grew to embody the spirit of a group of people deeply fed in a long standing tradition but at the same time profoundly influenced by the personality of an individual.

It is not definitely known how Buddhist art was born. There was certainly an artistic tradition in India, and there is now being known from archaeological remains dateable from pre-Buddhist times. But the surviving artistic remains from that age exist mostly in terracotta and are not monumental in scale. During the life time of Buddha nothing

that can be called Buddhist art was probably brought into being. A few monasteries were certainly built and gifts were made of those to Buddha when he was alive. A part from the architectural features, nothing is known about any embellishments, if there were any, in those monasteries. If anything was strictly associated with Buddha, it was the *stupa*, a number of which had been erected after the *Mahaparinirvana*, that is the death of the master. Unfortunately, however, no trace of any *stupa*, built earlier than the second century B.C. has survived. The *stupas* at Sanchi, however, in their magnitude and embellishment stand out to amply compensate for the non-existence of any Buddhist art from the earlier age. The Sanchi *stupas* account for the true design of a Buddhist *stupa* and also reveal the shape and character of the balustrate walls and gateways which serve as the epitome of Buddhist art of the earlier phase.

The *stupa* on Tumuli was a burial mound and was probably in use in India from a fairly early age. The *satapatha Brahmana* has the description of the construction of a burial mound for a dead person in order to serve him as a house or a monument. After the *mahaparinirvana*, the sacred relics of the body of the master were collected from the funeral pyre and those were distributed among many claimants who enshrined the relics in newly erected *stupas*. Buddha is known to have stated that after the *Mahaparinirvana* he would be ever existent in the *stupa*. This very well-known deliverance of the master made the *stupa* the most sacred and the supremely respected symbol to the followers and admirers of Buddha and in erecting a monument to the great departed, as can be supported from the *Satapatha Brahmana*, the followers of Buddha did not deviate from an older tradition. Even Brahmins are known to have paid respect to funeral mounds by paying visits to such monuments and offering lamps at their base.

The *stupa* mound thus erected became a very sacred edifice for the followers of Buddha and the *stupas* containing relics of the Lord became great centres of pilgrimage. Originally the *stupa* was a mere earthen mound but by the second century B.C. the mounds were covered with stone casing in order to protect those against the ravages of time and nature. Circumambulation of any sacred spot is an ancient practice in India and the tradition of circumambulating the *stupa* had probably grown from the very establishment of the same. Consequently a circumambulatory path with a balustrade around and four gateways on four cardinal directions were also put up round the *stupa* from the very beginning. Such balustrades and gateways were probably built of wood at the outset, but at Bharhut, a stone balustrade made its appearance replacing the wooden prototype. At Sanchi apart from the stone fencing and elaborate gateways, the great *stupa* has a lion-surmounted pillar just in front.

The lion quadripartite at once recalls the famous capital of Asoka's lion pillar found at Sarnath, a monument surviving from the *stupa* complex set up by the emperor at that place. Such pillars invariably carried a spoked wheel on top, a symbol, as the stupa was conceived as the abode of Buddha, a *chakravartin* of his universality. According to the Brahmanical tradition, *Mandhata* was the first *chakravarti* ruler of the world and the symbol of his position was the majestic wheel presented to him by the universal ruler of the celestial world. Clearly the wheel was the symbol of the Sun, and it was a pre-Buddhistic heritage, traceable from the vedic traditions.

The conception that Buddha was a *chakravartin* is fairly old, and can be traced from earliest Buddhist literature. When a tribal hero or a religious leader is to be elevated to the position of supreme consideration. Indian mind has always tended to conceive him as an incarnation or God himself. Even if Buddha led the life of a monk never claiming devine powers or super-natural entity for himself he was soon elevated to the status of a divine entity or the manifestation of the supreme entity itself. Though early Buddhist literature shows strenuous eflorts on the part of the authors to retain the stature of Buddha as an ethical force and an organiser of an order, only incidentally yielding to the use of such highly symbolic words as *Sakya-muni* for the master, art, since it had a much wider appeal, clearly reveals the working of the mass mind and the real place of Buddha in the popular estimation. If the traditions as revealed in the artistic representation of these early monuments are to be taken into consideration, Buddha was already a manifestation of the supreme entity, truly a *muni*.

In one of the panels of Bharhut Buddha is found referred to as *Saka-muni* that is the *muni* of the *Sakya* clan and in another, with the representation of a wheel bedecked with jewelled garlands and placed on a throne, having two persons on two sides in the pose of supplication, as *Bhagavato Dhammachakam*. The use of the word *Bhagavato* clearly indicates that already people had elevated him to the status of an object of worship, some sort of a cult deity. About the same age, the followers of Vasudeva, an ancient hero of the *Jadava* clan were calling their object of worship as *Bhagavan* while such semi divine elements as *Yaksha Manibhadra*. Sculptured in human form was also worshipped as *Bhagavato Manibhadra* by his followers. Though the intellectuals responsible for the literary works of early Buddhism tried to remain earnestly true to the teachings of Buddha by carefully avoiding any proclivity towards the deification of the founder of the order, to the ordinary masses Buddha had already been invested with the lustrous mantle of divinity. He had already become a *chakravartin*, an incarnation, or himself the greatest of the great.

As such his palace, the *stupa* not only had the symbol of *chakravartihood*, the wheeled disc in front, but had its four gates guarded by the four lords of the four quarters, the *Dikpatis* of the Brahmanical tradition and the *maharajas* of the Buddhists.

These *maharajas* were *Dhritarastra* for the east, *Virupaksha* for the South, *Virudhaka* for the west and *Kuvera* for the north. In the Brahmanical tradition, the same *Kuvera* rules over the north, while *Indra*, *Yama* and *Varuna* are held as the rulers upon east, south and west respectively. The deviation here from the Brahmanical tradition, to which it is basically related, is negligible. The next most interesting thing to note is the illustration of various male and female figures upon the balustrade posts at Bharhut and Bodhgaya, enormous figures on cave walls at Bhaja, another Buddhist monument of about the same age in western India and the *torana* posts and lintels at Sanchi. The labels accompanying the figures at Bharhut considerably help in establishing the identity of most of these figures as *Yakshas*, *Nagas* and *Devatas*. Most of these figures, life size in stature, in perfect gait with turbans, ornaments, *uttariya*, tightly worn dhoti, represent the social beings of the contemporary age but some super human aspects find attached to those

due to the extraordinary snake hood upon the head in case of the *Nagas* or the various types of mounts in case of almost all such figures. Some are without any labels and in such cases there are reasons to believe that those were to represent the vedic gods held in high esteem by the people belonging to the upper strata of the society. Such mounts as the elephant, characteristic of the vedic god Indra and the chariot symbolic of the god Surya (Mitra) can easily be identified among the figures represented in these monuments. Evidently the impulse on the part of the patrons and artists of these monuments was to represent semidivine and divine entities held in honour and worship by the masses of the contemporary age, as holding in their turn, the great redeemer Buddha, in supreme honour.

This effort on the part of the propounders and builders of these monuments has been taken by most scholars to be indicative of the fact that the Buddhists had broken away from the traditional fold and had made, much to the chagrin of the traditionalists, Buddha the supreme object of devotion. The traditions maintained in art as well as literature can prove that this contention was far from the truth. If the *dharma chakra* was symbolical of Buddha, an indication of his assumption or elevation to the supreme position of respect and devotion, then the *Jains* had also used the same in respect of their *Tirthankaras* and the *Vasudevites* in respect of their object of worship, the god *Vasudeva-Vishnu*. If the gods and demi-gods were made to bow before *Vasudeva* and still the followers of this hero god were not considered as breakaways from the traditional fold then why at this stage the followers of Gautama, the recluse of the *Sakya* clan, be deemed runaways and heretics to the orthodox? The age was the same when Buddhists were making the founder of their order the greatest among the great when the followers of the *Vasudeva* cult were proclaiming that their *Vasudeva* was the greatest among the great. This effort could be logically supported by the contents of the *upanishads* wherein the use of the word *muni* finds its proper explanation. In the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* in answer to Kahola Kaushitakeya's question "tell me the Brahman which is visible not invisible," *Yagnavalkya* says, "He who overcomes hunger and thirst, sorrow, passion, old age and death (is the Brahman which is visible!) When Brahmanas know that self and have risen above the desire for Sons Wealth, and new worlds they wander about as mendicants. *(Viksha charyam charanti)* . . . . . Therefore . . . . after he has done with learning, wish to stand by real strength; after he has done with that strength and learning he becomes a *muni.*" Elsewhere in the same Upanishad it is said: "And He (Brahman) is that unborn self who consists of knowledge, is surrounded by *Pranas*, the ether within the heart. In it there reposes the ruler of all, the Lord of all, the King of all. He does not become greater by good works nor smaller by evil works. He is the lord of all, the King of all things, the protector of all things. . . . He who knows Him becomes a *Muni*. Wishing for that world only mendicants leave their home." "This great unborn self undecaying immortal, fearless, is indeed *Brahman*. Fearless is *Brahman* and he knows this becomes verily the fearless *Brahman.*" Thus the upanishads propounded the theory of knowing as becoming. Why no image of him at this stage! Because the *Svetasvatar Upanishad* states that there is no image of him whose name is great glory. *(Na tasya pratima asti yasya nama mahadyasah)*. The *Taittiriya Upanishad* states, "He who knows *Brahman* as non-existing becomes himself non-existing . . . . . From the terror of it (*Brahman*) the wind blows, from terror the Sun rises, from terror of it Agni and Indra." This upanishad further states, "He who knows these knows the *Brahman. All devas bring offerings to him." (Sarvehsmaip deva valimavahanti).*

All these are enough to ensure the background against which the great *Sakya-muni Gautama* was being viewed by the masses. As one who had renounced his home and had become a mendicant, had overcome hunger, thirst, sorrow, passion, old age and death, risen above desire and done with knowledge, he had become a muni and by becoming a *muni* he had become one with the unknowable and the unknown, who was not being nor unbeing. That is why in the galaxy of represented world of gods, semi gods, men and animals, Buddha remains unrepresented in the anthropomorphic form or *pratima*. Because no *pratima* can be made of one such, and it was no wonder that all the gods are shown as bringing homage to this greatest of the great, the highest among all. So if the traditional gods were shown as subordinate to the *Muni* of the Sakya clan, the donors and the artists of these monuments did nothing in contravention of the traditional belief nor was in the contemporary estimate the *Sakya Muni* and the followers of him can be considered to have broken away in revolt from the traditional fold.

The great master was still in the minds of his followers an entity which was fully in conformity with the age old traditions of the country. The truth about these traditions is nowhere held better than in the upanishads and the artistic tradition of early Buddhism prove beyond all doubts that this art had not in the least deviated from the norms set up by the upanishadic lore. Buddha was yet the well-known *Sakya muni*, a mendicant who had known and become one with the highest among the high to whom all gods demi gods, men and animals, brought their offerings and homage.

*

THE FINISH PAPER MILLS' ASSOCIATION

HELSINKI|FINLAND

Sales Organisation for the Finish Paper Industry, Capacity about :
1.300.000 Tons

FINLAND

AGENTS

JAMES FINLAY & CO. LTD.

BOMBAY MADARS CALCUTTA NEW DELHI

MILES AHEAD
in quality and performance

Commanding the highest sale in India, *Sulekha* to-day, caters to an expanding export market earning thereby valuable foreign exchange for the country.

SERVING AT HOME AND ABROAD

Sulekha range of products includes: ADSOL Paste & Gum, Sealing Wax (SIKURITI), PENSOL, STAMP PADS, INKS for writing, stencilling, stamping, marking, etc.

Sulekha
FOUNTAIN PEN
INK
Special

Available in
BLUE BLACK ● ROYAL BLUE ● BLACK & BROWN

a product of **SULEKHA WORKS LTD.**
Sulekha Park, Calcutta : 32
INDIA

The ART of the CHANDELAS

By Prof. O. C. GANGOLY

THE Art of the Chandelas represented by the brilliant group of temples at KHAJURAHO, in the Chatrapatta State in Bundel-Khand in the Madhya Pradesa, were constructed by the Chandela Kings who reigned between the 7th Century and 13th Century.

These monuments form a compact group of twenty temples, clustered around an area of a few miles revealing a uniform style, illustrating the Northern Indian phase of Nagara Architecture, beautifully designed and richly sculptured with magnificent bands of carved friezes challenging comparison with the analogous group of temples at Bhubaneswara (Orissa).

The different stages of evolution are marked by three outstanding temples: (1) The Lakshana Shrine (953 A.D.), (2) the Kandariya temple (C. 1000 A.D.), and (3) the Chatturbhuja Mandir (1100 A.D.)

The characteristic Chandela style is illustrated by the brilliant bands of sculptured decorations which run round the facade in three parallel waves illustrating Saiva Images in high relief set off by a series of celestial damsels — *Apasaras, Sura-Sundaries,* and *Nayikas,* love-heroines in entrancing poses, some-times, of weird fantastic anatomical poses.

They differ substantially in their peculiar plastic idioms from the Kalinga School of sculpture illustrated on the monuments of Bhubaneswara, Puri, and Konarak. There is nothing at Khajuraho to compare with the famous colossal horse and elephant at Konarak.

Yet Chandela Sculpture has many original types and new standards of plastic beauty equal, in a different way, to the figurative decorations of the Kalinga Temples.

In common with the Kalinga sculptors the Chandela artists have also decorated their temples with a large series of "Mithuna" or "Reproductive Pairs" of profound and mysterious "Masonic" symbolism sometimes abused in exaggerated erotic obscenities of equally bad taste as that of the Orissan sculptors.

The aims and objects of these erotic sculptures have been the subject-matter of much discussion and controversies amongst scholars. It is not generally known that these Mithuna effigies occur not only in Hindu, but also in Jain and Buddhist Temples. The earliest Mithuna effigy occurs in a Buddhist cavet—the Temple at Bhaja, near Bombay.

As a rule, the representations of Mithunas on Buddhist monuments are absolutely free from any obscene suggestions. The series of Mithunas—in groups of loving couples—in domestic love gestures and homely anecdotes—are of exceptionally beautiful patterns glowing with artistic imagination, typically represented on the marble monuments at Nagarjuni—Konda (Guntur District).

But the Chandela Mithunas stand on their own grounds, and draw our praise and admiration by new types of faces, new types of gestures, and poses which surpass the beauty of *Abhinaya* gestures of dancers.

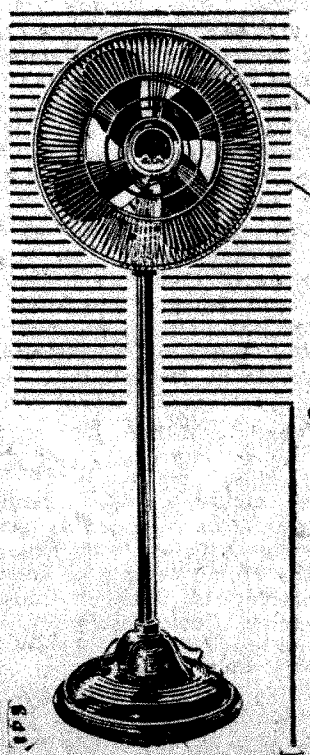
In some of the distorted and twisted poses of the Nayikas the artists display their mastery of human anatomy, in original and radiant poses which extract new beauties from female figures, while the types of faces, both Masculine and Feminine by their brilliant linear representation of the contours, coiffeurs, and beards, present new beauties of human figures as imagined through the vision of the Chandela sculptors who have indeed contributed a dazzling page to the History of Indian Art.

(The Illustrations are by the courtesy of Chitra-karu).

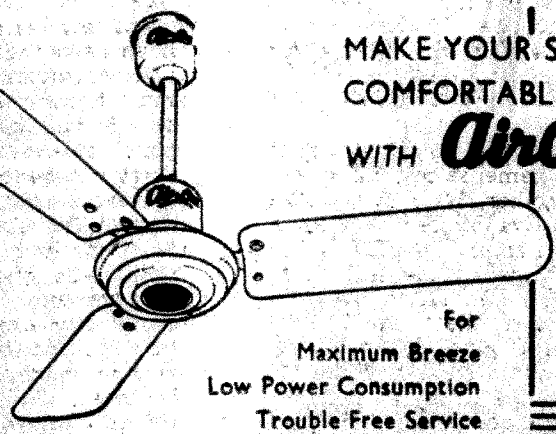
Our Puja Greetings to you all

Lord's SWEETS

JAMES LORD & SONS LTD., Calcutta-1.

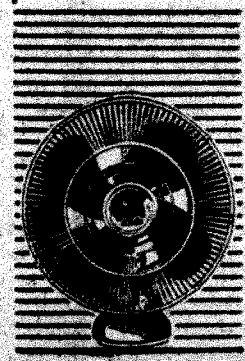


MAKE YOUR SUMMER COMFORTABLE WITH **AirOn FANS**



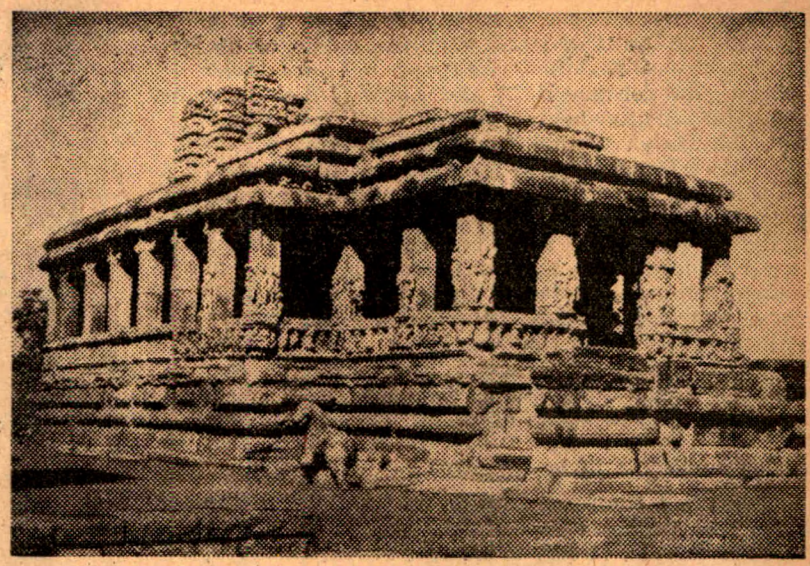
For
Maximum Breeze
Low Power Consumption
Trouble Free Service

REGISTERED WITH D.G.S. & D.



Manufactured by
PANDAY INDUSTRIES (P) LTD.
336, NETAJI SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE RD.
CALCUTTA-47
FACTORY & OFFICE : 46-8369.
SALES OFFICE : 23-7821

A treasury of fine Indian sculptures



THE FORT TEMPLE AT AIHOLE

By S. R. BALASUBRAHMANYAM

IN the former Bombay State, and in the present Mysore State, lies the valley of the Malaprabha, a tributary of the Krishna. The monotony of the level country is here relieved by a chain of picturesque hills —offshoots of the Western Ghats. At the foot of these hills, there are four towns close to one another, which played a glorious part in the past as Capitals and cultural and artistic centres of the Western Deccan; these are Badami, Mahakuta, Pattadakkal and Aihole.

Badami was known in the past as Vatapi, after the legendary demon of that name, said to have been overthrown along with his brother Ilvala by the sage Agastya. It is said that Agastya himself resided in an *asrama* near a holy tank named Vishnu Pushkarani with a natural spring, located in the neighbouring town of Mahakuta, three miles east of Badami. The temple of Mahakutesvara on the northern bank of this tank was perhaps an original foundation of Agastya, later renovated in the first half of the 6th century A.D.—soon after the rise to power of Pulakesin I the founder of the line of the Early Western Chalukyas of Badami. Agastya was a worshipper of Ganapati and perhaps also the founder of the Ganapati cult in this area, so that, in later times, the expression "Vatapi Ganapati" became a household name in the Deccan and South India.

About A.D. 533, Pulakesin I conquered Vatapi, fortified the place and made it his Capital. An inscription on a boulder at Badami mentions that in A.D. 543 (Saka 465), the Chalukya King Pulakesin I, here called Vallabhesvara, performed the *Asvamedha, Hiranyagarbha* and other sacrifices, and made the best hill of Vatapi into an unconquerable fortress, for the prosperity of the world. The conquests that he had made justified his performing the *Asvamedha* sacrifice, a hall-mark of supreme power.

Some earlier historians and archaeologists have held that Aihole, 16 miles east of Badami, was the original capital of the grandfather as well as the father of Pulakesin I, and that during their time the early temples of Lad Khan, the Durga, and Kontgudi at Aihole, and that of Mahakutesvara at Mahakuta were built. This opinion is not supported by any evidence. Pulakesin I was the first ruler of the Early Western Chalukyas; he captured Vatapi and made it his Capital. None of the early authentic epigraphical records of this dynasty gives any credit for specific victories or other historical achievements to the ancestors of Pulakesin I. The later panegyrics found in the *prasastis* of the copper-plate grants of the Eastern Chalukyas of Vengi and the later Western Chalukyas of Kalyani are all a "mere farrago of vague legend and Puranic myth of no authority or authenticity". All the cultural and artistic renaissance in this area, after the age of Agastya, should be attributed to the founder of this dynasty, Pulakesin I and his successors. The three Hindu rock-cut cave-temples at Badami, which are among the earliest monuments of the Hindu revival after the decline of Buddhism in Western Deccan, belong to the middle of the 6th century. A.D. Cave III at Badami, called the "Mahavishnugriham", can be definitely dated, for it contains an inscription mentioning its foundation in A.D. 578 (Saka 500) by Mangalesa, the younger son of Pulakesin I.

The earliest temple in the "temple-city" of Aihole—which should be regarded as part of "Greater Badami"—is the so-called "Lad Khan temple", a misnomer for the Hindu temple of Suryanarayana. The early archaeologists, Henry Cousens, Percy Brown and Ananda Coomaraswamy, were carried away by its *cave-like* features, and attributed it to the middle of the 5th century A.D. (A.D. 450), nearly a century earlier than its probable date, and gave the credit for its foundation, as already stated, to the ancestors of Pulakesin I. With the evidence since available, we may venture to state that it should have been constructed only after the rise to power of Pulakesin I.

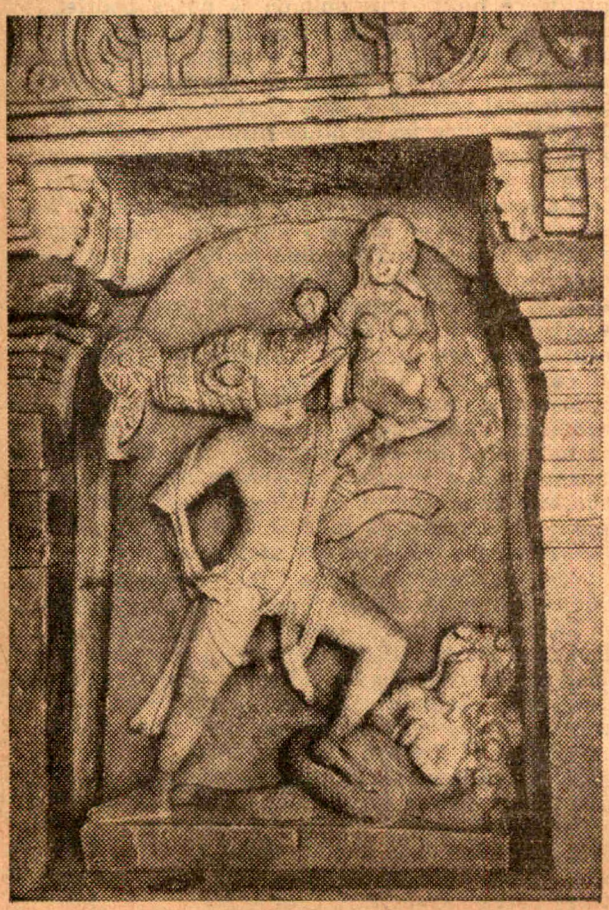
Chronologically, the Durga temple comes next

to the above temple. The name is meant to indicate that the temple is situated inside the fort (*durga*). The walls of this fort are to be found even now. This temple is peculiar in many respects. It is a Hindu temple, built of stone after the model of the earlier rock-cut Buddhist *chaitya-grihas* like those of Bhaja (2nd century B.C.) and Karle (1st century B.C.). The sanctum has an apsidal back. Longitudinally, the Durga temple is divided by two colonnades into a broad nave in the centre and two aisles on the sides. The sanctum is surrounded by walls which have alternately perforated stone-windows and divinities in stone installed in niches. All round the *garbhagriha* (the sanctum), there is a path of circumambulation, protected by a sloping slab-roof resting on pillars. In front, there is a porch resting on thick stone-pillars, whose lower halves have sculptures carved on them. There is a tower (*sikhara*) over the sanctum, perhaps built later, after the two main styles of Hindu temple architecture, the northern and the southern, had been evolved and come to be practised.

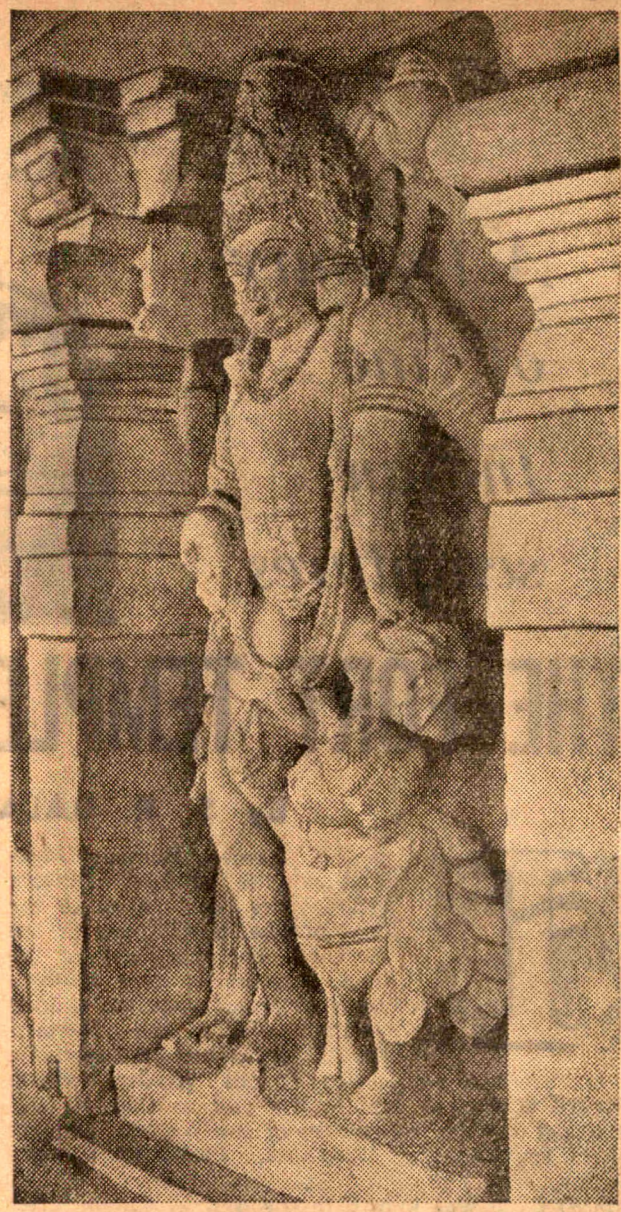
There is a figure of *Garuda* on the lintel of the doorway of the sanctum. Hence it should have been a Vishnu temple. It has to be mentioned, however, that the temples of the Early Chalukyas were not, as in later times, devoted exclusively to Saivite or to Vaishnavite deities. In this temple, both Saiva and Vaishnava deities adorn the niches of the outer walls of the sanctum and the *mandapa* in front.

The Vaishnavite sculptures here are : Varaha-murti rescuing Prithvi (Goddess Earth); Narasimha with human form below the neck and a fierce lion-face; and two figures of Vishnu, one with four hands and the other with eight.

There is a figure of Ardhanarisvara, the complex icon of Siva and Sakti in one, symbolising the unified principle of the Supreme Powers of creation.



Varaha-avatar of Vishnu.



Vishnu (with four hands) with Garuda His vehicle.

Mahishasuramardini with Her lion vehicle engaged in the act of destroying the demon Mahishasura, and Gangavisarjanamurti (see page 57 column 2 tailpiece) depicting Siva receiving the proud and turbulent Ganga on His matted locks much to the jealousy and consternation of Parvati, and releasing Her (Ganga) from one of the locks —these sculptures are among the masterpieces of Indian Art belonging to the middle of the sixth century A.D.

The ceiling of the verandah of this temple once contained images of flying *Vidyadhara* couples, of exquisite workmanship. These were found lying loose in the compound of the temple, and now adorn the National Museum at New Delhi.

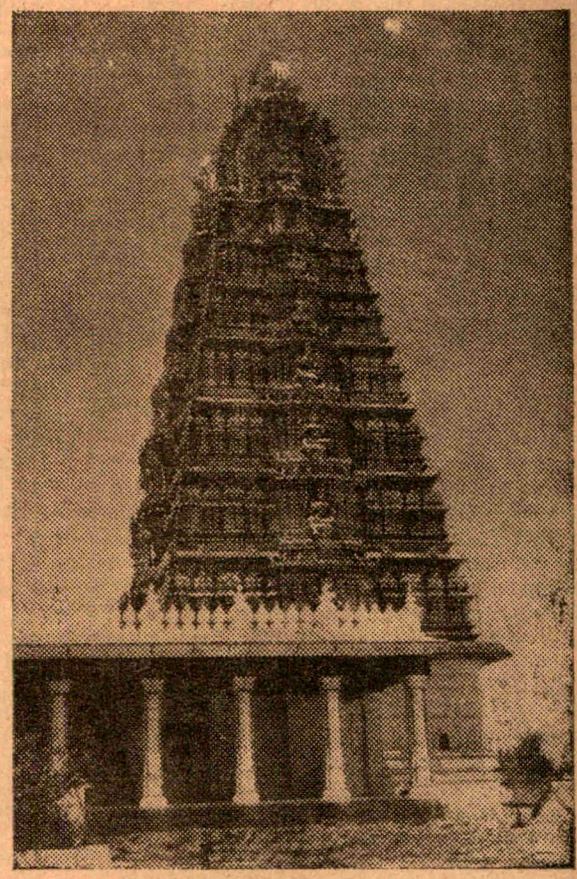
The ceiling of the porch has a sculpture of a coiled *Naga*. This feature of the decoration of the ceiling of the central hall and the porch is characteristic of Chalukyan Art, carried on further as adornments in Kakatiya and Hoysala monuments.

The outer sides of the basement of the porch contain panels of sculptures depicting scenes from the Ramayana.

The Durga temple at Aihole is one of the earliest and the finest of the Early Chalukyan temples of Western India.

TEMPLES *Of* MYSORE

By J. C. DAS



Chamundi Temple, Mysore.

SOUTH India is a land of legendary temples. Most of these temples bear the testimony of ancient India's splendour and advancement in the fields of sculpture and architecture. Referring to the South-Indian temple architecture Paul Genthner, a French Savant, wrote: "In Dravidian art, it is not the engineering skill, but the sculptor's skill that is most important....." The details of the sculpture are very interesting, and the history of architecture of South-India reduces itself to the history of ornamentation".

It has been remarked by Fergusson, to whose genius we owe not only a wider appreciation of Indian and Eastern architecture, but also of the history of architecture itself, that "the great value of the study of these Indian examples (he has been really referring to the Halebid group of temples in this State of Mysore) is that it widens so immensely our basis for architectural criticism. It is only by becoming familiar with forms so utterly dissimilar from those we have hitherto been conversant with that we perceive how narrow is the purview that is content with one form or one passing form. By rising to the wider range, we shall perceive that architecture is as many sided as human nature itself, and learn how few feelings and how few aspirations of the human heart and brain there are that cannot be expressed by its means".

The history of sculpture and architecture of Mysore requires lengthy treatment, if they are to be dealt with in adequate fashion. So much attention is now being paid to Indian sculpture and architecture that it seems necessary to stress the point that Mysore has something unique in these spheres to offer to the critical student of Art in general and of Indian Art in particular.

The bearing of image worship on sculpture in India is so close that a few words are necessary as to the impetus that image worship gave to sculpture. It is now generally acknowledged that image worship in India is older than the time of Buddha. It has been suggested that it is contemporaneous with, if not older than, the Yoga System, which dates from a time probably anterior to Patanjali, who was only its systematiser. Patanjali lived about the 2nd century B.C. Buddha himself was a follower of Yoga before his Enlightenment. He is sculpturally represented in the Gandhara School as an emaciated person, almost dying under the stress of the austerities he practised. Patanjali himself gives an idea as to the images which were commonly in use in his time. In his *Mahabhashya*, he says:— "What about such likenesses as of Siva, Skanda, and Vishaka, which are known as Siva, Skanda and Vishaka, and not as Sivaka, Skandaka, and Vishakala?"

Images of gods, as they laugh, cry, sing, dance, perspire, crack etc., are referred to in the *Adhbuta Brahmana*, part of *Shadvimsa Brahmana*, a supplement to the *Panchavimsa Brahmana*. Dr. Bollenson thinks that images of the gods are clearly referred to in Vedic hymns. "Indians", he says, "did not

merely in imagination assign human forms to their gods, but also represented them in a sensible manner". Image worship seems to have become common in the time of Yaska. In his *Nirukta,* he considers "the forms of the gods". "One mode of representation in the hymns makes them resemble men; for, they are praised and addressed as intelligent beings. They are also celebrated with limbs such as those of men". In the *Ramayana,* we have mention of temples in Lanka from which we may infer that at least in South India temples existed, where images were enshrined and worshipped.

Sculpture in Mysore, as elsewhere, may be treated under the various heads of: (1) Wood; (2) Stone; (3) Precious gems; and (4) Metals. Agamic writers add to these earth, ivory, bricks and lime. Among precious stones, crystal, diamond, cat's-eye, coral and ruby are highly valued for the purpose. For images set up permanently in Brahmanic temples or in Buddhist or Jain *Chaityas,* stone has been generally used. There are occasional instances of wood being used for them, but in that case, the images are periodically renewed, the old ones being either buried deep in the earth or thrown into the sea with due solemnity. The gods and goddesses of village folk are usually made of wood, though even in their case there has been in recent times a tendency to replace them by stone. Occasionally they are made of brick and mortar. In the temples of the 15th century and thereafter, the decoration of the *Vimana* part has invariably been by means of brick and chunam sculpture. Metal is rarely employed in the making of images intended as permanent fixtures in Brahmanic temples, though very occasional instances are not wanting of their use for such purposes, especially where the permanently fixed stone image has been desecrated or mutilated and another in stone has not been got ready to take its place. Metal, however, has been generally used for casting images for processional purposes. Such an image is called the *utsava vigraha,* or the image for festive occasions. There is evidence to believe that the art of metal casting has been long known in South India. At least it is older than the 10th century A.D., if we are to believe that the inscriptions of Raja-Raja and Rajendrachola, both of whom are known as the conquerers of parts of Mysore. In fact, both of them specially patronised the temple of Pidariyar in Kotar, now known as Kolaramma, and especially endowed it, while Rajendrachola had the brick-parts rebuilt in stone.

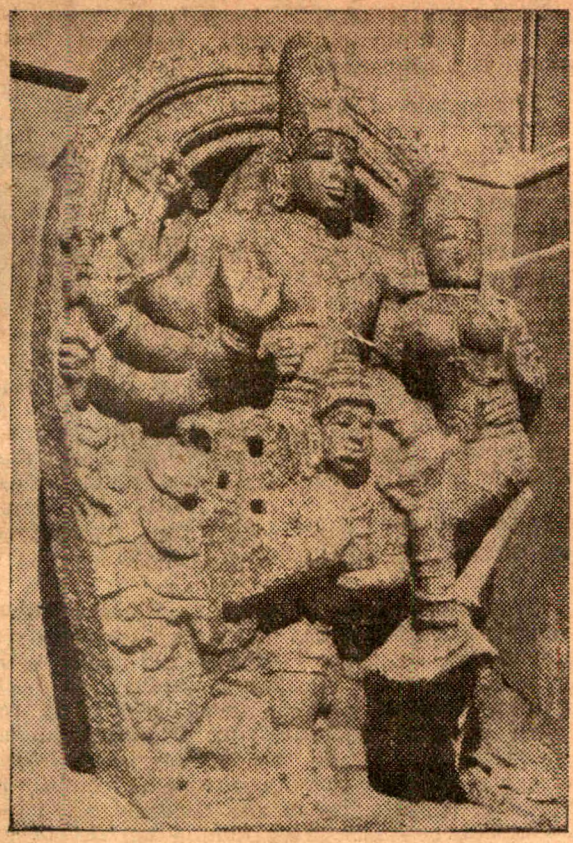
Mahishasura, Mysore

MAINLY BUDDHIST

There is reason to believe that the sculptural work of Mysore upto the beginning of the 3rd century B.C. was mainly Buddhist. Little of it has, however, survived to our times. Under the Satakarnis (1st and 2nd century A.D.), Buddhist worship began to decline, though it still shared with Brahmans the devotion of the people. The Kadambas (3rd to 6th century A.D.) who succeeded the Satakarnis were avowedly Brahmans in origin and the earliest known temples in the State are connected with them. Jainism, however, competed for supremacy with both Buddhism and Brahmanism from very early times, and succeeded during the Ganga times (2nd to 11th century A.D.) in firmly establishing itself, in the land. Buddhism lingered on to the 12th century A.D., while Brahmanism which lay dormant during the period of the Gangas, slowly gained strength during the time of Rashtrakuta, Chalukya and Chola domination in Mysore, and finally asserted itself during the Hoysala period.

The kings of the Hoysala dynasty (11th to 14th century) were, however, staunch Jains upto the time of Vishnu-Vardhana (1111-1141 A.D.), and favoured much the Jain religion, but after his conversion to the Brahmanic faith, the latter, especially Vaishnavism, gained considerable strength and spread over the country. The later Buddhists of Mysore, as elsewhere, used in their worship images as much as the Jains and the Brahmans, and the adherents of the three religions drew on a common stock of symbolism in the same way as in early times. The Buddhist statuary of the 12th century, for instance is almost indentical with that of the Brahmanic temples of the period. The Jain statues, are, however, distinguishable from the Brahman by their nudity, but the accessions of both do not differ widely. The Rashtrakuta sculpture found in Mysore bears close affinity to early classical art as represented in the Kailasha temple at Ellora. The Chalukya kings, their generals and ministers (10th to 12th century) built and endowed many temples in their State, and they developed a style of architecture which goes after their name. The later Kadambas, who were their feudatories, closely followed their style. In fact, most of the monuments in the Chalukyan style are connected with this line of kings. Its chief characteristic is elaborate ornamentation. A development of this style, peculiar to Mysore and the outlying parts of Madras Presidency close to it, is the Hoysala style, which is represented by many fine examples in the State ranging from the 11th to 14th century. This style is specially noted for its rich friezes, crowded with thousands of figures, often worked out in the most elaborate and delicate manner. The Cholas (11th century) introduced the Southern (or Dravidian) style of architecture with which they were most familiar in their homelands.

The principal specimens of the Dravidian style in Mysore are the temples at Terakanambi, Gundlu-



Garudavahana Vishnu

pet Taluk, which date from a period anterior to Krishna Raya of the Vijayanagar Dynasty (1509-1530); the Sriranganath temple at Srirangapatam, the Nanjundesvara temple at Nanjangud and the Chamundesvari temple on the Chamundi hill near Mysore. On the imposing *gopuras* attached to these temples of the Mysore-royal family, the first probably belongs to the 15th century, or may be older; the other two are modern, that at Chamundi being built in 1827, and the one at Nanjangud, apparently, about 1845. The temples at Halsur (16th century), Melkote, Talkad (1100 A.D.) Tirumukudlu-Narasipur (1100 A.D.), Ramanathapur and other places may be mentioned as effective illustrations of temples in this style. The Nandisvara temple at Nandi, architecturally the first and most ornate of Dravidian temples in the State, goes back to the 8th century A.D. The temples of Kolar and Kaivara (11th and 12th century) belong to this style. The Binnamangala temple, dating from the time of Kulottunga Chola I (11th century) is typical of this style in the State. The Lakshminarasimha temple at Doddadalivatta (Tumkur District) is one of the largest temples in the State in this style. The Somesvara temple on the Nidugal Durga, is another fine structure in this style. It was probably founded in 1292 A.D. Its more noteworthy features are its carved doorway and its beautifully sculptured *navaranga*.

The temple of Vidyasankara at Sringeri is another well designed and effective building in this style. It resembles the temple at Vijayanagar and belongs to the reign of Bukka I (1356 A.D.). As Burgess remarks, the earlier Dravidian structures had lions or yalis and elephants placed as supports for pillars; and these were gradually enlarged, made affixes to pilasters or pillars and the animal forms multiplied and conventionalised with riders and human and other figures introduced as supporters or attendants, until about the 14th century or earlier they had obtained a permanent place in the architecture. At a later date figures of gods, demons and patrons or donors sometimes took their places. Well-known examples of these occur in the famous temples of Vellore, Madura, Vijayanagar and Rameswaram. In this State, the best examples of these later innovations are to be seen at the Aghoresvara temple at Ikkeri, Hanumantha *mantapa* at Terakanambi (1640 A.D.), the double temple of Rameswara and Virabhadra at Keladi etc.

In Mysore there exist also a few caves and cave temples. Their age is not certain. The inner sanctuary of the Hidimbesvara temple at Chitaldrug is carved out of a single rock. The figure of Hidimba, the Rakshasa who was killed by Bhima, one of the Pandava brothers, is sculptured on the *Vimana*. The Anklematha at Chitaldrug is noted for its caves which form a perfect labyrinth consisting of rooms of various sizes at different levels. They are approached by a good stone staircase. The shrines, *lingas*, baths and pedestals, the last apparently for *Yogasana*, may be of recent origin, but the caverns no doubt existed long before. When and for what purpose they were originally formed or occupied is unknown. At the Panchalinga cave, near the entrance, is an inscription, which says that the *tirtha* of the five *lingas* was established by the Pandavas and that Perumala Deva Dannayaka, the minister of the Hoysala King Narasimha III and others joined in making a grant of land to it. The temple of Gangadharesvara at Sivaganga is a large cave sheltered by a huge overhanging boulder with cells all round. The caves on the Bettadapura hill and near the Anjaneya temple close to it are irregular shaped and dark. The double *linga* to be seen in them, one placed in front of the other, on a single *pitha* or seat, is specially noteworthy because of its unusual character. The Virabhadra temple on the Nandi hill is in a large cave near the fort gate, the overhanging boulder being about 70 feet high. The Gopinatha temple on the Gopinatha hill is in a large cave sheltered by a gigantic boulder measuring 100' x 60' x 70'. On the Tyakal hill, the cave known as Bhima's *Gardi* (Gymnasium), is a magnificent one measuring 150' x 70' x 50', the approach to it being very difficult.

BLEND OF STYLES

The influence of the dominant Hoysala style on later Dravidian architecture as known in this State is manifest in many temples, during the period of Vijayanagar ascendancy and even later. The most notable example of this is the Vidyasankara temple at Sringeri (1356 A.D.) which is such a blend of the two styles that it is difficult to say to which style it belongs, though there is mistakable evidence of its Dravidian parentage. Another is the Aghoresvara temple at Ikkeri and the Gopalakrishna temple at Krishnarajasagara. The Gopal Krishna temple at Nonavinkere is a three-celled temple (or *trikutachala*) in the Dravidian style.

In the Hoysala style, called a sub-variety of Chalukyan style, a new development of the Chalukyan style is seen. All the temples in this style are to be found in Mysore State, and were built entirely during the period of Hoysala rule.

The temples at Belur, Halebid and Somanathpur are doubtless regarded as master-pieces of the Hoysala style. These temples stand unrivalled for their sculpture as well.

The Kesava temple at Belur, Hassan District, was caused to be built by Vishnu Vardhana in 1117 A.D. to commemorate his conquests. A complete description of this temple, with numerous plates

Darpana Darsini in Belur, Mysore State

and full notes on its architectural and sculptural peculiarities, will be found by the interested reader in a monograph devoted to it in the *Mysore Archaeological Series*. The figure sculpture on the eastern gateway is characteristically Vaishnava with the figures of Hanuman and Garuda, Narasimha killing Hiranyakasipa and Varaha killing Hiranyaksha. The rail to the right of the east entrance illustrates briefly the story of the *Mahabharata*, upto the *Salya-Parva*. The frieze on the creeper depicts scenes from the *Ramayana*. The same frieze exhibits here and there exquisitely carved tiny seated figures playing on musical instruments. Above the rail come pierced stone windows or perforated screens surmounted by the caves. They are twenty in number and form a charming feature of this beautiful temple. Ten of them are sculptured with Puranic scenes, and the rest decorated with geometrical designs. Around the temple, on its walls, there are eight large images, of gods and goddesses, which extort admiration. Inside this temple, the sculptural work is even finer. The figure of Kesava—or Vijaya Narayana as it is called in the inscriptions—is a very handsome one. The pillars of the *navaranga* (central hall) are artistically executed. They are in three different sizes, and the arrangement of the pillars enhances the beauty of the structure. Two other pillars here deserve special notice. The well-known Narasimha pillar, which apparently used formerly to revolve, is marvellously carved with minute figures all round from the base to the capital. One of the figures, a tiny bull, is known as *Kadalebasava*, because it is of the size of a seed of the Bengal gram (Kadale). The representation at Belur of the Seven Mother goddesses, female counter-parts of the gods, who took part in Siva's conquest of Andhakasura, is an impressive one. These are: Brahmani, Mahesvari, Kaumari, Vaishnavi, Varahi, Indrani and Chamunda.

The temple of Kappe Chennigaraya, within the enclosure of the Kesava temple, is equally noteworthy for its fine sculpture. The Vira Narayana temple to the west of the Kesava temple has numerous finely sculptured figures of the leading Brahmanic gods. The temple of the goddess Andal, north-west of the Kesava temple, has sculptured images on its outer walls, the canopies over which show elegant workmanship. The temple of the Alvars, in the enclosure, is specially noteworthy for the frieze representing scenes from the Ramayana which it contains. Describing the sculptural beauty of the Belur temples, Fergusson, in his *Architecture in Mysore and Dharwar*, bestows very high praise on them. "There are," he says, "many buildings in India which are unsurpassed for delicacy of detail by any in the world, but the temples of Belur and Halebid surpass even these for freedom of handling and richness of fancy."

The exact date of erection of the Halebid temple is not known, but it has been set down, with good reason, to about 1141 A.D. Probably it was begun in the reign of Vishnu Vardhana and continued in that of his son Narasimha I. It is a double temple, dedicated to Hoysalesvara and Banchikesvara. Again the author has to quote Fergusson with regard to the architectural and sculptural peculiarities of the Hoysalesvara temple at Halebid: "The great temple at Halebid if it had been completed, is one of the buildings on which the advocate of Hindu architecture would desire to take his stand." The general arrangements of the temple are that it is a double temple. If it were cut into halves each part would be complete, with a pillared porch of the same type as that at Belur, an emblem of Siva.

ELEPHANTS

The buildings stand on a terrace, ranging from five to six feet in height, and paved with large slabs. On this stands a frieze of elephants, following all the sinuosities of the plan and extending to some 710 feet in length, and containing not less than 2,000 elephants, most of them with riders and trappings, sculptured as only an oriental can represent the wisest of brutes. Above these is a frieze of *Sardulas* or conventional tigers, the emblems of the Hoysalas, who built the temple. Then comes a scroll of infinite beauty and variety of design; over this a frieze of horsemen and another scroll, over which is a bas-relief of scenes from the *Ramayana*, representing the conquest of Ceylon and all the varied incidents of that epic. Then come celestial beasts and celestial birds, and all along the east front a frieze of groups from human life, and then a cornice, with a rail, divided into panels, each containing two figures. Over this are windows of pierced slabs, like those of Belur, though not so rich or varied. In the centre in place of the windows, is first a scroll and then a frieze of gods and heavenly *apsaras*, dancing girls and other objects of Hindu mythology. Siva, with his consort Parvati seated on his knee, is repeated at least fourteen times; Vishnu in his nine *avataras* even oftener. Brahma occurs three or four times, and every great god of the Hindu pantheon finds his place. Some of these are carved with a minute elaboration of detail, which can only be reproduced by photography, and, as Fergusson rightly says, "may probably be considered as one of the most marvellous exhibitions of

human labour to be found even in the patient East." Fergusson continues : "If it were possible to illustrate the Halebid temple to such an extent as to render its peculiarities familiar, there would be few things more interesting or more instructive than to institute a comparison between it and the Parthenon at Athens....." Numerous images of gods and goddesses would be found at this temple, and the existence of Gana Gopala (variety of Krishna image), Govarhanadhara Krishna, Kshetrapala (the protector of cities and villages), Vrishabhavahanamurti (the most popular representation of Siva), Gajasurasamharamurti, representing the destruction of an elephant *asura* by Siva and his wearing the skin of the elephant, etc., etc. are worth-mentioning.

Around Belur and Halebid temples there also exist a number of notable temples, amongst which mention may be made of Chennakesava temple at Belur (Ravananugrahamurti, representing Siva and Parvati on Mount Kailas, being lifted by Ravana, and also an image of Varaha) and Nritta-Ganapati Hoysalesvara Temple at Halebid.

THREE-CELLED

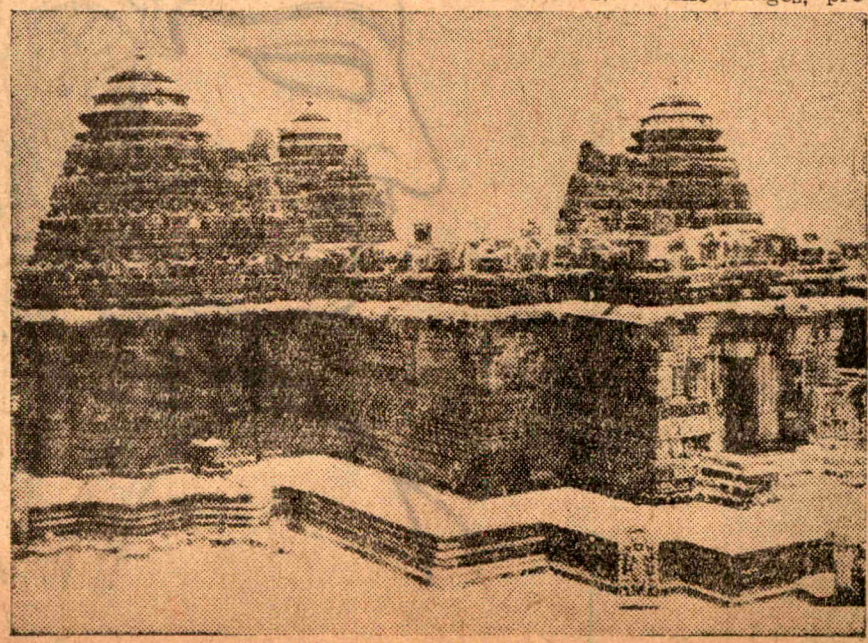
Somnathpur, or Vidyanidhi-Prasanna-Somanathpura, according to inscriptions, is situated about twenty miles to the south-east of Srirangapatam in Mysore State. It lies on the left bank of Cauvery. The Kesava temple at Somnathpur is an excellent example of the Hoysala style of architecture, its sculpture being, according to Fergusson, more perfect than that of the fascinating temples at Belur and Halebid. The temple, which measures 215 feet by 177, is a *trikutachala* or three-celled temple. An image of Kesava once occupied the cell opposite the entrance and gave the name to the temple. The other two, which are opposite to each other, face north and south respectively. The original image of Kesava in the central shrine is not available now, and in its place a modern image has been installed. The north has the image of Janardhana and the south that of Gopala. The temple, which resembles the famous Kedaresvara temple at Halebid, stands on a raised platform which is supported at the angles by figures of twelve elephants facing outwards. Round the exterior base are portrayed interesting events from the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, and the *Bhagavatapurana*. The Panchalinga and Lakshminarasimha temples are respectively to the east and south-west of the Kesava temple.

With the silent displacement of the Hoysala by the Vijayanagar dynasty, the Dravidian style of architecture became once again predominant in the land. The resuscitation of this style resulted in the erection of many temples in that style in the State. The newly built temple of Sarada at Sringeri at this place shows great skill in modern sculptural work. The temple at Virupakshipura in Kolar District, perhaps, the largest temple in the State, was built during the reign of Deva Raya II (1419-1446 A.D.). It has a Parvati shrine, which is unique in having the figure of a lion in front of it, just like Nandi in front of Siva temples.

One of the best examples of the influence of Hoysala art in temples built in the Dravidian style, as already stated, is the Aghoresvara temple at Ikkeri, the second capital of the Keladi kings. Also as stated earlier, the Gopalakrishna temple at Krishnaraja Sagara (Kannambadi) is still another instance of a Dravidian Temple with Hoysala features about it. The image of Gopalakrishna is beautifully carved. This temple is said to have been enlarged by Narasa Raja Wodeyar, son of Raja Wodeyar (1578-1617). The double temple of Rameswara and Virabhadra at Keladi belongs to the Vijayanagar times. The **gandabherunda** ceiling of this temple is a remarkable piece of sculpture. It is conceived in the best classical Indian style and is, perhaps, one of the few examples of its kind in the State. The ceiling in the **navaranga** of the Someswara temple at Magadi is well sculptured on all the sides with figures of animals, etc., some of the panels showing skilful combinations of birds, men and beasts. The **Grudastambha** before the Soumyakesava temple at Nagamangala, a temple in the Hoysala style, is one of the finest in the State.

During the period of the Vijayanagar Kings, the custom of engraving labels descriptive of figure sculpture was continued. Thus in the Janandhana temple at Sringeri is a stone on which are small figures of Brahma, etc., with labels giving their names. In the Melkote temple on the four pillars in the Mondapa of the Lakshmidevi temple, are engraved notes explaining the sculptures to which they relate. The practice was perpetuated by the Mysore Kings down to a late period. There are, for instance, thirteen short inscription on a pillar in the Tirukachchinambi temple at the Melkote temple, five of which are on the pedestals of the images representing Krishna Raja Wodeyar and his four queens.

There are many examples of good workmanship in brass, copper, bronze, etc., in the temples of the State. The best of this kind of work is to be found chiefly in connection with the processional images. During the periods of Hoysala and Vijayanagar ascendancy, the custom of presenting cast metallic images to the temples received even greater sanction and the tradition was kept up by the kings of the Mysore royal line upto the most recent times. A number of metallic images, pre-



A full view of Belur Temple

sented by Sri Krishna Raja Wodeyar III in 1829, are to be seen in the Prasanna Krishnaswami temple at Mysore. These images represent various Vaishnava deities and saints and sages of Southern India. The Lakshmivaradaraja temple at Terakanambi contains a number of metallic images of gods and goddesses belonging to several of the ruined temples at the place. The fine metallic image in the sanctuary of this temple itself was presented to it by Sri Krishna Raja Wodeyar III. This temple has also metallic images of child Krishna and child Balarama and of Yasoda suckling Krishna. Sri Krishna Raja Wodeyar III also brass-plated the doorway of the Mahabhutesvara temple on the Chamundi Hill near Mysore. In the Gangadharesvara temple at Seringapatam is a very handsome metallic image of Dakshinamurti used for processional purposes.

Most temples in the State possess jewellery, gold, and silver plates and vessels, bells of various kinds, vehicles of different sizes, brass and copper utensils, large and small, and many miscellaneous articles made of metals of different kinds. The jewels of the goddess Sarada, at Sringeri, for instance, are of very great value, made of solid gold and set with diamonds, rubies and other precious stones. There are also numerous pearl necklaces with fine pendants set with precious stones. The famous jewel at Melkote, known as the Rajmundi, a golden crown, set with jewels, was presented to it by Raja Wodeyar (1578-1617) whose image about 1½ feet high, standing with folded hands, with the name inscribed on the base, is to be seen in one of the pillars of the *navaranga* of the Narayanaswami temple at Melkote. It is said that Raja Wodeyar was much attached to the Melkote temple, whose sanctum, tradition says, he entered on the day of his death, and was seen no more afterwards. The other jewels at Melkote date from the days of Krishna Raja Wodeyar III. The Nanjangud temple, likewise, owns many silver articles, gold vehicles, vessels, and ornaments, set with precious stones.

The beautifying effects of painting were well understood from very early times and, the customary modes pertaining to it were fairly uniformly followed by the builders of temples and *maths* in this State during successive centuries.

There exist still innumerable temples at this treasure-state of India, all of which, if described in detail, will form a voluminous publication. The temples of Mysore, famous not only for their mystic history but also for their sculpture and architecture, were doubtless being, and, if maintained properly, will also be considered, for ever a paradise of mythologists, historians, students and research scholars of sculpture and architecture, saints and sanyasins, tourists and journalists, and thinkers and lovers of all walks of life. The temples of Mysore are the pride of India.

*

Female head *(see article on page 183)*

MAHA-ASHTAMI AT SEA

by LOKESH GHATAK

"EE here Mister Mate," said our German Captain to me on the bridge that morning after droping the Pilot at Suez Bay, "I work Hansa Line twenty years before war, sail with plenty Indian crew. This only one Indian festival we give for holiday at sea, see you, it is the Idd".

"Even of that festival," I said gloomily, "There are two. If you won't give a holiday to the men, you won't. They all came up here to see me early in the morning, that's all."

"Ho! You think I cut up rough like the Captain Bligh, hein? You think I make trouble for my men? Then there's mutiny?"

"Oh, you need'nt fly off the handle, they're used to doing without **any** holidays at sea."

"But **you** do not like it. Because you do not **comprehend.** There is the **discipline** to be considered, rules **must** be rules. See you, I will go and bring my note book and show, you."

He went into his day-room and presently came out with a small, weather-beaten, brownish coloured note book. He opened it at a page and held it under my nose. I was surprised to see that the entries were made in English, and one particular line was underlined in red.

"This book," the Captain said with a grin, looking sideways at me, "He is given to me by my English friend from B.I. whom we carry as passenger one trip. Look what is written."

I looked. The underlined sentence read: "The most important festival for them is the 'Idl-Fitre', when they will break their month old fast, and be sure not only to give them a holiday on that day but also extra rations of meat, flour and ghee"

The Light dawned on me. "But Captain! I remember now ..... I was only a cadet then. Your Hansa Line ships before the war carried Afghani crew in the Engine Room only, as stokers! They are Muslims. Our lads on this ship are all Hindus, except the Saloon Crew who are Christians. And some of the Officers are Muslims, Parsees Christians, Hindus and all sorts."

"Hindus, huh?" The Captain stroked his chin for a while. Then he said. I have it! "I have something for this contingency also, have no fear". He promptly went inside and brought out another book. This was a printed manual, in German, issued by the Hansa Line many years ago.

"I will translate for you," said the Captain: "When the Hindu is in the crew you will please to give the Divali as Holiday. That's right, I remember now. It is Divali and not ..... this what do you call it?"

"Maha-Ashtami".

"Manastatami. There is no such festival. The men. ....." and he drew up his full four foot and three to look up at me, "are, how you say, trying to pull your legs. They're bluffing you! But they can't bluff an old sea-dog like me, eh?"

"But Captain, we observe this festival at home ourselves! Why, it's the biggest day of the Pujas, which end in another festival called Dashami, better known in the rest of India as 'Dussera".

"Dussera, Dussera! Now where have I heard that word before? Wait." He went inside again and after a few minutes came out with the current year's diary, a gift from our Company, one to each Officer on the eve of our departure from Hamburg on the ship's maiden voyage under an Indian Flag twenty one days ago.

"I have it! Yes, Dussera. That is a holiday. Of course, it is printed here. The men shall have it. And also extra rations of meat, flour and ghee. Like Divali. That is also entered here. How many holidays do you have? If this is only for Hindus, then which are the other ones for Muslims, Christians Parsees, Sikhs, Jains, Budhists, ... how many kinds of people do you have in your country?

How do Indian ships work cargo and sail? How many times extra meat, flour and ghee?

"Where are the store rooms to keep the extra food? The new owners never told me about this," he grumbled. Then, looking at me still through the corner of his eyes, he added, "But there's no 'Mastamtamie' written here."

Spying our Bengali Serang Mukherjee patiently trying to follow our conversation, standing in a corner on the deck below, I raised my voice slightly and said, "You see, Captain, there is a festival called Durga Puja, lasting for four days, and ending with the ceremony of 'Dussera' when the idols are immersed. That last one is the only day observed in the rest of India except Bengal, and this diary which you have got was printed in Bombay. Now our men on this ship were all recruited at the Calcutta Shipping Office, and so naturally almost all of them are Bengali Hindus. Maha-Ashtami is the biggest religious festival in Bengal besides Kali Puja, which is the same as Divali. These boys want a day off, they don't want any extra rations." These last few words I uttered looking straight at the Serang who was in my direct line of vision, and who now winced at me. "They can have their extra rations on Dussera and Divali days." The Serang's face resumed its normal expression.

... "What? No feast? I mean no 'Burra Khana'? —— see how I quickly pick up my urdu. Do they just want to pray on this day, then?" The Captain seemed curious now to learn more about our strange habits, "You mean, they will pray ——" I said, uncomfortably, "Well, no, they won't actually pray. I mean it is a day for rejoicing and all that, recalling Rama's victory over Ravana and the conquest of Lanka and so on ....."

A small power boat appearing fast from the starboard bow helped me in avoiding further discussions on the subject as I began to give helm-orders to the quarter-master and the Captain, after making a note of the two names, Rama and Ravana, in his diary, slipped back into his cabin. I knew, of course, that the day was won for the men now, so I waved a hand to dismiss Mukherjee, who lost no time in sending the galley boy galloping down to the crews' quarters to break the glad tidings.
But my ordeal was not quite over yet.

At breakfast, about an hour later, the Captain announced: "My Steward says there is no such person called Rama or any Ravana."

"Your Steward said that?" Having a brand new crew on board and the voyage having begun soon after I myself had arrived at Hamburg, I did not have any chance yet to get fully acquainted with all members of the crew. The Captain was gazing fixedly at nothing in particular out of the port hole.

"What's his name?"

"George."

"George? But he's no right to go about saying a thing like that. It might upset the crew, turn them against him. I've never known a Goan to hold such views."

"Is he a Goan?" asked the Captain with considerable interest. "Three of our ships had scuttled in Mormagao Harbour during War and a number of my friends were in them. They stayed in Goa all through. Is lively place, Goa, no? But no Rama and no Ravana. 'Mantatami' is not for all India. Why ship, that is all-India, have holiday?"

Our Chief Steward, who was hovering about the pantry, came up behind me, bent his neck over my ears and whispered hoarsely, "George is not a Goan, Sir. His name is George Goonatilaka. He and the pantryman are Ceylonese." The Chief Steward was a Goan.

"Oh," I said, relieved, "They're Ceylonese, are they. You see, Captain, it's rather a curious thing: although the episodes of the Ramayana are not exactly historical, legendary really, but Indians believe in them implicitly. But in Ceylon, the island most concerned in bringing about the denouement, to the tale, has no legends concerning Rama's conquest of their island or the existence of a demon king there called Ravana. They don't learn these things in their school text books like we do in ours"

"But he said worse things," said the Captain darkly.

"What worse things?"

"He said the whole story was nothing but Aryan conspiracy."

"Good Heavens!" I exclaimed, "are we carrying a bunch of intellectual anarchists in the Saloon Department?"

But the Captain took no notice of me and continued in an injured voice: "Why must you also have Aryan Conspiracy in India, this I like to know. You been Germany before. You say so to me. What you see in Hamburg, Bremen, Bremmerhaven? Desert. Jungle of ruin. This result of Aryan Conspiracy. Why you want that in India?"

The Chief Engineer, at the other end of the table, bent forward on his elbows and said: "I am a Jew, Captain, a Bene-Israelite from Poona. Did'nt you know my name was Levi?" The Captain looked at him silently for a minute or two and said: "When you have your holiday, Chief?" and then asked pleasantly, "When do I have to give you extra meat, flour and ghee?"

The Chief looked disgustedly at the Captain..... one must remember that they hold equal ranks on a ship as technical heads of departments..... and retorted: "You start fraternising with a bunch of stewards and what not! Just try and be guided by what the Mate says, for Chrissake."

"Yet he swears by our Lord," said the Captain, who was a devout Catholic.

I tried to explain to the Captain, patiently, the secular nature of India and why only the three major community's principal religious occasions were declared public holidays as otherwise no office or industry could run on account of absenteeism. Men belonging to other communities, if they absented themselves on their own religious holidays, would not lose their pay and at the same time their absence from work would not markedly hamper productive work. But on his ship, as it happened, the majority of the crew belonged to a particular community whose 'Big Day' of the year was this, and so today the ship wanted a holiday. But I could see that the Captain was not listening. He was gazing vacantly at me. When I stopped speaking, he asked: "Why Aryan conspiracy?"

Breakfast having now being eaten, I said: "Let us, with your permission, call Mr. George Goonatilaka now to the Saloon, and ask him what he meant by it."

The Captain merely nodded his head. He was still apparantly thinking of the ruins of Hamburg, Bremen and Bremmerhaven.

Goonatilaka arrived. He was even shorter than the Captain, a shy subdued looking young man, not at all any body's idea of a budding fire-eating anarchist.

"Sir, please Sir," he said in a whimpering voice. "I never said conspiracy, Sir", "What you said," said the Captain, "means to me the same as conspiracy in German. Made up story to fool people." George turned to me and said, "Sir, please Sir," Captain read the names of Rama and Ravana from his note book and asked me who they were. I said they were a Hindoo God and a Demon, but we did'nt believe in them. He asked, 'Because you are a Chirstian?' I said 'No, Sir, but because there is no mention of any conquest of Ceylon before

Vijaya Sinha of Bengal in our History books.' If there was a Rama and a Ravana then we will learn about them in History books, Sir, will we not? But our History says nothing. So he asked me, are the crew bluffing the Chief Officer? I said Oh, no Sir, they believe the story. It is because, I said, and then again because you see Sir, the Captain knows nothing about our two countries, so I said to him, I said, in those very olden days there were a lot of uncivilised people about and the Dravidians, my forefathers, Sir, were the most civilised of all, and these uncivilised Aryans came and invaded the country and defeated them and all that, Sir, and to keep peace and everything they invented a lot of gods and legends and all. Sir, please Sir, I was not taught this at school but told on my last ship by the Captain whose steward I had been. He was an Englishman, please Sir, and used to read a lot of books."

This marathon speech over, I asked him to withdraw. Then I turned to the Captain. "Did you follow what he was saying?"

The Captain nodded his head. "It is confusion. I do not like confusion. This I will not have on my ship. What are your plans for the morning?"

"Men are on holiday. I have some paper work to get through." "Then come to my cabin at eleven o'clock for a glass of beer, Chief and you. Chief can wear his cap inside my room. I want to hear this story of Rama and Ravana and what is this 'Mantastami'."

"Maha-Ashtami," I said.

"Well, write it out on a piece of paper, and how you pronounce it like is done in dictionery."

✱

"Two things I do not like about this story," said the Captain very decisively.

It was nearly twelve o'clock, half an hour to go yet before the lunch gong, and the Chief and I were seated in the Captain's day room.

"Which are the two things?" asked the Chief.

"No. I do not mean your Hanuman. Jumping across the Adam's Strait and all that. Creatures in our legends have done for more atrocious things than that."

"Then which are the two things you do not like?" The Chief persisted.

"Look you, first your Rama listening to wild talk and exiling pregnant woman his lawful wife. This I do not like and in Germany we will not have this at all, even in legend or mythology.

"But long before this" he continued, "the same Rama finds it necessary to evoke the Goddess Durga for strength to conquer one whole demon kingdom in order to rescue this same wife. What for this, first one thing, then another?"

"Some of the things mentioned in the epic," said the Chief, "are more symbolic than true to life and I don't think any of us, including the Mate hero who is a Hindu, understand all of it."

The Captain made a gesture with his hands, "Then Aryan conspiracy right. Not true history. You say is not mythology also. Is what?"

"Listen, Captain," I said, "few in any part of the world are concerned with historical authenticity where religious ritualism is concerned and legends are an essential part of all religions because man must associate his religion with something that is super-natural, something which he himself cannot do. Why are we going into all this talk? You want to know why this is a big festival in Bengal and whether men are entitled to a holiday. Durga Puja was introduced to Bengal quite recently as far as dates go in the history of our country, but why it has taken such a root there is something I can tell you about."

"Why is this so?"

"Take a look at this picture," I had come up to the Captain's cabin armed with a copy of the previous year's Pooja issue of Patrika and I now held out for his inspection a picture of the 'Pratima' that was printed in it: "That is Durga with ten arms, surrounded by her husband Shiva above, sons Kartikeya and Ganesha and daughters Laxmi and Saraswati on either side, riding on a Lion and destroying the Asura who, when mortally wounded, discards his guise of Mahisha or a Buffalo."

"Very interesting. What do all these gods and goddesses represent?"

"That's the thing that counts. To begin with, Durga is a goddess whose home is Bengal. She is the daughter of Yaksharaj, and once a year Bengalis like to welcome the return of the daughter of the house for a brief visit of four days. Has this anything to do with Rama's conquest of Ceylon and your George's objection to it?"

"Seems not."

"Her husband Shiva is also admired much in Bengal. He is a very forgetful type of a God, given to smoking hemp, generally care-free but terrible when roused and then he dances the Tandava, or the dance of destruction."

"This I see in Berlin many years ago. This one dance of Shiva. Indian dancer Shankar, I remember."

"Yes, Bengali dancer Uday Shankar. Well you see why Shiva is also popular in Bengal. Bengalis have a weakness for this type of a character....."

"And probably one of the reasons why there isn't any prohibition in Bengal....." the Chief, who came from the State of Maharashtra, put in wistfully.

"Probably," I continued, "and then this is Saraswati, the Goddess of learning, art, music and culture....."

"The muses?" The Captain asked brightly.

"All the muses," I agreed, "rolled into one. And you must know that Bengalis go in for the muses in a big way....."

"This also I know, Tagore and Jamini Roy and....."

"Yes, yes, — the lunch gong had already sounded and I could see that the Chief was impatient to go below to attend to his victuals, "and this one is Kartikeya, the god of war. But wait! You are going to say that Bengalis are not war-like people. True, but in Bengal we admire Kartikeya because of his physical beauty and not his prowess. See that hair-style, the manner of wearing the dhoti, the moustache and the long hair? For ages this god has been the idol of fashion for Bengali youths."

"At Hamburg I see Serang and Cassab go ashore with hair plastered by grease in the centre like your Kra-ti-Keyo."

"Exactly. And this is Laxmi, Goddess of wealth and well-being. You have no objection to being rich and happy?"

"Not at all."

"Then this goddess will pass muster in any country. And this God, the one with the elephant's head....."

"Why the elephant's head?"

"That is a long story which I will tell you some other day. This is the god who fulfils your desires, including that for making a lot of money, and is much sought after by Marwaris, and we have to follow suit....."

"I do not comprehend."

"You see, the Marwaris must worship Ganesha, particularly before going to the share-bazaar, and since they are the biggest employers of Bengali young men ..... incidentally now your own employer, the owner of this ship, is also a Marwari

.....so we worship him also, a kind of second hand approach to keep our jobs."

"I see. And the Lion and the Buffalo ?"

"Well you see, that's where our Bengali sculptors of these images get some real inspiration in putting up a spectacular show. So all in all, you see, there are so many reasons why we consider Durga Pooja as the most important festival of the year and this day, Maha-Ashtami, is the biggest day of all . I think lunch is getting cold and the Chief is hungry," I said, standing up. But I could see that the Captain was not entirely convinced.

*

It is amazing but true how men aboard a merchant ship, both of the old and new, seem to know where the ship will be on any given day and at any given time even better than the ship's Navigating Officer.

During the war the Captain used to receive his "SAILING ORDERS" in a sealed envelope which could only be opened after the Pilot had dis-embarked, and would then reveal the ship's destination. But we junior officers knew better, and always laid in our sea-stores of cigarettes and things according what came to be called the 'Galley Bulletin' which emanated from the ship's cook days before she sailed.

Even with a band of Bengali boys having no sea-faring tradition, this ship proved no different.

Six p.m. is always ship's time for dinner and I was relieved on the bridge by the Third Mate as usual. But before I could enter the saloon, I was stopped by the Serang. "Please don't eat now, Sir. We have prepared some special food and sent up a dish for each Officer to the saloon, but you must come aft to our mess at 8 o'clock and take your meal with us."

"Well, I don't know," I said hesitantly, "I think it would do just as well if you send up a dish for me the same as any body else....."

"But there's something else, Sir. We are having Arati ?"

"Arati ? Before what ?"

"That's to be the surprise, Sir."

So I agreed to go to the crews' Mess Room after my watch was over at eight, and on entering the Saloon ordered only for a plate of soup.

The Captain was there. "Butler says this curry is made in crew galley, special khana. Gotddamn my tongue and eye both burning is what they put in this ? I never taste better curry since leaving Hamburg, our cook make 'Madras Curry', 'Cochin Curry,' 'Kofta Curry' every day for lunch, why not be learn to make. . . . ." and he looked at the piece of paper which I had handed him in his cabin earlier in the day....."Mashtami Curry from the Bhandari (Crews' cook), except not to put so many chillies then I throw him over the ship's side....."

The Butler, his pride pardonably hurt at this reflection on the culinary art of his cook, said, "The Bhandaris have cooked the same food for the crew as they always do, Sir. That and some other dishes were prepared by the Bengali sailors with massalas and many ingredients which they brought from Hamburg for these feasts today and on Dussera day."

"This — massala — you can buy in Hamburg ? I no believe !"

The Butler replied with a superior sort of a smile.....for in this one regard a man who has lived all his life in Hamburg is far less likely to know what is available in a super-market grocery that any ship's butler....and said, "Oh, yes Sir. Anything you can get in India you can get there if you know where to go."

The Captain turned to me. "They prepare for this festival three week, four week before ?"

"Obviously they worked it out that we shall be at sea during the time, as we indeed are."

"How ?"

"Don't ask me. Probably from a Distance & Speed table."

"But I was offered cargo from London but did not accept.....that was after leaving Hamburg ! If we took that cargo we would not be at sea today !"

"Oh, don't worry," I said resignedly, "They would still have known.....at least where we would be and would have done their shopping accordingly. Rest assured they don't throw away their hard earned 'advances' of Marks for nothing !"

"Is strange ! Why you eating only soup ? Try this curry. Chief, he try some, said roof of his mouth is falling off, and gone to his cabin to wash mouth with ice-water. Is more like "Hanuman Curry" I think, it make Second also take one very long jump from chair to door. This curry must be ma'e of secret ancient massala given as gist by Goddess Durga to Rama for feeding Hanuman, for with mouth burning he thinks nothing of tail burning and jumps the Adams straits and goes here and there like mad setting fire every where. You shoulda' seen Chief and Second. Try some, for you Bengali, no ? This your own curry, not harm you,"

"I am indeed going to try some," I said grimly, and told the Captain about the invitation aft.

"What is Arati ?"

At this moment the Chief came back to the saloon after having gargled his mouth and resumed his dinner. "The most inquisitive skipper I ever sailed with," He complained to me bitterly, "The men had sent a big dish-ful of Halwa and other sweets, but no, he says on all religious festival days Officers must have one dish in common with ratings, and they have extra rations for that. He wanted to find out what the men were eating. What for?"

"Is trouble with you, Chief, you too fond of eating Halwa which I try in Karachi once and my mouth & teeth remain sticky for three days. I see this 'Ravana Curry' at last give you chance to clean your mouth and teeth which I notice you do not clean since leaving Hamburg". The Chief ignored him and went on eating.

"Can I also go to see this Arati with you?" the Captain asked me.

"Why not? men will be tickled no end, I am sure. I'll call for you at five-past eight on my way down from the Bridge".

And so it was. The Captain was waiting for me by the door of his cabin, resplendent in full 'Number Tens' with four rows of ribbons.

"You no change?" he asked, looking at my dishevelled 'Number Thirteens'. "Oh I'll wrap a dressing gown around..wo'nt make you wait for more than a minute...." and then, seeing his face fall, hastily added, "You see you're a guest but since this is my festival, I must be in my national dress, and not having any with me, a dressing gown is best.....you have seen pictures of our Poet Tagore?"

This seemed to carry conviction with him and he nodded his head brightly.

Of course, I had already sent word aft that the Captain would be accompanying me and the men were ready. The Red Sea had co-operated with the mood of the men and was calm as a mill pond. In one corner of the crews' saloon they had rigged up a table with Flags and buntings and powerful incense was burning from several flower vases obviously borrowed from the Officers' Saloon. At the centre of this table was a framed (obviously the work of the ship's carpenter) frontispiece from some Puja Issue of a Bengali magazine. Arranged on two sides of this table were two long tables covered with spotless linen on which were laid the table, a place of honour at end one end of each for

the Captain and myself. Covered dishes arranged on the table emitted faint, savoury steam. And seated on the deck before the centre table was our Serang Mukerji, dressed in a Dhoti and a Chaddar. Pages of an ancient looking volume were open before him and without peering close I knew it was the 'Chandi'. Opposite him sat the Cassab, also dressed in a dhoti, nourishing the fires in two frying pans which contained the solid incense which must burn when the Arati was made, and Cassab was obviously the dancer. I was much impressed by all this, and so I could see was the Captain. As all the men stood up on their feet to receive us, the Captain unclutched the piece of paper in his left fist, peered at it, then said "Happy-Maha-Ashtami to all of you!" "Happy Maha-Ashtami, Sir," responded the men, selfconscious to a man at this unfamiliar mode of greeting. I was about to request the Serang to take his seat and go on with his reading and as I turned to the Captain with the words, "With your permission Sir, may I request the men to carry on with their function?" the words froze half way on my lips. The Captain was staring incredulously at the flowers on the centre table, his mouth open in wonder. Then he pointed at the flowers and asked me: "Where they get this flower? Also Hamburg?"

The Serang, who had been informed, no doubt by the Butler earlier in the evening about the Massala incident, said modestly: "Yes, Sir".

"By Gott, mann! That is hot-house flower the most expensive!"

I peered closely through the incense smoke now, and saw that the flowers were common or garden 'Ganda' used for every Puja in Bengal. Although where they procured a supply from, I had no idea.

"Mister Mate!" The Captain turned to me. "First Massala, then all this, and last the flowers! This crew prepare for their big festival one month in advance. I no prepare for Christmas one month in advance! This crew buy Puja needs one month in advance paying five time the price in foreign port, I buy Chrismas present in Custom Free Port only otherwise never, for cards are enough! This crew know where ship is to be on festival day,

..... *responded the men* .....

'Happy-Maha-Ashtami.....'

damn it, this my ship and I not know where she will be next week! There is more power in Durga Puja than I think and than you think, I think. This flower is marigold and none can get in market because no smell but in Botanical Hot-house is keeping."

"Yes Sir, "said the Serang, "You see Sir, for our Puja we need flowers that must not have any scent. It is very difficult to get."

"I know, I know.....This Puja too important I think! Mister Mate never tell me this important before. You say four days?"

Before the Serang could say anything, I said, "Well the first day was yesterday, actually...."

"Then balance three days must be holidays. Today, tomorrow and Day after, which of course is official Dussera. By the tail of Jumping Hanuman, on every my future ship Matamtamie four day holiday!" The men began to give three cheers to the Captain and I silently picked up the crumpled piece of paper which had fallen from the Captain's hand and on which was written the correct spelling and pronunciation of a festival, which I now firmly believe, must still be religiously followed in some ship of the German Merchant Navy, for our Captain was flown back to Germany after the ship was delivered in India and a new Indian Captain had taken over.

I later tackled Mukherjee in my Cabin.

"Cut all this out about shopping in Hamburg. Where did you get the ganda flowers that swung the der ?"

Mukherjee at first attempted an expression of injured surprise, but thinking better of it, grinned at me. "You were probably too busy to notice, Sir, but the owners while taking over the ship had a re-naming ceremony forward for which they had flown out gandas from India and when everything was over the Tindal collected some garlands which he kept fresh by watering daily..... you see, he used to arrange them before the photograph of his dead mother daily, and in the absence of any other flower....."

"And the Massala ?"

"Oh the Butler was simply laying it on. Giving the Officers insipid curry every day with the same massalas which we also get.....he was just trying to save the face of his cook."

ATOMIC ENERGY AND ITS USES

By S. C. CHAKRABORTY

IT is undoubtedly true that the first energy that man used was the radiant energy of the sun. Directly it warmed his body and provided light for carrying on various activities. Indirectly he used solar energy in other ways. His food consisting of plants and animals could grow like himself only because of the sun's energy. Water, his vital drink, had fallen condensed as rain after it had been evaporated by the heat of the sun. In the primitive stage his muscular energy was the direct source of his limited mannual activities; by domesticating animals he learned how to use them for traction and agriculture.

A new process of utilising stored up energy was discovered when man learned to make fire. Since then for the generation of heat wood, vegetable and animal fats and dungs have been used. The use of fossil fuels like coal and mineral oil is of comparatively modern history. The industrial revolution in the nineteenth century was possible by the invention of steam engine which had to be fed by coal. Almost entirely during the past century men have learnt how to generate electrical energy from the energy of steam or of falling water and to employ it in homes and industries in hundreds of ways. The use of electricity is, however, severely limited in our country and in most sections of life energy is obtained for use directly from primary chemical sources like cattle dung, wood and agricultural wastes. In fact about 97.4 per cent of the total household consumption of energy in India is derived from the aforesaid primary sources while coal, kerosene and electricity form only 2.6 per cent of the total.

With industrialisation and technological progress the present pattern of energy consumption will change and energy will be consumed more and more in the form of electricity. The large scale development of hydro-electric power has already begun to change the pattern in many areas. This, however, cannot meet India's power demand beyond a certain limit.

Regarding the question of power from oil, India's known resources are extremely meagre. Large scale expansion in future will have to depend primarily on coal when we consider India's rapid rise in population, desirable increase in the standard of living, growing demands for industrial expansion and consequent rise in per capita energy consumption. But India's position in respect of coal deposit particularly in comparision with U.S.A., U.K. and China is not satisfactory. So a new source of energy has to be tapped in India as in the industrially progressive countries of the West. It is the atomic energy.

Structure of Atom : Till the last few years of the nineteenth century matter was considered to be made up of a host of homogeneous, indivisible, invisible and ultimate particles known as atoms. But this idea of the homogeneity of atoms was rudely shaken by two epoch-making discoveries before the close of the century. The first was the discovery of radio-activity in 1896 by Professor Becquerel, followed up by his colleague Pierre Curie with his wife Marie Curie. The second was the discovery of electron by Professor J. J. Thomson in 1897. So long hydrogen atom was thought to be the smallest particle obtainable. The electron, however, is a particle whose weight is only about 1|1840 of that of the hydrogen atom. It can in addition be obtained from any kind of atom. It follows, therefore, that atoms must have a constitution and be capable of change. This deduction was in fact confirmed by the spontaneous disintegration of radio-active elements like uranium and radium with the production of new elements. An apparently inexhaustible output of heat energy from radio-active elements showed the possibility of obtaining energy from other elements also.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, therefore, it was known that all atoms contained a common constituent the electron; that atoms of one element could be transformed into atoms of another element; and that this transformation was accompanied by the liberation of energy. A New Zealand Scientist, Ernest Rutherford by performing a series of wonderful experiments at Cambridge succeeded in 1911 in formulating a new theory of the structure of the atom. He showed that the phenomenon of disintegration and the behaviour of the particles flung out by exploding atoms implied that the atom consisted of a very small nucleus containing nearly the whole weight of the atom, surrounded by numerous electrons which circulated round the nucleus at a relatively great distance from it. The nucleus carried a positive charge of electricity which exactly balanced the total negative charge of all the electrons in the outer parts of the atom. It appeared that the disintegration of an atom was due not to the loss of some of the outer electrons in the space round the nucleus, but to a break-up of the nucleus itself. This was the birth of Nuclear Physics. The great output of energy in radio-activity came from inside the nucleus.

Artificial Disintegration : As nuturally radio-active substances are continuously disintegrating, it seemed not unreasonable to suppose that it might be possible to disintegrate atoms artificially. Rutherford started on this pursuit.

Meanwhile a young Danish Physicist, Niels Bohr, came from Copenhagen to study with Rutherford at Manchester. He gave an explanation of many of the known properties of atoms, based on a combination of Rutherford's atomic model with Planck's quantum theory of energy. Pursuing his experiments to effect disintegration artificially during the War of 1914-1918 Rutherford succeeded in bringing about the disintegration of atoms of nitrogen and aluminium in 1919. He did this by

bombarding them with positively charged alpha particles shot out from radio active substances, when every time he got positively charged hydrogen nucleus spinning out as the result of the collision. It appeared as if the charged hydrogen is the result of nuclear structure. The charged hydrogen nucleus became so common that it was given the special name "proton". Since nothing else was known to come out of nucleus bombarded by radioactive particles, it was considered as the unit building block out of which all atomic nuclei are constructed. It was thus given a mass of 1 and a positive charge of 1. In a neutral atom the number of electrons rotating round the nucleus is the same as the number of protons in the nucleus. The chemical character of an atom is determined by the external electronic system i.e. by the number of electrons which of course equals the number of protons in the nucleus.

Neutron : It was also known that the nucleus contains more than the protons necessary to give it its net charge. Helium, for instance, has 2 protons in the nucleus, which gives it its 2 positive charges; but because its atomic weight is 4 it has something else in the nucleus that supplies the extra mass of 2; similarly in the case of other elements. In 1932 James Chadwick showed that a new kind of particle existed in the nucleus which was neutral in electric charge. It had the same mass as the nucleus of a hydrozen atom, but unlike that nucleus had no electric charge. Consequently, the neutron, as the new particle was named, could be expected to possess enormous power of penetration. When the neutron was shot at another atom it would be neither attracted by the negatively charged outer electrons, nor repelled by the positive charge on the bombarded atom's nucleus. Thus an extremely powerful new method of disintegration had been discovered.

Isotopes : Atoms of the same element have the same number of protons, but may have different number of neutrons in the nuclei. Thus atoms of some elements come to possess different masses. They are called isotopes of the respective elements. The common isotope of hydrogen has one proton and no neutron in the nucleus. Hence its atomic weight is 1. Heavy hydrogen, a second isotope of hydrogen, has in its nucleus one proton and one neutron and its atomic weight is 2. A third isotope of hydrogen has one proton and 2 neutrons and its atomic weight is 3. The commonest isotope of uranium has in its nucleus 92 protons & 146 neutrons. Its atomic weight is 238. A second isotope forming a very small percentage of natural uranium has 92 protons and 143 neutrons and its atomic weight is 235. A still rarer isotope has 92 protons and 142 neutrons and its atomic weight is 234.

Artificial Radio-activity : In 1933 Professor Frederic Joliot and his wife, Irene Curie showed that a large number of atoms could be made artificially radio-active. It should be remembered with great admiration that while Pierre Curie and his wife Marie Curie (popularly called Madam Curie) discovered the most potent source of natural radioactivity their daughter, Irene Curie and her husband should have discovered artificial radioactivity. The discovery that most elements can be produced in the form of radio-active isotopes opened the most wonderful possibilities of their use in medicine, agriculture & industry.

Fission of uranium : In January 1939 yet another astonishing discovery was made. Otto Hahn and Strassmann of Berlin by studying the action of slow neutron on uranium confirmed the fact that atoms of uranium could be disintegrated with a very great release of energy. It was also realised that in the disintegration of uranium a nuclear reaction took place of a kind utterly different from any so far found, in that the large uranium atom split into nuclei of two new atoms of medium weight. When the weights of these two atoms were added together the sum was appreciably less than the weight of the uranium atom. The mass lost must have been converted into and liberated as energy. By the equivalence of mass and energy any mass m may, in certain circumstances, be converted into energy E, the relation between the two being according to the Einstein's equation $E=mc^2$, where c is the velocity of light, which is $3x10^{10}$ cm/ per sec. However infinitesimal the loss of mass may be the amount of energy released is enormous in view of the aforesaid high value of C^2. It is estimated that the fission of a gram of U 235 would liberate energy equal to the energy of 2.5 to 3 tons of coal or 20 tons of T.N.T., the powerful chemical explosive used in conventional bombs.

In a sample of natural uranium, (atomic weight 238.07) isotope uranium-238 forms 99.282 per cent. Isotope uranium-235 forms a small fraction of 0.712 per cent. There is a trace of a still lighter isotope uranium-234, to the extent of 0.006 per cent. Of these three isotopes only U 235 nucleus undergoes fission by encounter with slow neutrons. Nuclei which split in this way are called fissile or fissionable. U 235 is the only fissionable substance in nature. There are two other fissionable substances which can be produced artificially; plutonium (Pu 239) from Uranium 238 and uranium 233 from thorium 232 by the absorption of a neutron each.

The smashing or splitting of atoms artificially is known as atomic fission. It is brought about by bombarding the nucleus of atoms with "atomic bullets" or strikers. These bullets are usually neutrons, but they may be other atomic particles also. There speed is tremendously increased by electric and magnetic devices of a huge machine known as cyclotron. If a nucleus is struck squarely it is usually split. The pieces of the split nucleus are the nuclei of two new atoms and more neutrons which may act as bullets.

Chain Reaction : The fission — reaction can be sustained if free neutrons — the product of fission— can be made to enter the nuclei of surrounding atoms and make them split. This is called chain reaction. Such reaction is self-sustained in a fissionable substance as its nucleus breaks up by capturing neutrons of any velocity and no extra energy supply is necessary.

To establish a chain reaction there must be enough neutrons produced by fissions to allow for the loss of neutrons which escape from the mass of uranium in which fissions are produced. Escape takes place from the surface of the mass whereas the amount of fission depends on the volume of the mass. With the variation of size of the mass the magnitude of surface changes less rapidly than that of the volume. The larger the mass the less is the relative importance of escape. Hence a big mass will automatically explode, but no explosive chain reaction will take place in a mass whose size is below a critical value.

An atomic energy project known as the Manhattan District was formed in America with American and European Scientists in 1942 with an American Government Subsidy of 2 billion dollars. It successfully separated a sizable mass of uranium 235 from its isotopes by an elaborate process of diffusion. On 2nd December of the same year a

group of 41 scientists working under the strictest war time secrecy under a canvas tent in a tennis court on the University of Chicago Campus was successful in producing controlled chain reaction in a pile containing purified uranium 235, discovered the new atom Plutonium and made the first atomic bomb test. It was the first controlled release of a part of the vast energy that had been securely locked up in the nuclei of atoms ever since the creation of the earth. It was the first fire lighted on earth that did not have its origin in the sun like other forms of energy and it marked the beginning of a new era in the career of man in search of newer sources of energy.

Atom Bomb : In atom bomb use is made of the devastating effect produced when a large amount of atomic energy is released in the shortest possible time by chain reactions. It is so designed that the largest possible number of fissions and consequently the greatest possible energy release occur in less than 1/100,000 of a second. The explosion of just over two pounds of U 235 or Pu 239 in an atom bomb produces a temperature of almost 2,000,000°F. This heat alone is sufficient to kill all life within half a mile. Along with the terrific heat come showers of neutrons, and powerful gamma rays which hit every object over a large area. The blast of air set in motion by the explosion is heavy enough to destroy buildings two miles from the centre.

The bomb consists essentially of 2 masses of suitable fissile material e.g. uranium 235 or plutonium 239, each less than a certain critical mass so that they may not automatically explode, but together greater than that mass. These two masses are brought into intimate contact very rapidly. A single fission at the moment of contact sets off the whole chain of fissions and so produces the tremendous explosion. The obvious means of bringing the two masses together in a bomb is to shoot one part as a projectile against the second part as target.

With this energy properly controlled man is destined to build an industrial civilisation with a standard of living that would satisfy all his material needs to an extent never dreamt of. But most unfortunately that energy was first expended in the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki by atom bombs in 1945 that ended the second world war.

Atomic Pile (Nuclear Reactor) : It is a structure consisting of a fissile material, e.g. uranium 235 together with a suitable moderator, e.g. pure carbon or heavy water (water formed with heavy hydrogen), so arranged in a lattice that energy is released in a controlled manner, continuously as the result of nuclear fission. In the atomic pile the uranium atom is excited by capturing a neutron and undergoes fission. Apart from the elements of approximately equal mass formed as a result of this disintegration, an average of two or more neutrons are also emitted. These neutrons produce further fissions in the uranium atoms, and extremely rapid chain reaction develops. This is controlled by inserting neutron absorbers like cadmium into the pile, which absorb all neutrons in excess of the number required to maintain reaction at a constant level. The moderator rapidly slows down the fast neutrons emitted by the fission process, so increasing their chance of capture to produce further fissions.

Thermo-nuclear Fusion Bomb : In the years since, human efforts have been bent to the development of still more deadly weapons. When hydrogen atoms are fused at very very high temperature their nuclei unite and make helium with a loss of mass. This process is known as thermo-nuclear fusion. This kind of fusion like atomic fission, turns lost matter into energy. The sun and stars are fusing hydrogen atom to make helium day in and day out, year after year. The Sun's heat and light come from the energy of this fusion. Scientists have been able to duplicate on earth what happens in the sun and stars; the results have been the making of a devastating hydrogen bomb which is a thousand times more powerful than an atomic bomb. In the hydrogen bomb hydrogen 2 and hydrogen 3, two heavy isotopes of hydrogen are fused into helium by the 2,000,000 degree heat of the exploding atomic bomb. Hydrogen-2 can be made from a kind of water known as heavy water which is present in a very tiny amount in ordinary water. Hydrogen-3 is present in ordinary water in extraordinarily minute quantity.

The total atomic reserves, i.e. the stock of fissionable materials of the earth, however large at present, will be depleted in a foreseeable future. The stock of heavy hydrogen in sea water is on the other hand almost unlimited. So fusion is the ultimate process of energy generation. But the process of controlling fusion reaction has yet to be found before the resultant energy can be used for peaceful purposes.

Great progress may be expected within the next decade not only in the more efficient utilisation of the fission process concerned with the burning of the heavy elements e.g. uranium and plutonium, but also in the means to bring under control the much more powerful hydrogen fusion process now employed in the uncontrolled release of explosive power in the hydrogen bomb. The difficulties in the way of achieving controlled fusion are vast. The fusion process can take place only at an enormous temperature as already stated. To convert the inexhaustible supply of energy of the oceans' deuterium into useful power, such a tremendous temperature must be achieved in a gas confined within walls that must stand that temperature. Under such formidable difficulties fusion reaction has to be controlled and the released energy extracted. Experiments carried out by the British and American Physicists suggest the practicability of controlled fusion.

Atomic Power Plant. The World's coal reserves are limited and will be precariously depleted within the next hundred years. So the giant energy of the atom is being tapped for peaceful purposes also, e.g. for making electricity and powering ships. At atomic power plant is much like an ordinary power plant that uses coal for fuel except that the nuclear reactor takes the place of the boiler and the heat of the reactor is carried off through heat exchanger for generating steam from water. The energy of the steam is turned into electricity.

For the U.S.A. blessed above all other countries with abundant sources of conventional fuels like coal and oil the use of atomic power is not so pressing a need as for the industrialised but fuel-short countries of Western Europe. Even then quite a large number of industrial nuclear plants are now delivering electric power in that country and the use of atomic energy for powering ships and her giant aircraft carriers has been spectacular. Great Britain under pressure of fuel shortage made a faster start. On October 17, 1956, Great Britain put into operation the world's first full-scale nuclear power station at Calder Hall in Cumberland absolutely with her own resources of men and materials. It was designed to generate 90,000 Kilo Watt of electrical power and at the same time to manufacture plutonium, the artificial nuclear fuel, for military purposes. Since then she has embar-

(Continued On Page 203)

The Lake, the fish, and Million Birds

By K. P. BISWAS

"WHAT places in Orissa are you going to visit?" asked Sri Biren Mitra, Chief Minister, when on reaching Bhubaneswar I went to see him.

"The one place I would surely go to is Lake Chilka," was my reply to his enquiry. I supplemented it by further stating that I wanted to be there only to see if that old source of fish-supply for Calcutta is to remain alive in future or to dry up at least for us Bengalis.

"Why should it go dry for you?" interrupted me Sri Mitra.

"Because," I replied, "I have already seen new cities like Rourkela coming up in Orissa, demanding the diversion of this protein-food. After all, the sons of the soil have the first claim."

"But," promptly countered the Chief Minister, "you do not know the new sources of fish-supply which are being opened in the State." He spoke of major and minor dams where fish culture had started and by taking his outstretched arms wide apart successfully tantalised a fish-hungry Bengali about the size of the catch he himself had witnessed.

Later, I had been to Chilka lake. Although the fishes it rears attracted me to its lake-side and then to distant points inside it, my mind once in contact with the vast expanse of water and isolated hillocks shooting up here and there in the unbounded heavens like guardian angels watching the placid surface of the lake, was lifted to the other domain to be thrilled and to remain uncommunicative.

That welcome isolation is, however, not unbroken for long. It is often given a go-by—possibly it is done only in Chilka — in the sudden visual presence of life surging in multitude. Flocks of birds, not hundreds, not thousands, but possibly millions over millions flutter their wings either to ascend from or descend to the lake. It is as much the kingdom of birds, local and migratory, as the lake water is the home for fishes of brackish and sweet water.

Nature is still unspoilt and full of life at Chilka. Fishermen's hamlets butting the edges of the lake and shrouded in bushes and trees during the

moon-lit night are appropriate frame to bound the Chilka picture. There is no over-emphasis or over-colouring of the broad canvas spread by Nature at any point.

It is more at night than during day-time that one realises better from the faint echoes of beating drums on fishing boats in the lake, that Chilka has another attraction for man, the boon of protein food. The drum beatings lure the fish to their nets. Birds also cover the horizon of half of the earth's surface to fly to the lake during cold season in search of the same food.

Chilka is thus a double attraction. It is the biggest brackish water sheet in the country. In area it is 450 sq. miles during the rains but shrinks to 350 sq. miles during summer. It occupies parts of the two Orissan districts of Puri and Ganjam. Its mean breadth in the northern part is 12 miles while in the irregular south five miles. The average depth of the lake is six feet, the deepest region being 18 to 20 feet.

The lake, is fed by the Bay through two channels. One of them is two miles north of the village Arkabulda, 14 miles from Puri. The width of the opening is roughly 100 yards. Another channel artificially made is through the estuary of the river Rishikullya. The depth of this channel ranges from six to 30 feet. Two rivers, Daya and Bhargavi, both branches of the Mahanadi, flow into the lake from the west and considerably reduce the salinity of the water as a result of which fish-culture is facilitated in the lake

About 38,000 fishermen, living in more than 100 villages around the lake, principally the western shore of the lake and the inner shore of the outer canals, are dependent on the catches from the lake for their subsistence. A section of them is the Telegu-speaking Nulias (two per cent) who also catch fishes in the open sea at the mouth of the lake with dragnets and cast nets. The majority of the fishermen are Kentos (70 per cent) who are entirely dependent on the fish-resources of the lake.

There are different ways of catching fishes in the Chilka lake, the most important of which is called "Jano". It is almost the same technique followed for fish-catching in the **Beel** and **Haor** areas in Bengal. It is done, as in Bengal, during winter months (October to February) when flood water recedes and fishermen barricade areas, miles long, with bamboo screens and employing trap enclosures at points in that bamboo wall (locally known as gohors) where fishes are daily collected. There are more than 100 such Jano-fisheries in Chilka and they fetch the largest amount of revenue. The other types of fisheries are known as "Bahan," "Diam" and "Prawn."

The total fish yield as accounted for by the Cooperative Society was, in 1962-63, about 30,000 maunds valued at one lakh and fifty thousand rupees approximately. The Society now holds leases for about 112 "Jano," 60 "Prawn," 25 "Bahan" and 91 "Diam" types of fisheries and will have five depots to store the catch at Rambha, Kespede, Balugaon, Naini and Kaluparghat. Kespede has already been built and Balugaon is nearing completion. The profit from sales made in 1962-63 by the Central Society was Rs. 35,000 approximately. A coordinated and controlled marketing of the catches is now being worked out. Just at present primaries are allowed to do the job. So far only one cold storage has been set up at Balugaon attached to the Government Ice factory.

These 288 fisheries are sub-leased to primary societies on the basis of an average lease value plus 10 per cent as margin for the Central Society. The primary societies, in return, work out fisheries through individual fishermen—members of different villages in the neighbourhood of the lake. Besides securing sub-leases the Central Society arranges for loans and advances by primaries to meet the initial cost of setting up a fishery.

Calcutta got scent of the Chilka fishes as early as 1902. Purna Chandra Roy — his son is still in the business — went all the way to Chilka lake site, organised fishing, advanced money and employed fishermen to catch fishes and to transport the cargo to Calcutta. There was no arrangement then for icing the catch which had to be salted for transport to Calcutta by rail. Sri Roy must have made considerable progress in this line of business and ultimately decided to settle in Kaluparghat on Chilka permanently. He was then followed by a few others who also are still in the same business.

Fish trade has been from the beginning, profitable though it was left to private initiative to develop it. No change in it came until 1930 when the first Cooperative move was made among fishermen to organise themselves. Auction in selling fishery-right was then introduced and only men having money and resources for organisation could be in it.

This state of affairs continued till 1952-53 when fisheries began to be auctioned in the name of fishermen but actually the transaction was on behalf of **Benamdar** traders from Calcutta.

Fishermen, who actually did the real job of catching fishes, fared worse in the whole transaction.

Fish trade of Chilka could still make headway and there was an insistent demand by parties both inside and outside Orissa to be in it. A spirit of competition and rivalry developed but the lot of fishermen did not undergo any change. Because Fishermen could have real interest in the job and were negligent. The situation grew so bad that fisheries at one stage used to be looted and the problem of maintenance of law and order in the lake area became acute. Disputes grew in number not only between fishermen and non-fishermen but also among fishermen themselves.

At this state Government was moved to act and set up mobile police parties to patrol the lake area particularly where the fisheries are situated. Although the present position is much improved yet the question of maintaining law and order and to protect properties has become alive and its solution on a permanent basis is awaited. Because of such trends in the state of affairs even cooperative efforts to organise the trade proved futile. Government till then was satisfied only in realising revenue — two lakhs of rupees a year.

Prof. A. F. Laidlaw, a Canadian expert and an adviser of the Reserve Bank of India, on an invitation from the Union and the State Governments, looked into the affairs of Chilka fishing trade and advised the State Government to sponsor a Central Fishermen Cooperative Marketing Society with its headquarters at Balugaon. His suggestion for the realisation of royalty of two rupees per maund on the catch basis to run the Society and to soundly centralise the marketing arrangement could not be implemented because of the opposition of vested interests.

The Cooperative, however, was established in 1959 and it took lease of almost all Chilka fisheries from the Government and sub-leased them in turn to the primary societies which act as its affiliated units.

Even then the system has not yet been fully organised. The number of fisheries leased out by the Cooperative is about 288 and the total lease money is considerable, being over a million rupees. Fishermen could, it was expected, secure a better return of their labour while working under the Co-operatives. This political parties and individual traders would have little chances of exploiting the

fishermen. But this expectation proved futile because even leftist politicians could influence a section of fishermen against their joining the Central Cooperative.

In certain respects the Chilka lake poses the sar reclamation problems as are witnessed in West Bengal's Sunderbans. Silt deposit in the lake because of the river flow is growing and there are areas which are unproductive both for fish culture and crop cultivation. These areas, about 8000 acres, are proposed to be reclaimed as paddy fields. Because fish culture is easier and more paying lease-holders of these acerage of lands, as in Sunderbans, give the pledge that they will develop them as rice-land but actually convert them into fish farms and set at naught the centralised growth of fish-trade.

The bulk of the Chilka catch, about 99 per cent, come to Howrah where the Central Marketing Cooperative has selected eight out of 50 Aratdars, on payment of a security sum of Rs. 1000/- each, as their agents for the sale of the cargo. Besides Howrah, the Central Cooperative has another agent-Aratdar at Kharagpur.

Chilka is Orissa's untapped reservoir of wealth and awaits development. The present income which is derived from the fish-catch is only a fraction of what the State will ultimately earn. It is said that Chilka abounds with fishes of as many as 160 varieties. They are classified in three main divisions, 25 fresh water, 15 marine and 120 brackish. They are not all marketable. Fish-traders however concentrate on transporting mainly prawns (maximum 40 per cent) and mullets (maximum 18 per cent) of the total catch to Calcutta and Kharagpur.

The existing arrangements for transporting fish to Calcutta or Kharagpur leave much room for improvement. For instance, fishes are landed early in the morning from distant areas inside the lake. The transport is by slow-moving country boats. The railway refrigerator van can also be loaded early between 3 to 6 p.m. to be pushed to Bhubaneswar (a distance of 22 miles from Balugaon) to be ultimately coupled to Puri Express to reach Calcutta. In both these respects adjustments are easy.

Apart from fish trade the lake is a potential source of agar pepared from the weeds which grow in such combination of saline and sweet water and the silt deposits as takes place in Chilka. It is pointed out that India exports a large quantiy of it from Japan for its use in bacteriological laboratories.

Dr. Khosla, the eminent engineer-governor of the State, has also given recommendations for the development of Chilka lake. His scheme envisages the running of a 100 mile long canal from Tikkerpara Dam across the Mahanadi to flow into Chilka. The object is to reserve the strip of the western coast of the lake as a site for cultivating sweet water fishes.

Besides all these Chilka awaits face lifting for tourists to enjoy boat cruises in an atmosphere fully undisturbed and untrammeled. The vast area is dotted with hills and islands a few of which have temples as their crown — including one dedicated to Goddess Kali — and rest houses for those who want to be far away from the madding crowd. Over and above all these sights those, who are bird lovers, can locate no better place than Chilka during winter to see the flights of small as well as migratory birds in flight covering miles of the lake surface.

ATOMIC ENERGY AND ITS USES

(Continued From Page 200)

ked upon a bold plan of providing one-fourth of her present generating capacity through atomic power by next year.

Considerable progress has been made in India for the utilisation of atomic energy for civil purposes. At Trombay, 16 miles from Bombay, an Atomic Energy Estabilishment was founded on 20th January 1957 and an American "Swimming Pool" type reactor was installed for research purpose. It uses uranium as fuel. Since then the establishment has been greatly expanded with the addition of more reactors. India has a few thousand tons of uranium in mines in Bihar; but she has a very big reserve of thorium in the monazite sand of Kerala coast. From thorium 232 uranium 233, a fissionable product may be obtained. The medium sized Canada-India reactor is producing plutonium. Thirty tons of natural uranium is now produced a year by the establishment. It is now sufficiently developed for the setting up of the first nuclear power station. A study of the economics of nuclear power in India has shown that electricity from nuclear energy would be competitive with electricity from coal in the regions of the country remote from the coal fields. Some 80 per cent of the coal is produced in the states of West Bengal and Bihar.

India's railways are already heavily loaded and have little spare capacity for carrying huge quantity of coal to thermal power stations at long distances. All such considerations weighed with the Central Government in deciding the installation of 3 nuclear power stations at the first instance. The first station will be at Tarapur on the Western coast. The Tarapur power station of 380,000 Kilo-Watt capacity is under construction by the International General Electric Company of the U.S.A. and is expected to go into operation by 1968. It is based on the use of enriched uranium as fuel which would have to be imported from the U.S.A. to the extent of Rs. 2 crores as annual cost. Decision has also been taken by the Atomic Energy Department of the Government of India for the installation of the second nuclear power station of 200,000 KW capacity at Rana Pratap Sagar in Rajasthan which is also expected to go into operation about the same time. It would be a heavy water moderator plant using natural uranium which is available in India. It would be of Canadian design and built with the co-operation of Canada. The third nuclear power station of 400,000 KW capacity will be set up at Kalpakkam near Madras, during the fourth plan period. With rapid technical advances being made by the Atomic Energy Establishment at Tromb India will be in a position to set up nuclear power generating units of much larger capacity in the near future.

An integrated plan

THE SHAPE OF CITIES TO COME

By BHASKAR MUKERJI

IT STARTED with the Search for a Remedy for the ills of our great City, Calcutta. You can do nothing real to improve the City unless it is first decongested. And you cannot decongest until you provide work and home elsewhere for the surplus millions of our City. Thus the need for the new Cities.

New Cities can house best the new workshops and new machines needed by the Industry of to-morrow, and the day after. New Cities can give shape best to our new political status. And new Cities can yet save an old one, Calcutta.

Though small in size, West Bengal is one of the most densely populated State in the Union. The reasons chiefly are, (1) influx after partition, (ii) the State has many industries, with more to come. Less people live only on the land than in most States in the Union.

The main task in West Bengal is to guide its growing industrialisation; at the same time to resusciate agriculture, which must indeed remain the basic activity or industry for all India, for all time to come. Had this fact been appreciated in time the present difficult food crisis might have been averted. There must, however, be improvements in agriculture almost revolutionary in its sweep. This can only be, if agriculture follows more and more methods and procedure such as an industry follows.

As in Industry there must be research behind agriculture. Quick-acting mass-producing machines must come. Organisation, collective operation etc., in agriculture must closely stimulate the technique of Industry. Finance should be forth-coming in an equal measure as in an industry. The captain of agriculture should be at least as important a person, and sought after as eagerly as any captain of Industry. As a nation we are not self-sufficient in food; as a nation we are dependent on others for food. There could be no greater humiliation for us as a nation, in spite of all our vaunted progress during the last several years. I will show how an integrated plan is possible. Indeed I believe an integrated plan has advantages over one that keep the two apart

The seat of an industry must be a city. The city therefore must be correctly planned if its industry is to make the best use of it.

A city plan has thus to suit the industry or types of industry it houses. Thus plans have to be different for different industries or types. A city plan that suits preparation of drugs or chemicals may not suit one that forges steel, or another that makes clothes, or canned fruit or tanned leather. If the city is specially planned for its industry, production costs are lessened, as machine and technique, both special to the industry, get the best scope to play their respective parts.

The town-planner must think of the industry in the town first. Roughly a quarter of the City area must be reserved for industry, present and future. The housing zone occupies half the City area. The rest, a quarter, is for social services and amenities, recreation, education, culture, health centres, clinics, creches, places of worship or of community gathering, centres for arts, crafts, hobbies, cottage industries, etc. etc

The city proper has thus 3 main zones :— Zone of activity, Zone of living, Zone of amenities. And round the city proper, there should be a Green Belt never to be built upon, where there will be Acres of fields of rice and corn; Orchards and plantations of fruit trees native to the soil; Vegetable allotments; Dairies, pastures; Grazing ground for cattle, goats and sheep; Poultry to yards; Ponds to rear fish; where work, in batches, for health, pleasure and profit, the entire city community. They work under expert direction, using machines and methods approved by Science. The size of this area, the Green Belt may be at least twice that of the City proper. Every industrial worker must spend at least 12 to 15 hours weekly in the Green Belt. This will make him a better worker, a better industrial worker; and properly run the Green Belt can produce enough food for the city population and reduce food prices in the city by at least 1/3rd. I need scarcely add, whatever is produced in the Green Belt goes to the city, and is sold on a co-operative basis to the citizens only.

Such a City cannot be built in a day. In fact it may be 30 years before the City grows to its full stature, and after it has so grown there should be no further additions to it, in size or in number of people.

How should such a City begin ? First, should be installed the special industry or industries housed in the City. The installations must obviously be such as are not likely to be out-dated to-morrow, or the day after. They will be powered either by Electricity, say, from the Damadar Valley Corporation, or

fuel-gas from Coke Ovens. Three indispensable auxilliaries aid industry. A permanent exhibition of the products of industry is housed in a Museum, which also contains a Bureau of Information. There is also a Technical School, with a centre of Research for skilled worker. Thirdly there is a local branch of the Chamber of Commerce, to help both the buyer and the seller.

The factories are in their own zone, which is laid out like a park, with trees lining the roads, lawns glistening, gardens in bloom. The factory buildings are stream-lined, featured architecture, in the style of day after to-morrow, no belching smoke, no rattling noise, no stifling smell. Far from being forbidding the factory rather attracts the worker and the visitors.

The factory zone cannot obviously be all built upon right at the start. Part by part it will be built up, in, say 30 years, according to a time-table fixed beforehand. Right from the start, however, the factories are built and equipped substantially, silent, quick-acting, mass-producing, built for to-day, to-morrow and the day after. Allowance must be made for progress, for improvement, for renovation. Factories can never be static.

The industries including those located in the green belt make and mould the fortunes of the future City.

The living and the amenities zones and the structures in the Green Belt cannot however, be all built in brick and mortar right at the start. I would suggest instead, bamboo, mud and thatch to begin with, for dwelling houses, also for centres of amenities and social services in the amenities zones, e.g. schools, markets and hospitals etc.

I make this suggestion because right at the start the citizen will not have saved enough to own a brick-built home, and at the start, the City cannot afford to own a brick-built school, amusement house or market. Both will be eventually possible, but will take its time, 5, 10 or 15 years, depending on the fortunes of the industry housed in the City, i.e. the fortunes of the City itself.

In the meanwhile the citizen loses nothing, misses nothing and perhaps gains a lot, if for the first five years he lives in a thatched cottage, if this is built rightly, clean, well-washed, figured mud-floors below, fresh, golden thatch above, flowered garden and green round; and likewise, the amenities are housed under thatches.

Although the structures are of mud and thatch, right from the start however the living and amenities zones are completely planned, with a full lay-out, which will hold good for all time. In this layout is balanced the needs of the hour and of the future. The successive individual living spaces, the roads, the drains, the squares, the gardens, the larger plots for community building or activities, are all drawn up in a master plan right at the start. It is the beginning that matters. This must be faultless if the future is to be trouble-free.

An individual dwelling plot may be less than 10 cottahs,—7.200 sq. ft., in size, and price not to exceed Rs. 1.500/-, at about Re. 1 for 5 sq. ft.

The number of people in one acre (3 bighas) need not be more than 30.

This then is a picture of the City I have drawn up, silent machinery, automatic, mass-yielding, quick-acting, housed in factories in the Industrial Zone; a series of cottages for workers, clean tidy, each in its own garden, well-kept roads and lanes, trim hedges, shady trees, in the living zone; schools, creches, clubs and markets and other community building, all under thatches, with ample space round and to spare, in the Zone.

It is at most 15 minutes walk from home to work, or 5-7 minutes cycle ride.

The triple evils of large, unplanned agglomerations,—congestion, contrast and confusion are totally eliminated. The triple results of the evil, squalor, crime, depravity, likewise disappear. The one enemy of good living is congestion. And space, space without limit is the one remedy, and the one amenity which the City offers to the citizen right from the start.

The idea is thus (i) to build up, right at the beginning those which will sustain the City, the factories, the workshops, the sidings, the warehouses, the City's industry, with adjuncts. These cannot all be installed right at the start; these will take their time, and progress, part by part, according to a time-table. But every factory or part of it, every building or equipment or addition must be of the latest design—solid, substantial, at the very inception, as and when built, and built with an eye to progress and the result of ceaseless research.

(ii) To build up, gradually, houses and amenities, which may start as cottages, Kutcha roads, thatched halls, etc., but all correctly placed in the plan of the City, which is drawn up at the start, and adhered to throughout the period of its growth. This helps the gradual change-over from Kutcha to pucca,—the feature behind the scheme.

I said the conversion from Kutcha to pucca, from mud and thatch to brick and mortar should be gradual. Those who will own these homes can largely by their own hands, assist in the change. They need to purchase the materials only. "By their own hands they can labour" their homes to grow. Guidance can be given gratis by the town authorities, who can arrange expert instruction. Some skilled manual labour would always be necessary but the bulk of the unskilled work and even part of the skilled may be done by men, women and even children who will own and live their lives in the houses thus built. Thus will be indelibly imparted to them a basic lesson in reconstruction.

Gradually at 5-yearly intervals the cottages yield place to more substantial buildings, the roads metalled, part by part, or even asphalted, water-supply, drainage, lighting etc. are installed and improved, as the City grows and prospers, until after say 6. 5-yearly periods, totalling 30 years, the City attains its full stature, and is able to afford full-scale amenities. By this process the City follows the path of the least economic resistance. Initially most of the capital is spent on what yields recurring income-the industries of the City. Out of the recurring income is paid the worker whose savings enable him to buy his land first, then build his cottage with garden, gradually replacing it by brick and mortar. His surroundings and amenities are provided in the same manner, basic essential requirements first, gradually changing over to the substantial, even to the elaborate.

Thus the town is placed, right from the start on a foundation that is solid, on which it can grow by stages, sure, secure.

(iii) To reserve an unbuilt area round the city for agriculture etc. under expert, technical direction. No buildings are allowed here except those needed for agriculture.

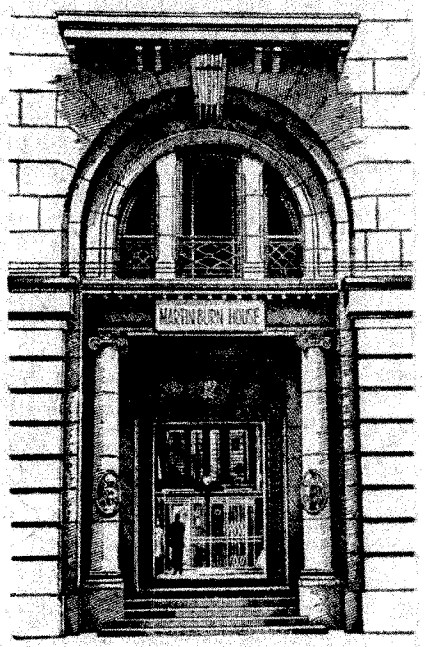
The uses of this area may be: For growing staple food,—rice, wheat, jawar, etc. For (seasonal) vegetable allotments; For fisheries; For orchards and groves of fruit trees; For poultry, animal husbandry, bee-keeping; Timber; Dairies and pastures etc. etc.

The total area of this unbuilt space round the city,—the Green Belt may be twice the area of the City proper.

The workers in the Green Belt are the citizens

(Continued on Page 211)

MARTIN BURN LOOK BACK TO OVER *180 YEARS OF SERVICE TO INDIA*



...to be able to compute this service by decades, not by years alone... to recall that our creed has consistently been the development of our country's resources through engineering and allied enterprises... to take pride in planning that makes the many units in our organization fall into a rational and complementary group and each one a leader in its particular field, a position which some of them, early pioneers in India, held even in the last century. For us looking back is a worthwhile proposition —an incentive to *move forward.*

AMONG THE COMPANIES IN THE MARTIN BURN GROUP ARE:

THE INDIAN IRON & STEEL CO. LTD.: With a million ton integrated steel plant at Burnpur, the largest foundry in the Commonwealth at Kulti and its own collieries and iron ore mines, IISCO has an enviable record in production efficiency.

BURN & CO. LTD., HOWRAH WORKS: Pioneers in foundry practice in India, in structural steelwork fabrication and the manufacture of rolling stock—the origins of the Company go back to the year 1781.

BURN & CO. LTD., REFRACTORY & CERAMIC GROUP: Apart from stoneware pipes and chemical stoneware, the works of this group—eight in number and located in four states—manufacture nearly all types of refractories to meet the requirements of India's steel industry, power undertakings, railways, ordnance factories—in fact, any industry requiring refractory material for the maintenance of furnaces.

THE INDIAN STANDARD WAGON CO. LTD., SANTA: The oldest Indian unit started for the specific purpose of manufacturing railway rolling stock—has been mainly responsible for building up the wagon building industry. Also manufactures springs, forgings, pressings and stampings for heavy industry as well as automotive components.

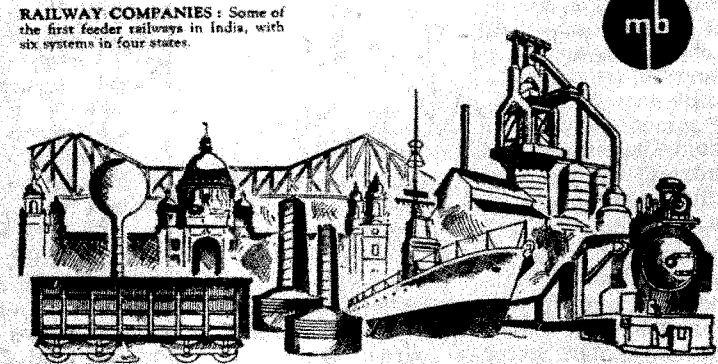
THE HOOGHLY DOCKING & ENGINEERING CO. LTD.: Established in 1819, the Company has a shipbuilding yard, a dry dock and extensive workshops at Salkia.

ROBERT HUDSON (INDIA) LTD.: A premier concern in its own field, the Company devotes itself to all types of light railway engineering—has important connections with the mining industries.

RAILWAY COMPANIES: Some of the first feeder railways in India, with six systems in four states.

ELECTRIC SUPPLY COMPANIES: Pioneers again in the generation and distribution of domestic power in India—serve 45 towns in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

THE VAUGHAN BURN CRANE COMPANY LTD.: A collaboration with The Vaughan Crane Company Ltd. of Manchester... Hand operated and electric overhead travelling cranes and chain pulley blocks.



MARTIN BURN LIMITED Calcutta New Delhi Bombay Kanpur Patna

MBGC-28A

O Rare Ben Jonson!

by Sunanda Sanyal

A fierce-looking man with bushy beard and shaggy hair boasted that he had killed an enemy in the best Homeric manner. He stood astride the Elizabethan stage. His contemporary playwrights considered him a scourge, or a curse, or both. Still, he was irresistible, a man that mattered. He was Benjamin Jonson (1573-1637)—poet, playwright, critic and satirist rolled into one.

His friend Shakespeare took part in his play, *Every Man in his Humour*. In its Prologue he proclaimed that he preferred principles to popularity. His arrogance to those who differed from him was characteristic. The circumstances in which he was put up in his boyhood not only mixed him with the dust of hard reality but embittered him a bit too.

A posthumous and "poorly brought up" child of a rather aristocratic family, Ben was apprenticed to the hod by his bricklayer stepfather. One afternoon, while at work, he was reciting Latin verses that reached the cocked listening ear of a passer-by. As identified by later research, the passer-by was the celebrated William Camden, who took him to the Westminster School and trained his mind on the classics.

It is unlikely that Ben had ever been to a university, despite his remark to Drummond that "he was master of arts in both universities, by their favour, not his study." He no doubt craved enrolment with a university, most likely Cambridge, but had in reality to give up his "wonted studies" and return to bricklaying. He detested the hod now. So he set out for the Low Countries, where he joined the English troopers. Reminiscing, he later told Drummond how "in his service in the Low Countries" he had, in the face of both the camps, killed an enemy, and taken *opima spolia* from him.

On return from the Low Countries, he married a shrewish yet honest woman. Though unhappy, the marriage produced several children; they all pre-deceased Jonson. In 1597 he began, with Pembroke's Men, his stage career as an actor and playwright. In July that year he completed a satiric comedy (*The Isle of Dogs*) which was left unfinished by its original author, Thomas Nashe. The play was later denounced to the Privy Council as "containing very seditious and slanderous matter." As a result, Jonson and two other actors of Pembroke's Men, Gabriel Spencer and Robert Shaw, were imprisoned in the Marshalsea. Released in next October, Jonson could continue his ill-omened career as a dramatist mainly because of an encouragement from Philip Henslowe, an exploiter of dramatists, who gave him 20 shillings in advance for a play. Jonson made the most of this offer, began to write plays in quick succession, and soon became famous. Between 1598 and 1602 he wrote for not only Henslowe but also three players' companies—the Admiral's, the Chamberlain's and the Children of the Chapel.

Jonson asserted that he was the first to teach his age the comic laws of the ancients. He considered these laws sacrosanct and scourged all those who transgressed them. His contemporaries paid no heed to Sir Philip Sidney's plea for classical unity and learnt little or nothing from the neat little plot of the first regular English comedy, *Ralph Roister Doister* (c. 1553) by Nicholas Udall.

To the chaotic literary scene of his time Jonson tried to restore order and discipline. He wanted every writer to take lessons from Francis Bacon, the master of the classical style. "No man," he wrote of Bacon, "ever spake more neatly, more pressly, more weightily, or suffered less emptiness, less idleness, in what he uttered. No member of his speech but consisted of his own graces."

Although most of the writers who "commonly seek to do more than enough" cared little for his case for economy in words, Jonson never refrained from making it out at the top of his voice. He went in for the "election of a mean," that is to say, for a "strict and succinct style" from which "you can take away nothing without loss, and that loss to be manifest." Jonson says that the "poet or maker" who has "a goodness of natural wit, ingenium" and a "perfection of nature" will be "able by nature and instinct to pour out the treasure of his mind." But natural endowment, though essential, is not enough for the production of a piece of good literature. "To this perfection of nature in our poet," says Jonson, "we require exercise of those parts, and frequent."

Such remarks as these show what Jonson meant by literary excellence and how he wished to achieve it. He would scout the idea that there could be a short cut to literary success or that a man of genius had only to put his pen on paper to write a masterpiece. The critic in him did not spare even Shakespeare:

> I remember, the Players have often mentioned it as an honour to Shakespeare, that in his writing, (whatsoever he penn'd) he never blotted out a line. My answer hath been, would he had blotted a thousand. Which they

thought a malevolent speech. I had not told posterity this, but for their ignorance, who choose that circumstance to commend their friend by, wherein he most faulted.

Indeed, the cross-grained carper alone could read "malevolence" into Jonson's speech. Really, he was second to none in his love for Shakespeare; he did honour him — but "on this side of idolatry." He declared that Shakespeare

> . . . . was (indeed) honest, and of an open, and free nature: had an excellent Phantasie; brave notions, and gentle expressions: wherein he flow'd with that facility, that sometime it was necessary he should be stopp'd . . . . . His wit was in his own power; would the rule of it had been so too. Many times he fell into those things, could not escape laughter: As when he said in the person of Caesar, one speaking to him; *Caesar thou dost me wrong.* He replied: *Caesar did never wrong, but with just cause* and such like: which were ridiculous. But he redeemed his vices, with his virtues. There was ever more in him to be praised, than to be pardoned.

So according to Jonson, success in the field of literature, as in every other field, is commensurate with practice. But the reader too on his part must be as painstaking as the writer himself: for "things wrote with labour," he declared, "deserve to be so read." He himself wrote for "scholars that can judge" rather than for "nut-crackers that only come for sight." He, therefore, dedicated his best comedy *Volpone* "to the most noble and equal sisters, the two famous Universities." Jonson is justly famous for the comedy of humours, which got off to a good start in 1597 when Chamberlain's Men (i.e., Shakespeare's Company) staged his *Every Man in his Humour* with thumping success. This kind of comedy is founded on the "humour", or a single dominant trait, of the individual.

According to ancient physiologists, the physical and mental well-being of an individual depended on the four "humours" or liquids in his system—blood, phlegm, yellow bile (choler), and black bile (melancholy). While a well-proportioned mixture of these would make an individual perfect, excess of any would correspondingly affect his bodily health, moral character and temperament. For example, too much blood was held responsible for sanguine, joyful and amorous disposition. Excess of phlegm would cause phlegmatism, dullness, paleness and cowardliness. And, again, while surplus yellow bile or choler would make an individual bilious, irascible, impatient and obstinate, too much black bile (melancholy) would account for meditativeness and unenterprising disposition. Jonson himself said in his *Every Man in his Humour:*

> *In every human body,*
> *The choler, melancholy, phlegm, and blood,*
> *By reason that they flow continually*
> *In some one part, and are not continent,*
> *Receive the name of humours.*

This humour may apply itself to the general disposition,

> *As when some one peculiar quality*
> *Doth so possess a man, that it doth draw*
> *All his affects, his spirits, and his powers,*
> *In their confluctions, all to run one way,*
> *This may be truly said to be a humour.*

In Every Man in his Humour there is an old gentleman called Knowell whose humour it is to plague himself by being overmuch worried about his son Edward, a young poet, who is leading a profligate life. Kiteley, a merchant, is too jealous of his beautiful wife to have any peace of mind. His jealousy, which is worse than suspicion, makes him a spineless creature. He cannot pluck up courage enough to rebuke even Wellbred and his fellow rioters who misuse his premises. His fear is that

> *They would give out, because my wife is fair,*
> *Myself but lately married, and my sister*
> *Here sojourning a virgin in my house,*
> *That I were jealous! nay, as sure as death,*
> *That they would say.*

The fun is that though Kiteley is incurably jealous, he cannot bear being described as such. The "black poison" of suspicion peeps into his mind, and he cancels a business appointment that demands him to stay away from his wife for two hours. He considers it risky to leave his wife's beauty unguarded for as long as two hours.

Jonson planned *Every Man in his Humour* both as a proof of his own literary theory and as a protest against romantic comedies of his time in which there was much crude spectacle at the expense of the unities of time and place. In its Prologue Jonson promises to present

> . . . . . *deeds and language, such as men do use;*
> *And persons such as Comedy would choose,*
> *When she would show an image of the times,*
> *And sport with human follies, not with crimes.*

His next play *Every Man out of his Humour* (1599), the first of the comical satires, was neither a contrast nor a complement to its predecessor. The play comprises a series of episodes held together by the satirical intention of its author. Jonson, who considered romantic excesses contemptible, guarded against being an obstinate neo-classicist. Had he been one, he would not hazard the innovation of the comical satire, which is certainly distinct from the comedy. And Jonson's reason for his innovation is furnished by Cordatus (in the Induction), who is described as "the author's friend; a man inly acquainted with the scope and drift of his plot; of a discreet and understanding judgement." Cordatus cites precedents galore of the changes that the comedy as an art form has undergone at the hands of great writers. He concludes:

> I see not then, but we should enjoy the same license or free power to illustrate and heighten our invention as they did; and not be tied to those strict and regular forms which the misuses of a few (who are nothing but form) would thrust upon us.

If Cordatus is the author's friend, Asper, the Presenter of *Every Man out of his Humour,* is the author himself. He makes no bones about his satiric intention:

> *my soul*
> *Was never ground into such oily colours,*
> *To flatter vice and daub iniquity:*
> *But, with an armed and resolved hand,*
> *I'll strip the ragged follies of the time*
> *Naked as at their birth.*

Cynthia's Revels, or The Fountain of Self-Love (1600), Jonson's next comical satire, has a simpler theme; but it is in no way less aggressive than *Every Man out of his Humour.* It entertains the audience with some good caricature and some very witty and trenchant dialogue, as in the Induction where three of the Children quarrel, each

wanting to speak the Prologue. In the scene of revels (Act V, 5) there is a splendid hymn of invocation of Cynthia, beginning with "Queen and huntress, chaste and fair," which is perhaps more famous than the play in which it occurs. Cynthia is the old Queen and Crites, the "retired scholar," is none but the author himself. Crites is just, infallible. Cynthia praises him extravagantly for his poetry and wisdom and charges him and his companion Arete, or Virtue, to purge society:

Dear Arete and Crites, to you two
We give the charge: impose what pain
you please;
Th' incurable cut off, the rest reform.

What is more bumptious of Jonson is to have described himself as "a creature of a most perfect and divine temper. . . . . it is clear, Nature went about some full work, she did more than make a man when she made him." As if this were not enough, for Jonson makes Arete direct public attention to him:

Lo, here the man, celestial Delia,
Who (like a circle bounded in itself)
Contains as much as man in fulness may.
Lo, here the man, who not of usual earth,
But of that nobler and more precious
mould
Which Phoebus' self doth temper, is
composed.

This egotism was naturally laughed at by Jonson's friends and foes alike. *The Poetaster*, a thoroughly amusing play, was his rejoinder to the critics of *Cynthia's Revels*. This last of the three comical satires had to be dashed off within only fifteen weeks to forestall Marston and Dekker who were working hard at a play in which they excoriated Jonson. In *The Poetaster* Horace, who is Jonson himself, reaps all the laurels, while his critics like Crispinus, the Poetaster (Marston) and Demetrius, the subsidiary Poetaster (Dekker) are lashed out.

However, Jonson did not end up by writing only homage to himself. He wrote two good Roman tragedies—*Sejanus, and His Fall* (1603) *and Catiline, His Conspiracy* (1611)—and some high comedies that are his masterpieces—*Volpone, or the Fox* (1605), *Epicoene, or the Silent Woman* (1609), *The Alchemist* (1610) and *Bartholomew Fair* (1614).

While in his early "humour" plays Jonson was experimenting with the mechanics of the drama, it is in *Sejanus* that he begins to discover himself. This play, which has for its theme exaggerated love of political power and the meanness that achieves it, is so well-constructed and the historicity of the facts so indubitable, that even the bitterest critic of *Sejanus* must acknowledge its author to be a master craftsman and a man of vast learning. However, *Sejanus* is certainly not so interesting as Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, which Jonson sought to excel.

Because of its theme *Sejanus* does not permit of strict adherence to the classical laws. Jonson finds it impossible to present "the old state and splendour of dramatic poems." He has to infringe the unity of time and do away with a chorus. In place of these, however, he makes sure of presenting "truth of argument, dignity of persons, gravity and height of elocution, fulness and frequency of sentence". But Jonson himself does not seem to be quite satisfied with his own work. Lest he should relapse into any such violation, he scrupulously remains close to Seneca in *Catiline*, which opens with a monologue by a ghost, and in which the acts, all but one, leave room for choruses.

Of his masterpieces *Volpone* is certainly the best. But it is a dreadful comedy. Jonson plays here more with crimes than with follies. It is a veritable zoo in which greedy human beings have been shown as either beasts or birds of prey. Volpone, the Fox, is the chief villain. He is an old, very rich, childless Venetian. Mosca, or the Fly, is his chief accomplice. At the instance of his master the Fly circulates a canard that the Fox is dying. At once the Fox is surrounded by his false friends, who are birds of prey; Voltore or Vulture is a lawyer, Corbaccio or Old Crow is an old man with one foot in the grave, and Corvino or Little Crow is a merchant. Each is convinced that he is the Fox's heir-designate and makes him costly presents.

Much of the beauty and appeal of *Volpone* are due to its "purity of language." Indeed, Jonson writes with style—a style whose "chief virtue . . . . . is perspicacity, and nothing so vicious in it as to need an interpreter." Take the following passage for example:

I fear I shall begin to grow in love
With my dear self, and my most
prosperous parts,
They do so spring and burgeon; I can feel
A whimsy in my blood: I know not how,
Success hath made me wanton. I could
skip
Out of my skin now, like a subtle snake,
I am so limber.

This is not only good poetry, this is also great poetry. It is great because it is simple, direct, chaste and yet colloquial. Its phrases seem to leap out of the text. And the words are solid, weighted and perfectly free from ambiguity.

"In his merry humour," William Drummond wrote of Ben Jonson, "he was wont to name himself the Poet." Jonson had every right to do so. At times he reached heights that Shakespeare alone could reach. Unfortunately, few Indian students of English literature read Jonson's poems grouped under *Epigrams, Forest* and *Underwoods*. But attention to them will certainly be rewarding. We can give here only one example. Let us take his poem on love of which, according to him, there are two ways. The first is

The thing they here call love is blind
desire,
Arm'd with bow, shafts, and fire;
Inconstant like the sea, of whence 'tis born,
Rough, swelling, like a storm:
With whom sails, rides on a surge of fear,
And boils, as if he were
In a continual tempest.

Clearly, this is not true love. For

. . . . . true love
No such affects doth prove!
That is an essence far more gentle, fine,
Pure, perfect, nay divine;
It is a golden chain let down from heaven,
Whose links are bright and even,
That falls like sleep on lovers and
combines
The soft and sweetest minds
In equal knots, This bears no brands
nor darts
To murther different hearts,
But in a calm and godlike unity
Preserves community.

In one of his last plays, *The Devil is an Ass* (1616), a lover speaks out a few lines which Jon-

Festival ACCOUNT

It is time now to start a FESTIVAL ACCOUNT under our
Recurring Deposit Scheme for the next year's Pujas

•

Also longer period RECURRING DEPOSIT ACCOUNTS with attractive terms.

A SYMBOL OF SERVICE

United Bank of India Ltd.

Regd. Office: 4, CLIVE GHAT STREET, CALCUTTA.

THE BANK WITH SERVICE PLUS

FDS/UB 10

Lustre to festivity

Puja festival makes exacting demands on one's dress. Men, women and children make rounds of Puja pandals in their best wear. ARATI ULTRAMARINE adds lustre to that festive spirit by making white dress really white. Treat your white clothes to its distinguished touch and put your best face forward.

ARATI
ULTRAMARINE

SETH CHEMICAL WORKS,
160, Jamunalal Bajaj Street, Calcutta. 7
Phones : 33-5250 & 33-5259

ARATI ULTRAMARINE

son's followers rightly set up as a model of lyric excellence:

Have you seen but a bright lily grow,
Before rude hands have touch'd it?
Have you mark'd but the fall of the snow,
Before the soil hath smutch'd it?

Jonson was particularly skilled in the art of writing poetry of compliment, and since he was beloved of many in his old age, he had to write a good deal of such poetry. Friendship, as much as love, moved him to the depth of his heart. What on earth can be more heartwarming than his homage to Shakespeare, the very man whom he honoured on "this side of idolatry"? During the Quatercentenary of Shakespeare's birth the poem must be read all over the world:

To draw no envy (Shakespeare) on thy name,

Am I thus ample to thy Book, and Fame:
While I confess thy writings to be such,
As neither Man, nor Muse, can praise too much. . . . . ..
Soul of the Age!
The applause! delight! the wonder of our Stage. . . . . .

Triumph, my Britain, thou hast one to show,
To whom all Scenes of Europe homage owe.

He was not of an age, but for all time!
And all the Muses still were in their prime,
When like Apollo he came forth to warm
Our ears, or like a Mercury to charm!

Among Elizabethans there had been more prolific writers than Jonson, but his literary output is nevertheless considerable.

It is wonderful to note that apart from plays, poems, masques and entertainments and a kind of big dairy (*Discoveries*) Jonson could make time to write "The English Grammar . . . . for the benefit of strangers."

Jonson's last plays—*The Devil is an Ass* (1616), *The Staple of News* (1625), *The New Inn* (1629), *The Magnetic Lady* (1632) and *A Tale of a Tub* (1633)—were not very successful. Of these *The Tale of a Tub* was an earlier comedy, only rehashed. These plays give much moral preachment and personal lampoon rather than satire.

Jonson's last days were sad. He lived some twenty months after the death of his only surviving son in November 1635. These were months of excruciating pain, disease and heavy debt. He left no will when he died on August 6, 1637. The mourners who accompanied his bier to Westminster Abbey included "all the greatest part of the nobility and gentry in the town." The stone that was set on his grave still bears an epitaph which speaks eloquently of the esteem in which lovers of English literature will always hold him:

"O rare Ben Jonson."

THE SHAPE OF CITIES TO COME

(Continued From Page 205)

themselves,—factory workers of every grade, those employed in the City social services and others.

The work is of an intensive nature and can only be done under the supervision of experts. The latest methods and implements are used, in which factory workers are likely to possess a certain aptitude. The work proceeds with the technique and precision of operations in a factory.

Japanese methods of rice cultivation may be tried most conveniently.

Dozers and tractors can be usefully employed in preparing and cultivating fields. Sprayers, portable pumps, powered ploughs etc. can all come very readily into use.

The science of plant genetics can find full scope. Marine Zoology can aid pisciculture. Hatcheries may be given a trial.

The dairies and cattle sheds are all in the style of the day after to-morrow. Cattle do not easily get ill,—but if they do, skilled attention is ready at hand. Pastures are sun-drenched, cattle-food grows in nearby fields, sheds and stalls are spotless, and the handling of the milk after it is drawn leaves nothing to caprice or chance.

Production is regulated by the collection of data and research.

The results are: Good and cheap food for the citizens; Healthful occupation for them; Training for citizens in scientific agriculture.

This is in essence the scheme of the integration of Industry and Agriculture.

Cities may be built all over West Bengal on this basic plan. Twenty such cities can easily be fitted in our State. The main activity of the City is its ultimate support, and is indeed what gives the city its character; but integrated with it on a compulsory basis is agriculture,—intensive, scientific.

A city need not have a single principal industry; it may have a group of allied or associated industries mutually helpful or complimentary. Choice will depend on various factors, availability of power supply, of raw materials, of local talent, etc.

Similarly, different cities with different basic industries may be linked up in a mutually advantageous manner. These are details to be worked out by the right men in the right manner.

The three chief tasks are: Fixing upon the correct sites; Planning the single City; Linking the sites of the several Cities.

The task is such that none but the ablest could shoulder. Those that do so have the privilege of helping history.

Voyages to TERRA AUSTRALIS INCOGNITA —And Drama

by William Walker

VOYAGES of discovery in ancient times and in the 17th and 18th centuries provide a mass of fascinating information — of skilful, intrepid navigation, the capacity of mariners to withstand the rigours of tempest and disease in formerly uncharted territory, and, above all, the scientific and other knowledge gained in the exploration of the oceans.

My interest has always been Pacific voyages of exploration. French, British, Portuguese and other navigators set out from their home ports with instructions to explore the "southern seas." The Pacific voyages are particularly thrilling.

The most notable for me, and a lifelong interest, was the Pacific voyage of Capt. Cook. This lasted from 1768 until 1771 during which he touched at what is now known as Australia and New Zealand and other Pacific islands. It was a voyage of discovery, made more memorable by having as members of Capt. Cook's ship's company, a distinguished British scientist, Sir Joseph Banks, and several other botanists and artists engaged to record the many specimens collected on the voyage.

Sir Joseph Banks compiled a diary of the voyage, and this in a sense is more important to historians and scientists than the actual voyage

I refreshed my knowledge of the Banks' drama in a recent visit to Australia where I called at the Mitchell Library in Sydney to study the latest literature on Banks and other Banksian collections. The Public Library of New South Wales is fortunate in having had bequeathed to it not only a magnificent collection of books, pictures and manuscripts dealing with the Banks and other Pacific exploration, but money to build and maintain a special library, The Mitchell Library, named after its benefactor, David Scott Mitchell, a renowned book collector.

Captain Cook commanded the Endeavour in his Pacific voyage and the Mitchell Library holds the journal of the trip which brought Banks to the eastern shores of Australia in April, 1770. This was written by Banks, and has been embellished in several publications in recent years.

First, Banks, the recorder of such a valuable journal, was a typical product of the 18th Century. It was the Age of Reason, the Age of Enlightenment, of oratory, of mercantile development (and the Age of despots). It was also the age of the Gentleman Amateur and Banks was indeed this — a gentleman amateur of science. Science had not yet been organised. It was only at the beginning of things and yet it was popular. Educated classes of England and France made it a cult. Into this scene stepped the figure of Joseph Banks.

He was an enthusiastic botanist, the devotee of "Man" in the state of nature, as they proved to be as savages of the Pacific islands.

Banks voyaged to the Arctic in 1766 and his discoveries, including a study of Eskimaux in New Foundland, is available in the manuscript in the South Australian Branch of the Royal Geographical Society of Australasia, Adelaide, South Australia.

Banks, a bachelor of the rich landed gentry, was most interested in astronomy and geography, yet the voyage to which he has fastened his name was the result of impulses from the Royal Society and the British Government with which he had nothing to do. It was a voyage, in short, for the observation of the transit of the planet Venus across the disc of the sun and for the investigation of the great continent which was alleged by a number of theoretical geographers to exist in the southern and western parts of the Pacific — the Terra Australis Incognita of long tradition.

The transit of Venus had been observed in 1761. It was due to occur again in 1769 and more than a century would elapse to give astronomers another chance. Good observations would make it possible to calculate with some accuracy the distance of the earth from the sun, a prerequisite to other important calculations in astronomy

The voyage's principal purpose to observe the transit of Venus was a failure; but it goes on record as one of the most dramatic and informative of all time.

Banks led a suite of eight people, including Solander, a Swedish botanist, and famous English natural history draughtsman, Sydney Parkinson. It was the first voyage of discovery to leave port equipped with a scientific staff (provided by the Royal Society, premier British science organisation) Banks provided a lot of his own money. His journal, while of massive scientific interest, had one regrettable defect. Banks' eye was always outward. Nowhere does he give a picture of his shipmates. By contrast, the log kept by Cook as a commander's normal duty, writes inwardly, as a captain noting the essential facts of the day's weather, distance travelled etc. It is the work of a man who had risen from rural poverty to high professional standards of seamanship through native genius. Banks was then a 25-year-old gentleman, a child of fortune. But there is evidence that Banks at times helped the less literate Cook to write his log.

The voyage as far as Australia and the first recording of the Australian landscape and of the

(Continued On Page 216)

FESTIVALS ARE FRUITFUL
THROUGH PROMOTION OF

NATIONAL INTEGRITY
AND
PROSPERITY

IN THIS FESTIVE SEASON
WE PLEDGE ANEW TO

- PROMOTE NATIONAL INTEGRITY
- WAGE WAR AGAINST WASTE
- PRODUCE MORE IN FIELDS AND FACTORIES
- MAKE SACRIFICES FOR NATIONAL DEFFENCE AND DEVELOPMENT

Government of West Bengal

My most unforgettable character

EKAYRAY

I knew him for nearly half a century. Earlier he was Asutosh De as an advocate in the criminal side at Monghyr, Patna and Bhagalpur and amateur journalist, essayist, story-writer and dramatist. Later, he dropped his *tosh*, for the one-worded name ASUDE by which alone he would have liked to be known as an amateur in prestidigitation which was one of his two hobbies. The writer of the inimitable PATTER had a two-worded name, Asu De, the same one as used by him as the Secretary of the Indian and Eastern Newspaper Society in Delhi.

He had three jealous mistresses in the public,—law, magic and writing,—and two wives at home, not simultaneously, but one after the other. The surviving one is my respected Bowdi after whom he named his three sons, Ananda, Sunanda and Srinanda. (The reader may easily find out the common factor.)

I have a deep personal affection for him and am proud to be one of his intimate old friends. My friendship (nay, brotherhood I should say) with him was hereditary, beginning with our fathers and, alas, ending with us. His sons and my son, though all of them are now settled in life, have never met so far and I do not think they ever will. The reminiscences and memories are so vast and deep that to attempt to write them is like trying to pump out the waters of the Pacific through a jet.

He was a brilliant conversationalist, not a practised talker exactly, but a human Niagra of mirth, frivolity, wisdom, brilliance, erudition, knowledge, wit, humour and information. He would talk and talk and talk incessantly in good, friendly and appreciative company. Once at the Monghyr bar library, more than four decades ago, there was a bet if he could remain silent for only a couple of hours. He lost. It has been said that an empty vessel sounds much and that a man who talks too much knows little; but this was belied in him. I wonder, how many readers of this humble vignette have known him even a little or listened to his incessant familiar chat of which PATTER was a small fraction to his million readers. He coined a funny interjection denoting contempt, *fachafagus*, which aroused research among linguists. Talking to a friend on the 'phone he would not put back the receiver before half an hour; it might have been more.

He was not handsome. About sixty-eight inches tall, dark, slim with almost no fleshy curves on the body which was reduced nearly to skin and bones in later days, though in his school days he had earned the sobriquet of *Elephant Asu*. His face was rather primitive, high cheek-bones and protruding jaws, but his eyes, oh, they were brilliant, piercing, super-intelligent and could speak even when he remained silent.

INIMITABLE

His PATTER and TALKIE-TALKIE defied imitation in style, subtle humour, satires on the foibles of society and choice of topics and words. Among the masterpieces I may mention *Prisoner at the Bar*, *When daughters grow* and many others. At about twenty-five when he took to writing as an amateur his vocabulary had become abundant and sentences sonorous. He could wield his facile pen in Bengali too with equal ease and was the author of a few dramas (*Asoke* and *Troyee* among them), innumerable short stories and tutorial articles on magic. I think many elderly readers of mine have read them in the *Bharatbarsha*, the *Sachitra Bharat*, the *Sanibarer Chithhi* and similar other old periodicals. He never wrote for the mushroom papers. Later in life his hobby-horse of journalism was metamorphosed into a charger which he rode till three hours before the end.

Even the professional magicians of the highest reputation who had seen his chalk-walking* and card tricks and other marvellous sleights of hand

* Completely blindfolded Xray-eyed ASUDE could walk along any type of zigzag chalk lines drawn on the floor by any one of the audience.

took off their hats to him and speak and write to him with extreme deference. He could also act and sing on the stage and was an ardent admirer and true imitator of Sisir Bhaduri in roles of *Alamgir* or Professor Digambar Majumdar in *Ritimoto Natak*.

Like Michael Madhusudan Dutt he was a pucca Burra Sahib in dress, manners, courtesy, speech and meals, but was at heart a true Indian Hindu and follower of the Ramkrishna cult for which he put in his best efforts all his life. He had firm belief in the immortality of the soul: if you looked over the railings *without purpose*, he thought, and received a bullet through your chest, all that happened was that you could no longer communicate with your friends and relatives. There you would be; knowing (*perhaps* it was only *seeing*) all that went on; forming your ideas and wishes, but absolutely unable to communicate. So long as you *were* interested in earthly affairs this would worry you. But after some time your object of interest would change. He was sure that new light would dawn, brighter and better at last, far off, for all of us. But if you looked over the railings *on purpose*, you would start very ill in the new world. He went to see a dying friend in December, 1962, with a little holy water (perhaps from some Ramkrishna Math) which he put into the quivering lips of our moribund friend for the salvation of the departing soul.

PREMONITION

He had a premonition of the end. A couple of months before his passing away he wrote to me: "Do not worry so much about me or my physical condition which is as it should be now." *Bonophul* and another doctor friend of ours met him in April last (the end came on May 9) and found him constantly gazing at a portrait of Ramkrishna and muttering his name even between his talks. And he died quite suddenly surrounded by his loved ones, amidst the respect of mankind and the grief of all his friends.

For his friends he had a fund of immeasurable sympathy and would hold out a helping hand whenever needed. He was a wonderful letter writer too. No letter to him ever remained unreplied whatever the answer might have been. He used to *clutch* the pen with his thumb, fore and middle fingers and did not *hold* it. The toil of caligraphy or typewriting was a pleasure to him. He could drive the pen in fine style faster and longer than any one I have known. While preparing manuscripts in English for the press he would seldom makes notes or rough copies with his pen, but would type them straight away. He got up at times at about 3 o'clock in the morning and write letters or reply to them. I have got a few written at this hour. He would write and write, charming, weighty, magnificent letters, often about not much. It was a relief to him and perhaps unconsciously a counter-irritant to his fretful mind revolting against the precipitate moral downfall of our country after her liberation from the British yoke. He loved independence, but he sought the palm without the dust. He lived to see almost everything he admired and believed in shattered to pieces. That was his grief. Latterly he lived in ill health to sustain the burden of a post-septugenarian's life lighted by the refinements of profound and astonishingly wide-ranging literary knowledge.

Lawyer, journalist, satirist, magician, dramatist, histrion, venerable, profound and irrepressible Asu De received, if not the salutes, at least the hand clappings of a generation which honoured him as another link to the previous generation and as one of the greatest Indian masters of letters in the English-speaking citizens of this country. Many South Indian papers copied the articles of his PATTER to cater for the readers of the south.

Some men when they die after busy, toilsome and successful lives, leave a legacy of scrip and securities, of acres and factories, or the goodwill of large undertakings, or even several houses. Asu De banked his treasure in the hearts of his friends who will cherish his memory till their time is come. But I also feel the tragedy which robs the world of all wisdom and treasure gathered in a great man's life and experience and hands over the lamp to a callow successor or lets it fall shivered into fragments upon the ground. Asu De has left no peer.

He was a devoted and loving husband too, but he tried to hide this feeling (of inferiority?) by giving the airs of a misogynist and barking up the wrong tree. He tried to magnify and jeer at the frailties of woman,—hinting often at the one in the house to put the reader off the scent. To counteract the feminine gift of nagging he recommended in the last posthumous PATTER (entitled "nag-nag-nag") in *The Sunday Amrita Bazar Patrika* of May 17 last to "plug your earholes with the tips of your forefingers . . . . . And if you can find a better 'ole why not go into it?" The anticlimax is not of a true misogynist's, but only of a faked one's. Only about three hours before the end the *nagging person* lifted the weak and emaciated body lying on the bed, propped it up lovingly and tenderly like a mother and put the typewriter before him to peck away his swan song *"nag-nag-nag."* You may be reminded of Rabindranath's *"Amaray pachhay sahaje bojho taito eto lilar chhal."* That was Asu De.

VOYAGES TO TERRA AUSTRALIS INCOGNITA

(Continued From Page 213)

somewhat hostile Australian aboriginals on that part of the Australian coast which later became Sydney Harbour, provides layer and layer of invaluable detail. It has unending vivacity and is obviously the work of an exceedingly quick and lively mind. To this stage the voyage had been comparatively smooth, with a good health record. But after the Australian incidents came the most dreadful part of the voyage. Malaria and dysentery attacked crew members and a fatal sickness struck. The sailors looked almost like spectres. Parkinson, the artist died, as did a Tahitian native who had been taken aboard.

They survived a crash on a coral reef and the place where the ship was repaired on the northern coast of Australia was named Cooktown after the celebrated navigator.

The Endeavour anchored for a while in Batavia. The crew regained its health and sailed into the England home port. The voyage had included the circumnavigation of New Zealand. The flowers and plants seen on the voyage were faithfully recorded in colour. Banks was a botanist first; dramatic exploration was merely incidental.

SCIENCE, PEOPLE AND SOCIETY

By Dr. U. P. BASU

THE beauty of a society lies in the vitality of the individual member and on his intellectual and moral ideals. Fineness can be expected when he is supplied with sufficient food to eat and drink, a suitable place to live in, and necessary amenities. With the progress of our civilization techniques have been developed for improving health, reducing drudgery and increasing material comforts. These enchant the people, and the politicians and Government become interested in the development of technology and consequently, in the promotion of science. Science, however, is a discipline that men of all nations have evolved in their search for truth and efforts for unravelling the mysteries of nature. It is not a religion, nor, something static to which humanity can pin its faith; yet it looks at facts and bestows self-reliance in man in order to create in him ideas which is beyond conception, and not known to the physical world. In its application some methods, processes, or materials may be found that can suitably be handled to be of use to the people and the society either in their advancement of learning, social problems, national defence, and economic growth.

EFFECT ON APPLICATION OF SCIENCE

How science is to be oriented for the benefit of the people and the society will depend mostly on Government policy, power and action. Its education, promotion and development would rest on the economic and social conditions of the country. A change envisaged and translated in a developed country, may not be applied to a developing society, but the same may affect the economic conditions and social structure of a country as happened in the North-East part of India with the advent of synthetic indigo. Who knows whether the established textile industry and its associated agricultural progress would not take a new shape or pattern with the entry of chemical firms into the above industry with their synthetic fibres. Already the cotton textile consumption in the world has come down from 70.2 per cent in the year 1958 to 62.8 per cent in the year 1963 out of the total world textile fibre consumption, i.e. a lowering of 7.4 per cent during a period of five years. A careful scrutiny would show how the fabric of social structure is gradually being altered by the introduction of many newer techniques and methods developed through the application of knowledge of science. Change of fashion or habit, alteration in the nature of trade, methods of transport, and many other modifications in our daily movement are affecting the behaviour of our people and the conditions of the society in multifarious ways. The non-ferrous metal, bronze, copper, brass and nickel, is being replaced, and the new development tends to indicate that even we may have our shoes from chemical factories. For all this renovation a nation is to develop her technology, and the necessary knowledge is to be acquired and practised through technological institutions, industrial laboratories and defence services. Any control, production or supply needs handling of problems of diverse nature requiring services of people from different walks of life. As such acquirement of knowledge of science, and application of the same for the benefit of the people would demand on the one hand a sense of understanding of human psychology, and on the other, a spirit of tolerance and a co-operative mind which would lead the people following the profession of science to working in a team, so essential in the growth of a society, industry and the nation.

CREATION OF PEOPLE

In following any discipline of science one is to work with devotion. In such work his imagination goes beyond the reach of mind, he remains in meditation, he forgets his egoism, and he makes repeated attempts for integration of knowledge acquired. In such a life full of joy and sorrow he looks back upon past history and literature, likes to remain immersed in rhythms of harmonious waves of thought, and leaves behind legacies of unsolved problems which require further work for their solution. These create a homogeneous outlook in the people where each individual becomes eager to take interest for the community even by sacrificing his personal leisures and comforts. Gradually the whole body acquires proclivity to serve the individuals. But the technical achievements which have been already made and whose effects have penetrated into our daily life, tend to infuse into the minds of the common people that man can gain material objects by following the path of science. In a country where 80 per cent of the people live in the rural areas any economic development would necessitate a control over innumerable men who are the source of creativity. Unless these people can be engaged in building up for the future, no amount of other development will produce the necessary social changes which are at the root of any national progress. These people would want amenities of city life, and are to be provided with good road, electric power line, schools, technical education, hospitals, and opportunities to grow more food and to produce materials for their own consumption. This is only possible by application of science to technology, and thereby, forming local industries to provide more employment to local and rural labour. No one would prefer to live in a society where one will become a mere cog in the modern machines set up by large industries in the urban areas only. In India generally, in rural areas particularly, everyone believes in the supreme value of the individual human being. A successful solution of the above two issues would create a society where humanity and science will mingle together to give birth to people like Acharya Prafulla Chandra, Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose, and Sir Asutosh Mukhopadhyaya.

The whole world to-day is dreaming of a

society where there will be no poverty in body or in mind. Science and technology have added a new dimension to human life by satisfying our physical and mental needs. Search for scientific truth pleases mind, and the manifestation of 'science through technology gives material comforts. One is linked with the other just as body with mind. The place of science should not be considered in the narrow setting up of economic welfare of the people. The contribution of science to the growth of reason and the desire to do good to the society is not less. From time immemorial the concept in our country has been that the soul is eternal or immortal, and very little attention was paid to improvement of the living conditions of the masses. This has led to a stagnation. It is in the study of science and technology that a developed society has found new tools of thought. And science has virtually given to individual people a new vitality, and a new dynamism in orienting his culture. The benefit will be more felt when efficient steps would be taken to liquidate illiteracy, illness, and hunger. "Scientific truths and discoveries should cease to be mere instruments of greed. The supreme consideration is man". These words of Mahatma Gandhi can only be translated into practice when both the material needs and spiritual aspiration of man be satisfied. It is a pity that whenever the question of the impact of science on society is raised, many become dreadful of the existence of our culture. Here Rabindranath has expressed that "European culture has come to us with its speed as well as its knowledge. Although we have assimilated it only imperfectly and it has given rise to many aberrations, it has roused our intellectual life from the inertia of its old habits to an increasing awareness, resulting from the very contrast it offers to our mental tradition".

GIFT TO THE SOCIETY

Whatever may be the thought or the mode of approach in our daily life, the question remains as to how far can man's aspirations in his own surroundings be realised, or how can man be inspired to use the resources at his disposal for the real benefit of mankind. Here a synthesis seems necessary between one's objective judgment and his concept of fundamental values of life. This might be possible if our scientific and technical education be imparted in a way so that man will acquire knowledge and experience not only to discover, but also to control his discoveries for the preservation of his own humanity amidst the daily stress of life. Often it is said that the present turmoil is due to the discoveries of science. But has science anything to do with it? Scientists do a job for the good and comforts of others, and try to disseminate the knowledge gained. This character of a scientist very well synchronises with the following lines of Poet Rabindranath :

"এ জীবনে আমি গাহিয়াছি বসে অনেক গান
পেয়েছি অনেক ফল
সে আমি সবারে বিশ্ব জনারে করেছি দান
ভরেছি ধরণী তল।"

(Many a song I have sung, and reaped many fruits; all these now fill the earth as my gift to the people of the world).

CONCLUSION

The remedy lies in educating our children from the early stages with the concept of appreciation of services that can be rendered by the scientists and technologists for the welfare of the country. A scientific attitude must pervade the whole educational process in the schools whether the pupils develop their career in the field of science or not, as science is playing a role in modelling our daily life from early morning with the news from any part of the world to retirement at night with the melodious rhythmic sound of the National Song heard over the radio.

INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY

(Continued from Page 30)

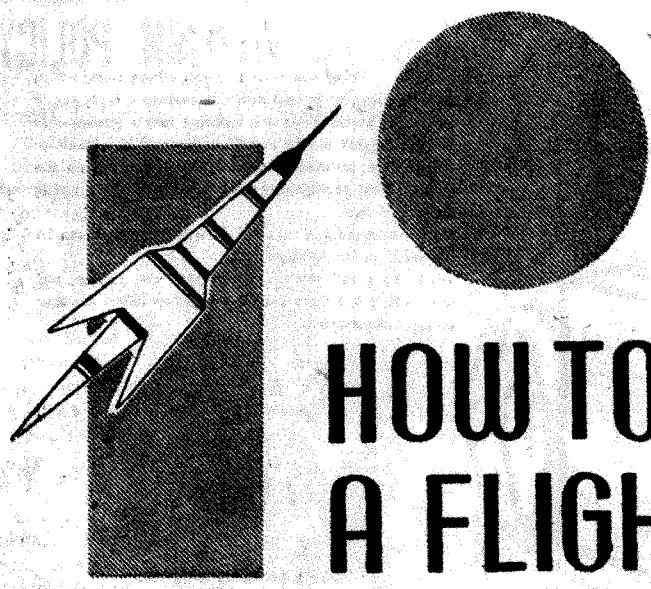
tish Foreign Office knows diplomacy from A to Z. Such men were not available in India in 1947. It was necessary, therefore, to place the Ministry of External Affairs in charge of a Minister who could exercise close supervision over Departmental work.

This, it may be argued, would have kept Nehru aloof from foreign affairs. But this assumption is unwarranted. In every country—Britain not excluded—the Prime Minister usually maintains closer contact with the Foreign Minister than with Ministers in charge of other Departments. All important Foreign Office despatches are sent to the Prime Minister as a matter of routine in Britain. Nehru would certainly have been able to keep the threads of policy-making in his own hands even if he had entrusted the Ministry to a trusted colleague.

His refusal to do so made him dependent on officials who did not possess the requisite experience to advise him and whose advice he hardly had the time to scrutinise. Another unfortunate result of this system was that no front-rank Congress politician was trained for the Foreign Minister's job. Deputy Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries attached to the Ministry of External Affairs were not persons who could grow. This became evident when Nehru sought Mr. Lal Bahadur Shastri's assistance in that Ministry after Bhubaneswar; he could not think of any one with previous experience of external affairs. And when Mr. Shastri decided to appoint a Foreign Minister, he had to choose a Minister whose experience related to a round of talks with Pakistan. Sardar Swaran Singh has now to learn new lessons. Either he or any other top-ranking Minister might have been initiated into the mysteries of diplomacy during Nehru's life-time and under his supervision.

It was no easy task to create a Foreign Service after 1947. Some members of the I.C.S. were transferred to this newly created Service, and even in the 18th year of the Republic they occupy the highest posts in the Ministry. A separate Foreign Service has been created; young recruits are drawn through competitive examinations held by the Union Public Service Commission, and retired officials and men from various professions are appointed to diplomatic posts. The Department has the proud distinction of having three full Secretaries, one of them with the designation of Secretary-General, a designation unknown in other Ministries.

Effective foreign policy requires collection and dissemination of correct information. It is no secret now that Nehru was misguided about Communist China's real intentions by the complacent reports sent by one of our Ambassadors from Peking. And only the other day Pakistani officials were able to score a vital point over India in the field of publicity in the Prime Ministers' Conference in London. Our Embassy in Moscow has not yet been able to circulate information booklets in the Russian language. Diplomats posted abroad are the eyes and ears of the Government at home. As we can no longer count upon the glamour, respect and weight connected with Nehru's great name it is urgently necessary to arrange a stock taking.



HOW TO CONTROL A FLIGHT TO THE MOON

DR. PATRIC J. RYGH

IF sending a spacecraft to the moon were a matter of setting your sights, aiming, firing the rocket, and sitting back with supreme confidence, then moon-shooting would merely be fun, and not the pulsating display of technical virtuosity that it is.

The U.S. Ranger moon flights must take account of the movements of the earth and moon, the gravity of both bodies, the purpose of the missions, the characteristics of the booster rockets and the spacecraft itself, the tremendous speeds involevd, and other factors concerned with celestial mechanics.

Thus one may understand why we have a great, co-ordinated network of tracking and command stations, operated by hundreds of technicians and scientists, to control the spacecraft during their three-day, 250,000-mile (400,000-kilometer) moon flights.

The co-ordinating centre is located at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (Pasadena, California), which is assigned responsibility for the Ranger Project by the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

The centre, being used for the first time, will co-ordinate future unmanned lunar, planetary, and interplanetary flights.

Five hours before the launching of Ranger 7, the Pasadena centre establishes communications with the launch site at Cape Kennedy, Florida, and the Deep Space Network tracking stations at Goldstone, California; Woomera, Australia; and Johannesburg, South Africa.

Periodically during the countdown, a Jet Propulsion Laboratory team at the launch site keeps the director of Space Flight Operations at the Pasadena centre informd of the spacecraft's status.

At the same time, the manager for the Deep Space Network, also headquarters in the centre, receives tracking station readiness reports from Goldstone, Woomera and Johannesburg, and from tracking facilities at Cape Kennedy.

Evaluation of Ranger's telemetry begins several hours before launch and continues through the 68-hour flight to the moon. Telemetry is the radio link that transmits technical and scientific information between spacecraft and earth.

Five minutes before the launching, the spacecraft's systems begin using power from on-board batteries. The batteries remain the only power source until Ranger's solar panels are extended and facing the sun about an hour and one-half later.

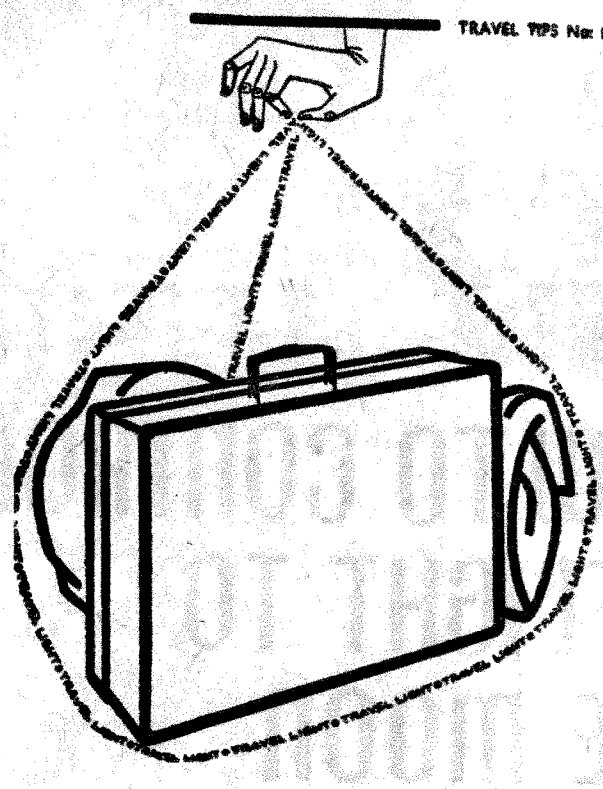
Beginning just seconds after launch, antennas at Cape Kennedy and down range on South Atlantic islands track the Atlas-Agena launch vehicle through the early phases of the flight. Later, the 85-foot (25.5-meter) dish antennas at the Deep Space Network stations successively track Ranger as the earth revolves under the spacecraft's lunar trajectory.

Tracking data obtained early during launch are processed both at Cape Kennedy and at the Pasadena centre so that accurate predictions can be sent to the Deep Space Network stations giving the location of Ranger in the sky when it appears on the horizon.

Within 35 minutes after liftoff, the Johannesburg antenna locks onto Ranger, ending the first of many critical portions of the mission.

Activity at the centre heightens during the second hour of the flight. A projection of Ranger's

(Continued On Page 222)



When you enter a railway compartment with a small bedding, an attache case and perhaps a handy bag or small tiffin basket, you are a welcome fellow passenger as all your luggage can be tucked underneath the bench or placed in a convenient place without littering up the compartment or depriving some fellow passengers' sitting accommodation.

Bulkier luggages not required during the journey can be deposited in the Luggage Van.

Travel light and thereby ensure your own comfort and the comfort of others and be a welcome fellow traveller in any compartment.

SOUTH EASTERN RAILWAY

We undertake every type of :—

CONSTRUCTION & STEEL FABRICATION

KUSHUMIKA IRON WORKS PRIVATE LTD.

71, 72, 73, Jeliapara Lane, Salkia, Howrah

ALLIED WITH

KUSHUMIKA CONSTRUCTION & IRON WORKS PRIVATE LTD.

Head Office : 3, Maharsi Debendra Road, Calcutta-7.

Telephone { Office : 33-2936 & 33-4541
Works : 66-4747 & 66-4748

Hints Towards A Talk On INDIAN MUSIC

By JAGANNATH BANERJEE

WITH meditative luxury more or less hanging about them, Ragas are in a way just languages of contemplation. Their constituents, the notes, are not so much merely cold objective materials by way of body-building necessaries as largely warm subjective entities sparked off by realization rather than mere understanding. Accordingly, Ragas, as much as their notes, must have their birth pangs, and they emerge into life under the creative spell of contemplative approach.

In the above context, talks on Ragas, no matter how informed and erudite, must invariably be too inadequate to present Ragas in their full form and perspective as, by and large, talks are merely theoretical quantities and, normally, do not offer to substantiate the thesis with relevant note production. Doubtless, at their best, they can be, if anything, only good introductories on Ragas, but they have nothing much of very forceful and impressive conclusions to make on them. The reason is that, with no note creation to resort to, they only go the other way about, depending heavily on mere words, in an effort to present Ragas and, not quite coming to grips with the question. They just cannot claim to capture their inmost secrets, their spirits. In other words, they are all too wordy and just do not work up a throbbing atmosphere of created notes to breathe life and zest into them. Nevertheless, however limited in effect, talks on Ragas, backed up by creation of pertinent notes for assessment of their contributions to Raga build-up, can certainly make up for the deficiency to some extent and have their own importance, too, in terms of practical educative values—and this, obviously, in a far higher measure than purely theoretical talks. Naturally, talks of this vintage are talks with a difference, and they, at their best, can be made to appear about as good as a near-*talim* affair.

So, talks on Ragas can be divided, conveniently, under two heads: (1) the *talim* way talks which not only explain technicalities of Ragas but also examine the notes concerned by actual production, say, among other things, in the comparative light of similar or near-similar ones of other Ragas, and (2) the non-talim way talks which are just purely theoretical in their approach to notes and Ragas. Evidently, talks in the former category have more purposive scope than those in the latter and, with good *talim* character and outlook about them, can indeed offer to give their peak values. Talks in the latter category, however,—virtually, all a wordy affair—have less lumnious impact and, for that matter, usually appear to pall on the audience, as they proceed, since, in the context of their wanting in created notes, the likely chinks and shortcomings in their wordage in exposition, due mainly to its overall inadequacy, must be not a little detractive. These latter, at their worst, can even go as far as to cause misunderstanding to green and unwary listeners particularly when the words employed are vague or ambiguous or do not strictly apply.

Of course, to prevent misunderstanding coming in, words in the course of non-*talim* way talks are so chosen as to be direct, unequivocal and compact to a degree. They can ill afford to spill over or be loose and wide off the mark, far less antithetical or contradictory. To say, for instance, that Marva is a *neerasa* (unemotive) Raga, as a talker once described it, would certainly make a ridiculous mishit. Wouldn't it, knowing that once you call it a Raga, it cannot be *neerasa*, for ought it is worth emotionally? Understandably, the sort of austerity underlying the Raga played him a trick and gave him the clincher, the word *neerasa*, that is. But one can ill-afford not to notice that this austerity is none of a bare, bleak, wintry type to identify itself with cold, infructuous rigidity. The expert, for one, knows it for a fact that it is never without its own charm and attractive variations, although it is liable to be overdone into something rather rough-dry at incompetent hands. To say this is, of course, not to deny that the charm of Marva's austerity, which provides the Raga's *rasa*, must yet look a sort of contained quantity. Even so, to negate it altogether and call the Raga *neerasa* would, frankly, only be making a stranger of it.

So, givers of non-*talim* way talks do well not to forget that while the effect of their talks must naturally be very much limited, their use of inept or imprecise words, at that, would only cripple it badly and, possibly, also bring in not a little confusion. Words are their only medium of expression; should there be slips about them, they would result in misunderstanding, and the talkers would come in for criticism on the score of word-sense or Raga-sense or both. Nevertheless, non-*talim* way talks wisely worded so as to explain Raga technicalities as effectively as possible within the framework of their limited scope do certainly speak well for themselves, although, going by values, they certainly never can hit the target which the *talim* way talks definitely can.

To these two main types can be added, of course, a third which one happens not infrequently

to hear. This is often a lay enthusiast's dissertation on music and Ragas where, chiefly, fustian and gust along with poetic flourishes here and there frightfully seek to replace even the limited theoretical assessment of technical niceties as covered by the non-*talim* way type; so much so that any precious little substance it may chance to have gets lost in its pompous rhetoric and colour. This, naturally, does not get you anywhere as, clearly, it is mere verbiage and, with nothing much of usefulness about it, it is just an exercise in futility and pulls no punches.

Obviously, therefore, it is the first two types that are of consequence and, for that matter, the *talim* way type does easily beat the other as there is its demonstration part giving it a scoring dimension. Because of this part, again, one's mere reading of the talk-script is never its full value, for missing, as it does, the talker's demonstration involved, it cannot fully pay off.

There is yet another type—not a happy one, though, by any chance — that appears to be a curious novelty, for while you get in it the theoretical treatment by one person, the practical note creation supposed to be in substantiation is given by another. Judging by utility, this dual method appears to make little headway particularly because it is likely to juxtapose two visions, two approaches. Given below are two striking instances which, I am afraid, cast a lurid light on this type of talk. They easily prove that this as a method is a trifle too new-fangled and can hardly make a thing of destiny as it is very likely to fail to give uniform pictures of Ragas. Besides, they, practically, knock the bottom out of it, for Ragas, which, if anything, are just subjective quantities, must naturally be too allergic to its bi-interpretative approach under dual sensibility to be well presented at all.

Once a talker while describing Raga Bhimpalasi gave *madhyam* as its life-note. Of course, he was not wrong, in his way. But the supporting (?) instrumentalist's piece was at a remove from his thesis since the life-note here, as suggested by the spirit of the composition, was definitely biased on the side of *pancham* rather than *madhyam*. The player was not wrong either, in his way. Yet, technically, a sharp difference was on view between the two interpreters which, normally, should not have been there, although, fortunately for them, Raga Bhimpalasi can be said to divide its life-note between the two notes and, for all the gap between the thesis and the demonstration, the Raga did not suffer. Nevertheless, the thesis did, especially, in the eyes of the knowledgeable section of the audience, and it looked about as bad as a case leading evidence in terms different from those in the plaint.

About likewise did another talker lose face and grace while theorizing on Raga Kedar to the effect that it is a member of *Bilaval That*, not of *Kalyan*. The music in support (?) completely let him down as it was a forceful pointer to the Raga having *Kalyan* bias. Understandably, the powerful position and vitality of *suddha madhyam* in the Raga so much exercised the talker's mind that he 'could'nt care less' for other things that mattered and was easily tricked into a purblind conclusion. As a matter of fact, he totally missed the decisive importance underlying its descending *tivra madhyam's* livewire activity, in the chromatic way, to shape up and add zest to its *suddha madhyam*. Perhaps this was because this *tivra* note is just something of a dark horse choosing to remain rather in a hide-out, its virility and verve ready for action, which his obsession with the *suddha* note would not let him see. But the demonstrator was quite alive to this — the descending *tivra madhyam's* telling contribution to the Raga build-up and its indispensability to working up the Raga-spirit. Accordingly, much to the talker's chagrin, his thesis got bowled over, the demonstration running counter to it with unmistakable emphasis on *tivra madhyam* as the deciding factor and clinching the issue overwhelmingly in favour of *Kalyan That*.

FLIGHT TO THE MOON

(Continued From Page 219)

flight path is computed to learn where the spacecraft is going. During the next 15 hours the computations are refined to determine whether Ranger's mid-course rocket engine would be able to correct any deviation from the precise trajectory needed to bring the spacecraft to impact the moon.

Ground commands, some for storage in the spacecraft computer for later use, and other for instantaneous response, are transmitted to the spacecraft from the Deep Space Network stations. The commands are ordered by the director of Space Flight Operations via teletype to the station that happens to be in contact with Ranger at the time.

Stored commands, such as those which would tell Ranger which way and how far to turn and the required velocity change in a contemplated mid-course manoeuvre, are generated at the Pasadena centre, using a computer system, and transmitted to the spacecraft about two hours before the event. To verify its reception of the proper commands, Ranger repeats them in a transmission to earth. Later, a command from earth starts the manoeuvre.

The mid-course manoeuvre is a very critical portion of the flight and brings the director into consultation with the group in the area where telemetry data on Ranger's performance during the manoeuvre is being received within a fraction of a second of when it occurs.

The telemetered information reveals whether the spacecraft has turned in the proper direction and for the correct length of time. With the aid of the centre's powerful computers, experts from the various technical support groups are able to advise the director whether to continue the manoeuvre.

For the next 48 hours after the manoeuvre, Ranger cruises along a lunar collision path at an average velocity of about 4,000 miles (6,400 kilometers) per hour. It may be required, as the spacecraft nears its target, to command a change in attitude to point the six TV cameras aboard Ranger along the descent path to minimize blurring.

Whether or not this terminal manoeuvre is commanded depends upon the centre's analysis of the orientation of the spacecraft to the moon's surface. This information is conveyed to scientific investigators and project officials who make the joint decision on the use of the manoeuvre.

A successful mission by Ranger 7 would be a dramatic scientific achievement. More than 4,000 high resolution photographs of the lunar surface, the first ever, would be telemetered to earth during the final minutes of the flight. Not all of them are expected to be useful because the intensity of the light on the moon's surface is unknown.

By the time Ranger ends its mission by crashing onto the moon, the director and many of his Jet Propulsion Laboratory associates will have spent three full days and nights in the centre eating all their meals and sleeping there.

THE DECLINE OF AYURVEDIC SURGERY

By JAPESH DAS GUPTA

INDUSTRIAL development on scientific basis of the West has created such an influence in our mind that we cannot admit anything not sanctioned by Science. This belief is of tremendous importance in the field of medical science. The idea that any treatment other than on western line is unscientific has taken root in our mind. Because of the wonderful innovation in surgery in the western countries, we have lost sight of the fact that once in our country surgery in Ayurveda occupied a very high place in our life because of its scientific efficiency. As in Europe for centuries scientific development could make little headway due to supreme of religious scruples — so in ancient India the advancement of surgery in Ayurveda was unfortunately interrupted by a multitude of similar causes.

During the time of Lord Budha there was ample use and practice of Ayurveda surgery with remarkable results. In the earlier stage the Budhist monks used to consider Ayurvedic medical treatment as a part of their religion with the result that it gained a wide publicity and recognition.

King of Benares, Dibodas Dhanwantari first introduced surgery in Ayurveda treatment. After him his disciples Upadhanab, Pauskalabat Baitaran, Susruta wrote books on surgery in their own names dwelling on the various aspects of the branch. (At the moment only Susruta Sanhita is studied in Ayurveda). This surgery is divided into two lines viz., general surgery and midwifery. General surgery deals with prognosis, symptoms, diagnosis, haemorhage and their remedy while obstetrics prescribes on conception, pregnancy, pre-natal and post-delivery care including safe and effective process of delivery.

SURGICAL INSTRUMENTS

Development in Ayurvedic surgery in those days was really surprising and can be regarded as a matter of pride for Indians. In it is contained the use of instruments like scalpal, sharp curate, dressing and dissecting forceps including the director with scoop. The remedy obtaining for fracture, dislocation etc. in Ayurvedic surgery in those days was in no way inferior to the present day treatment in those branches of surgical treatment.

It also prescribed proper method of treatment for amputation, obstetrical operation, opening of abdomen, surgery of bladder and removal of stones from stomach etc.

Progress of surgery in Ayurveda reached such a height of perfection that the Kings used to take the Ayurvedists with them when proceeding on war and earmarked for them special camps. It is found in Susruta Sanhita that effective remedial measures were known to them to combat contamination of air and water caused during the warface by the enemies.

When Gautama Budha preaching his religion in Magadha during the reign of Bimbisara and his son Ajatasatru a disciple of Atreya named Jibak commanded admiration of the people by his method of Ayurvedic treatment.

Along with the progress of art, commerce, agriculture, music and various other items of art, Ayurveda also reached a remarkable height during Budhist Era. I shall try to hint and dialate upon certain incidents from the life of Jibak to focus on effectiveness of Ayurvedic treatment during his time. Jibak was an urdent disciple of Lord Budha. Some say that he was born of a concubine of Abhoy, son of Bimbisar. Jibak was so much devoted to Lord Thathagata that he could not get peace of mind unless he saw the Lord three times a day. Benuban was situated very near to the house of Jibak and as such he erected a Bihar (Budhist Shrine) in his own Mango grove for use of Lord Budha, who used to stay there from time to time. As to the perfection of study of Jibak, it is said that after completing his course he enquired of his preceptor about the further time he will be required to prosecute his studies. In reply the Preceptor wanted him to go round 2 miles in and around the city, examine each root, plant, herb and tree and say which of them were not required in the Ayurvedic treatment. After proper investigation in the line suggested by his preceptor Jibak submitted that he found not a single instance when a tree, plant, herb or root was void of medicinal value. On hearing him the Preceptor declared that he had completed his studies. Without accepting any reumuneration from him the Preceptor gave Jibak some money to cover his expenses of his journey home. On his way home Jibak was called in for treatment of a lady suffering from cerebral congestion in the town of Shaket. The lady had some doubt about his ability because of his tender age. Jibak administered a pinch of a particular type of snuff to the lady and on her being cured by it he remarked that in learning age was not the criterion. The lady got satisfied and amply rewarded him.

Once the Emperor Bimbisar was suffering from Fistula. Jibak cured him by the application of an ointment. Another instance was there when Jibak after the diagnosis of the case by means of a lens, opened the scalp of a patient and after having removed the germs inside, successfully reset it. In this and similar other ways he cured many patients suffering from sinusites.

Once King Bimbisar invited Jibak for the treatment of a respectable person of Rajgriha suffering from cerebral complaints. Jibak caused an operation by a sharp weapon and removed the germs inside by removing the scalp, reset it again and cured him within three weeks by application of some ointment.

GYNAECOLOGY IN AYURVEDA

In Gynaecology also Jibak had uncommon proficiency. He earned great fame at Rajgriha for effecting a safe delivery of a lady by opening her abdomen. He was titled as KOUMARVRITA. He had also considerable skill in the surgical treatment of bladder. Once a son of a respectable person of

Benares was reduced to skeleton due to intestinal obstruction. The father of the patient took Jibak to Benares through the influence of Bimbisara. Jibak cured the patient by setting the troubled knots of the intestine after operating the bladder.

LORD BUDDHA CURED

When Lord Buddha was suffering from constipation Jibak gave him three lotuses to smell putting inside them mild purgative drug and by this process he cured him. Lord Buddha got hurt in his legs when Devadatta pelted a stone at him to cause his death. In this instance too he was cured by Jibak's treatment. There are very many example of such cases relating to the mode and method of Jibak's treatment. It is evident from these facts the extent of progress of Ayurvedic surgery in those days. Later on, Asoke came to occupy the throne after the passing away of Emperor Chandragupta and his son. After the Kalinga war he was captivated by the preaching of Buddhist principles and doctrines of the eminent monk Upagupta and got converted into Buddhism. He directed Buddhist monks to far away countries viz. Egypt, Greece and Syria. At that time the philanthropic monks made a wide publicity of Ayurvedic treatment in those countries for the benefit of the people. It is found in the edicts of Asoke that he collected and planted medicinal herbs and plants in and outside the country for the welfare of not only humanbeings but for animals as well.

After the death of Asoke there was a conflict between Buddhism and Brahmanism as a consequence superficial religious rigidity and outward show gained prominence over the spiritual aspects of the beliefs. The Brahmins laid more stress on the bigotry of religion and the bias of untouchabilities while the Buddhists regarded surgery as a method of violence much against the creed of Buddhism and thus gave practically a goodbye to Indian surgery for good. At a later date it declined to such an extent that when Jagatguru Sankaracharyya was suffering from fistula the disease was declared to be incurable. In this way surgery in Indian form began to decline gradually due to apathy and neglect and dwindled away ultimately.

TANTRIC CONCEPT OF ANIMAL SACRIFICE

(Continued from page 31)

intended to serve an earthly purpose. "Oh mother, rob me of my sin, rob me of my grief and rob me of my evil, that is the eternal refrain of a votary's prayer in Tantric worship. It is an invocation by the votary not to help himself or herself to fly life but definitely to enable him or her to live a better life in the family and the society. In one sense, it is the opposite of the vedantic attitude to negate the life concrete. It is a crude thinking among a section of modern men and women that the offering to the mother including the killing of an animal is intended to bribe off the mother's gifts. The effectiveness of these offerings depend on the purity and the emotional integrity of the votary's mind and no gift can really be forced out of the mother's "right hand", far less by a quantitative measure of the offerings. The Cosmic Will can deliver all goods to men individually but for such delivery an emotional apotheosis in the nature of Mother-Son relationship is essential.

A final word of clarification about the Tantric Puja the essence of which lies less in prayer and invocation than in the mystic syllable and gestures (mantras and mudras) for the purpose of instilling consciousness in the material symbol. But however widely such worship may be undertaken for securing earthly good, it should by no means be construed that their potentiality is confined to the securing of such material benefit. As it is, neither the animal that is sacrificed nor the worshipper that sacrifices the animal receives any spiritual benefit—not even the animal more than the man, as is often puerilely thought — but the whole act of sacrifice may be consummated in the spiritual status of the highest degree. Should the man and the animal both discern the presence of the Universal Energy—the Mother — in the act of the sacrifice, the "vision beatific," as the Christians would say, may immediately result. All play of cosmic energy is for the primordial good, in other words the union of Shakti with Shiva in the Supra-mental consciousness, is the Supreme and fundamental realisation for which men may repeatedly strive, falter and then win.

CLIMBING THE SOCIAL LADDER

(Continued from Page 19)

engage themselves in some sort of rural uplift work. Distribution of milk powder, weekly visits to rural homes for educating the illiterate women in the virtues of family planning and the use of contraceptives, instructing the already famished village folk in nutritional programmes and change of food habits — these are only some of the favourite components in the rural welfare programme in which the society ladies love to indulge. But not any or every village can possibly attract their attention or claim to be the field of their intensive activity. The villages must be easily accessible from Calcutta by limousines and, preferably, endowed with electricity so that the heat of the country-side summer does not weary out the self-less social workers.

In the High society one cannot be too careful in the observance of codes of manners and canons of courtesy even if that borders on affectation and the slightest tripping off the delicate line of conduct to be toed by a member of the society may cause ripples of ridiculous laughs within the sleeves. To avoid the pit-falls, the life-members of the High society would lay down a few shibboleths which the new aspirants in the arena of social climbing would do well constantly to bear in mind. These shibboleths are: When a society lady cuts a joke, one must heartily laugh however dull, commonplace or oft-repeated the joke may be.

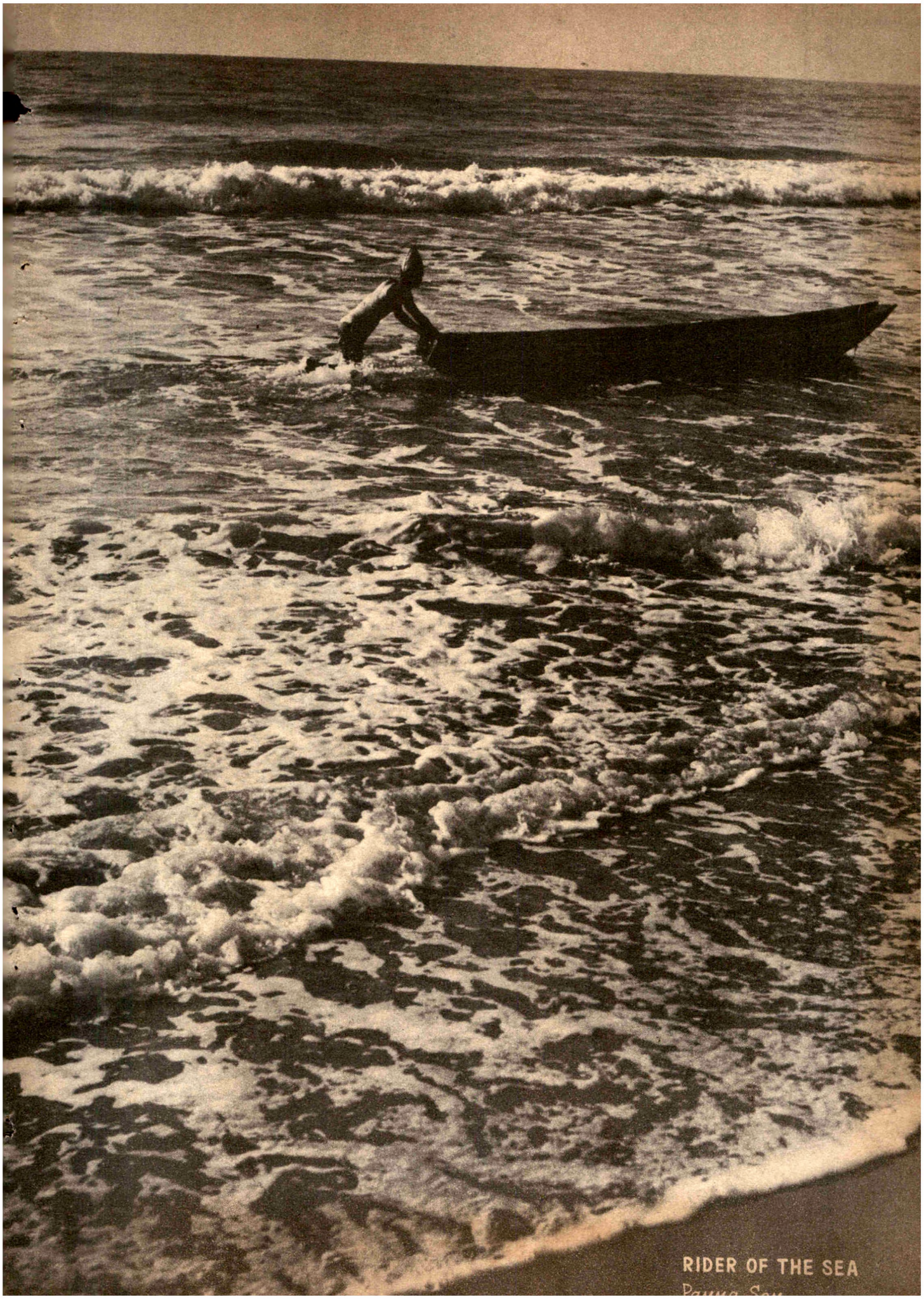
Whenever you meet a society lady, you must instantly say, 'How delighted I am to see you," though, inwardly, you may feel just to the contrary.

You must take a polite interest in all that a society lady may say, however uninteresting her talks may be. You must musk a hideous boredom with an amiable civility of manners.

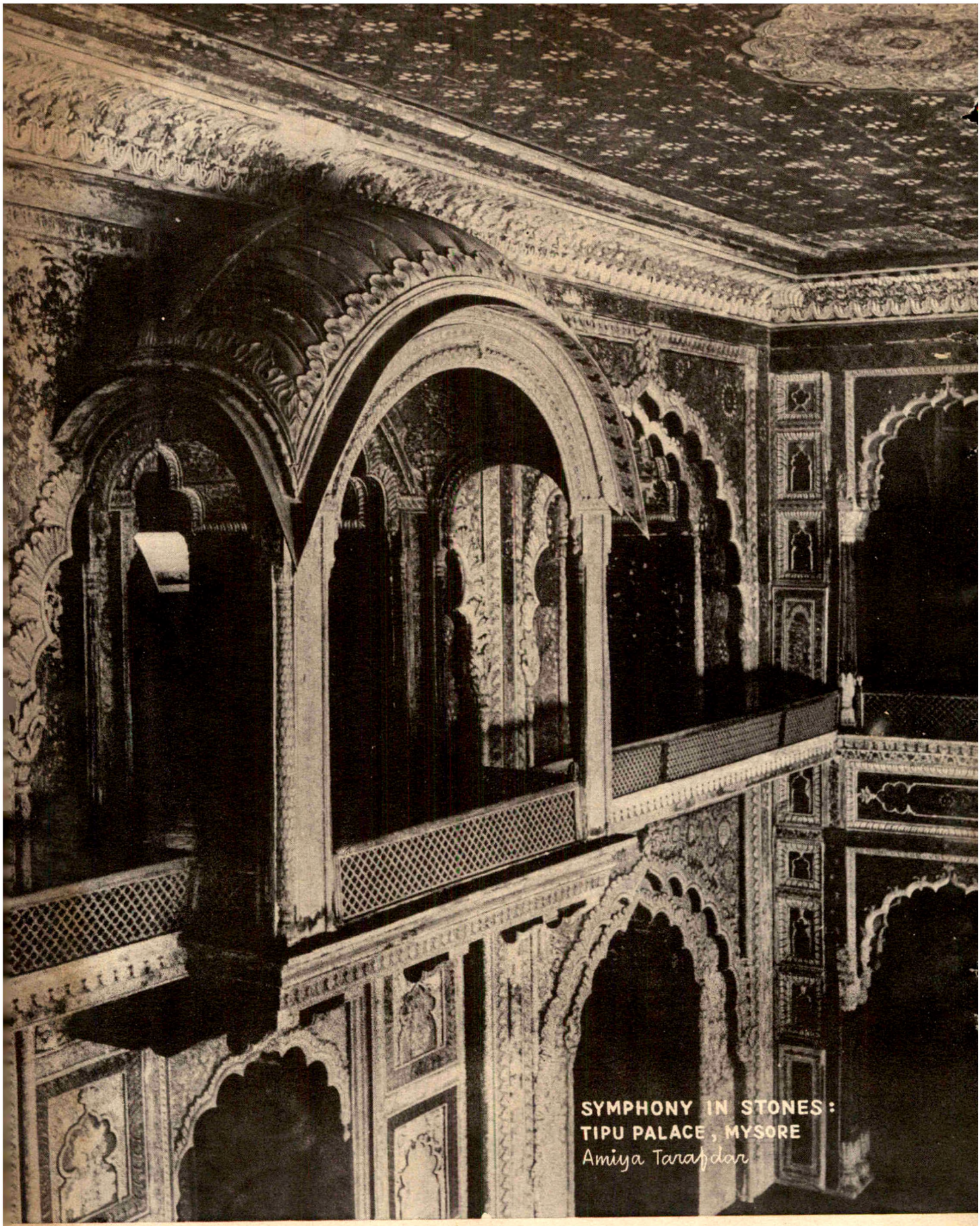
You must have always on your lips a measured smile like that of the pre-fabricated smile of an air-hostess.

You must never be niggardly in your compliments for the slim figure and youthful look of a lady, though you may be feeling all the while that you are not telling the truth.

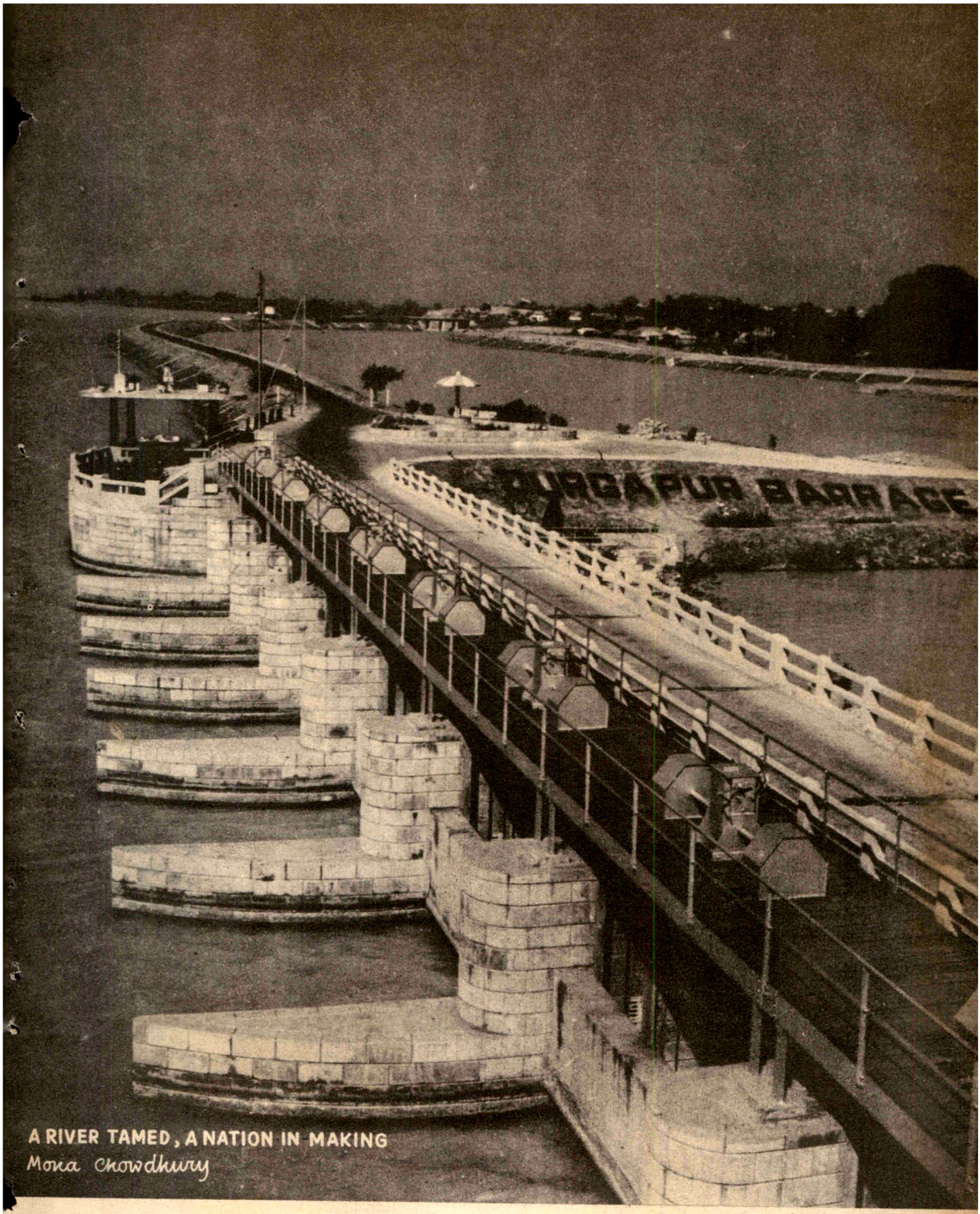
Whenever your guest arrives you must greet them with "So, after all you are come" and when they depart, see them off saying "So soon", though you may have dislike the early arrival and detested the late departures.



RIDER OF THE SEA

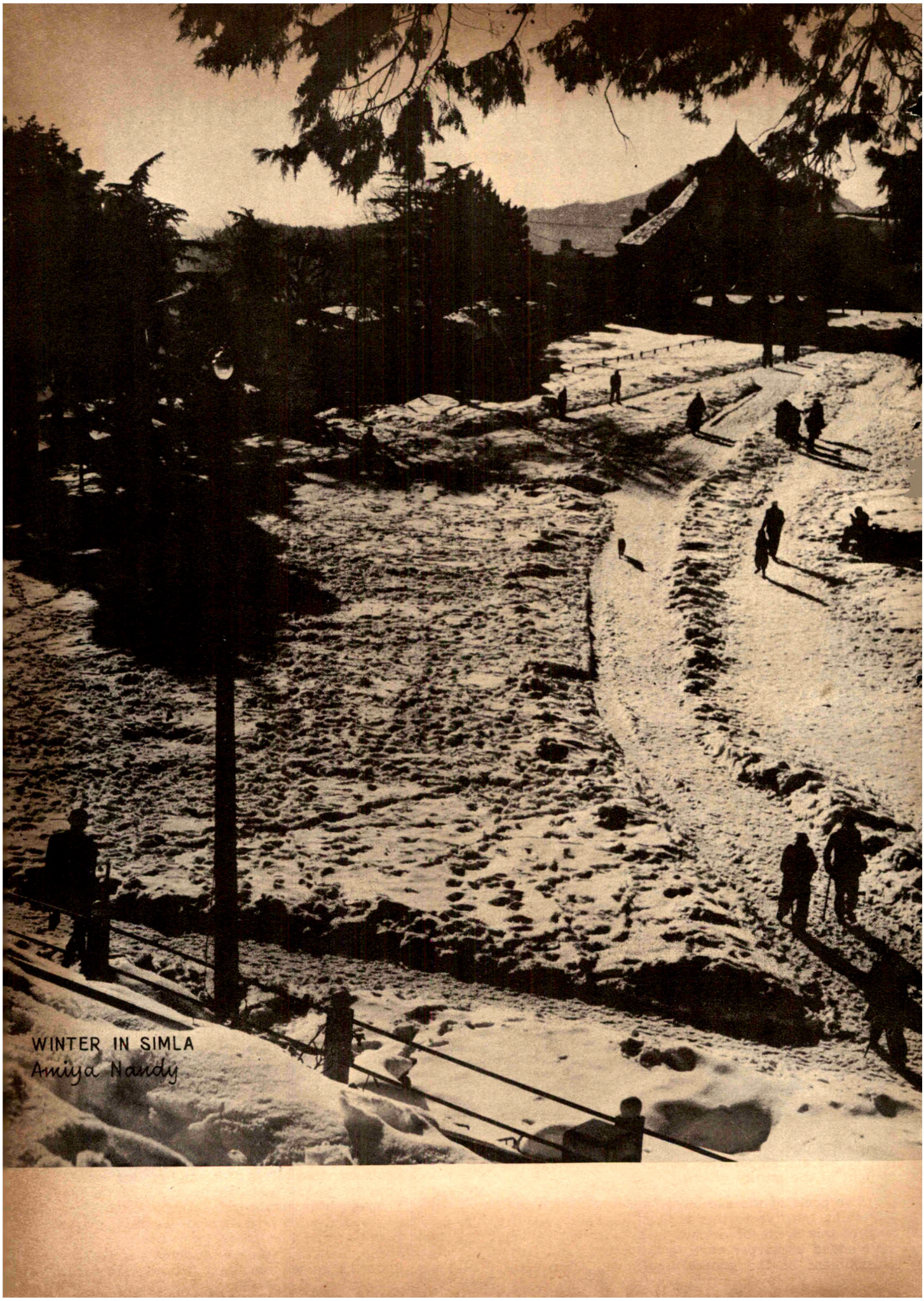


SYMPHONY IN STONES :
TIPU PALACE, MYSORE
Amiya Tarafdar



A RIVER TAMED, A NATION IN MAKING

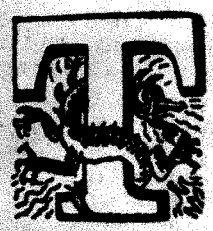
Mona Chowdhury



WINTER IN SIMLA
Amiya Nandy

RECENT TRENDS IN BENGALI LITERATURE

By Dr. SRIKUMAR BANERJEE



O stress trends in literature is to run the risk of exalting the subsidiary at the cost of the essential. After all, the main thing in literature is not the subject but the transformation of the subject into an impression of beauty and significance. During a certain period in the history of the country certain topics are uppermost in the minds of all, and the man of letters merely breathes the same atmosphere along with his other non-literary fellow-men. He merely thinks of and cogitates upon what everybody else around him has been doing in instinctive, inevitable response to the urge of the hour. The environment casts its shadow upon the literature of the period as naturally as it projects itself into the general consciousness. The literary artist feels his creative sense attuned to the stir of thoughts in the air round about him and is sustained by the sense of his spiritual kinship with the world at large. He feels a strange exaltation in the thought that he is giving literary expression to the inarticulate feelings of a thousand and his lines glow and quiver in the warmth reflected from a hundred hearts. It is always an advantage to know that one is sailing with the current and the tidal flow will carry him to the crest of the wave.

But the advantage of this sense of community can easily be over-stressed. In poetry at any rate, it is not an altogether unmixed gain to reflect a general consensus of opinions and feelings. If a poet is too sure of the sympathy of his audience, he may rest content with a widely diffused vagueness, instead of cultivating the last reach of clarity of thinking and expression. He may easily echo current sentiments instead of reaching a new intensity of emotion. He may merge himself in the multitude, instead of giving them prophetic guidance and inspiration. A poet, in order to give the best of himself, must maintain some detachment and observe the shifting pageantry of life from a certain vantage ground of elevation. He may be in the atmosphere, but must not be entirely of it. He is expected to contribute something original and significant to the indeterminate vacuity that forms the general staff of contemporary thought. This is all the more necessary in an age of vague, wistful yearnings, in which life has lost all sense of direction and the strong support of a fixed idealism. In an age of strenuous endeavour and soaring aspirations, the complete identification of poet and people would add strength to the wings of poetry. Even then Shakespeare would always remain an exception. But in the present age, when the two world-wars have completely shattered all our philosophy and moral resources and left men a hopeless prey to dark negation and drifting vacillation, the poet must not drift as hopelessly as the rest of his contemporaries but must offer some ray of light in the murky gloom.

The poets of the age have no doubt contributed something positive to this purely negative picture of life, this scene of discord and confusion. They have added a sharper edge to the ennui and disillusionment of the general sentiment. The sighs of despair ring hollower and more cavernous in their rhythms. The shuffle of drifting and aimless feet, the yawning boredom of a mind hopelessly out of tune with life have been more incisively defined against a background which aptly reflects the mood. The muffled notes and low whispers of a hundred throats have been caught up and magnified in an artistically contrived atmosphere. Over the blank abyss poetry has built a corridor down which one can look into the giddy, swirling depths below. So modern Bengali poetry is in some respects an apotheosis of what is at bottom an utter sense of frustration in life.

Some poets like Jibanananda Das weave a new sensitiveness to beauty, a new pattern of delicate and evanescent sense-impressions out of this relaxed, ruminative mood. Life, stripped of all its serious purpose and solid contents, nevertheless presents an avenue through which streams a wonderful procession of subtle colours, smells and sounds, which fill up the whole of its substance. Stray memories, strange associations, wistful imaginings, truant emotions seeking to embody themselves in some semi-transparent form make up the warp and woof of his poetry. He seems to be the only poet who gives a new imaginative orientation to moods of barren negation, making life blossom forth under the very ribs of dissolution and death.

The rottenness and insincerities of society, clogging and hampering the free, spontaneous movement of life, have been exposed by poets like Sudhin Dutta and some other senior poets with a pungent energy that gives a new zest to social criticism. Younger poets betray some symptoms of being fed up with the customary pose and are scanning life with a new intent, though their scrutiny is hardly rewarded as yet with anything approaching a complete vision. Conversational idioms are much more plentifully used in their poetry and a rhythm that approximates very closely to the speech-habit. They tend to concentrate more upon subtle and minute effects rather than to achieve perfection of form based upon an orderly development of ideas. While some of their short lyrics excel in suggestiveness, they can hardly claim the possession of a close-knit core of thought. Recent poetry has been still passing through a phase of restless experiment and hardly anything foreshadows the emergence of another spell of greatness in the near future.

NOVEL & SHORT STORY

But it is really in the sphere of novels and short stories that we find a genuine transcript of modern life in all its morbidity and fragmentariness. The absence of a deep-rooted idealism, of a philosophy which knits up the scattered moments of experience into a wider harmony and an underlying unity of purpose in life in its apparent inconsequence is detrimental to the highest art in any form. But in poetry the want is much more fatal than in fiction which follows rather closely the broken threads, the unplanned disarray of the actual scene of life. In poetry we expect to see life already idealised, and its raggedness tucked away under a golden canopy. All the immense

pains that is taken for building up its body and soul, its rhythms, and cadences and subtle nuances of suggestion, its evocation of an atmosphere that broods over and irradiates all the details, would otherwise appear to be a much ado about nothing. Poetry is no place for first drafts and experiments with life; it should embody only experiments brought to fruition and perfected. The novel is the place for recording first impressions, adjustments to a new order of experience, fractions of life seized at odd moments and presented in a striking light without much pretensions to finality. Poetry must be oracular; a novel can afford to be exploratory.

The post-war Bengali novel thus furnishes the best literary record of the fast-changing, the almost crumbling and disintegrating social and moral values of current Bengali life. In fact the change has been taking place at such a break-neck speed, with such dizzy whirl that the revolutionary of yesterday is dubbed as a conservative of to-day. Sarat Chandra was the first revolutionary advocate of social re-thinking, the first stimulator of our social conscience in the second and third decades of the twentieth century. But the mental conflicts and agonies of all his rebel heroes and heroines really indicated what a high value he attached to the traditional virtues cultivated in all sincerity and honesty of purpose. Savitri and Rajlakshmi, two of his most advanced heroines, suffered tortures of agonies and sacrificed their life's happiness because in spite of their pursuit of a shameful career, they could not wean themselves away from the most exalted ideals of bodily purity and conjugal fidelity. There is only one woman, Abhoya, who courageously snaps asunder the marriage tie, which had proved a mockery and welcomed a new extra-marital relation in order to rehabilitate herself. Achala eternally vacillates between her husband and her lover and does not know whom she really loves. Her mind hovers in a perpetual twilight which shuts out self-knowledge. His Kiranmayee is a sceptic in words, but a traditional in conduct and her insanity is an index of the strain she had put upon herself all her life. Her Kamal is a practitioner of promisicuity, but her motives remain obscure even to herself and her austerity in food is a comical contradiction to her sexual indulgences. His Sabita chews the cud of her past adultery, but she is concerned more with her discarded husband than with her equivocal seducer. Sarat Chandra certainly has familiarised us with free thoughts about love and done something to shed light upon the mystery of its fascination ,but he visualised love in its old social and domestic framework and with something of the traditional Puranic halo still upon it.

But in the forties and fifties the structure of society and the ideals of life were completely swept away by a gust of change. The Second World War had weakened the economic stability of a Bengali householder and brought into the domestic economy a spirit of speculation and gamble. It was with the partition of Bengal and mass evacuation of the population from their homeland under conditions of intolerable agony and humiliation that the break-up of the Bengali morale became complete. The moods became engrossed with the stories of men and women, who became the victims of atomic disintegration and forfeited the last vestiges of self-respect and the minimum decency of life. Humanity, reduced to its last rags and tatters, not merely in the literal but the moral sense, offers interesting sociological study to the modern novelist and an opportunity either for over-sentimentalised sympathy or for keen social satire, but constructive thinking as well as characterisation are rather lacking. Of writers who have dealt with this life of dusty decadence, mention may be made of Saroj Kumar Roy Choudhury with his *Nil Agun* (1963), Bibhuti Bhushan Mukherjee with his *Panka-Pallwab* (1964), and Jyotirindra Nandi with his *Baro Ghar Ek Uthan* (1956). Tarasankar Banerjee with his *Bhubanpurer Hat* (1963) and Ramapada Chaudhuri, with his *Banapalasir Padavali* (1962) dwell upon the changing face of rural life and manners. International contacts and the widening of the horizons of life find their interpreter in a promising new writer, Chanakya Sen, who brings out the expanding interests of Indian life particularly in official and cultural circles. Historical novels evince a new base of life as illustrated in Pramatha Bisi's *Lal Kella* (1964). Manoj Basu returns to the half-mythical, half-idyllic strain in his story of romantic theft pursued as an art with the flavour of an ethical ideal in his *Nisi Kutumba* (1964) in which there is a touch of a wistful yearning for wander-lust, the uninhibited freedom of a life untied to social conventions. Samaresh Basu's *Baghini* (1963) is an idealised picture of smuggler's life and an equally idealised love between a high-caste Brahmin youth and a low-caste woman, although there is too much of over-strained psychology and a far-fetched, long-drawn-out conflict which militates against the probability of the story. Above all, Bimal Mitra's encyclopaedic novel, *Karhi Diye Kinlam* (1964) sums up the complexities and unsolved riddles of modern life in a representative individual character and studies life against the background of an ever-widening environment. This is truly a novel with a third dimension that packs up the meaning of the lives of all classes of people and events of far-reaching magnitude into the life of a single individual. Though some of the episodes are rather loosely connected with the central theme and appear to have little relevance to the moulding of the hero's character, yet this is a book which has an intellectual appeal not exhausted at the first reading of the story. With this novel, modern Bengali fiction may be said to have stepped into a new sense of life-values ,a new world of cosmic proportions which, consciously or unconsciously, impinges upon our narrow round of daily life.

No great literature in any form can be built upon a mere negation. It requires a positive view of life, an authentic and fruitful interpretation of the tangled skin of human actions and motives. Life is moving at too fast a pace for us to give us a chance to seize and apply its real import. Our eyes are blinded by the dust of crumbling cultures, which clouds our vision for a new and significant image. The furious pace of scientific and industrial progress, the multiple problems thrown up by the revolving wheels of the rushing chariot of life have outstripped our powers of comprehension and adjustment. The world bristles with problems that are unsolved and apparently insoluble even on the political and economic plane. They have not yet generated emotions in which they may be drenched and dissolved. They have not inspired ethical ideals and a sense of imaginative beauty in which incompatibles can be reconciled and can meet in a creative synthesis. Sheley's vision of the world's great age beginning anew has not yet come true. Till that consummation is reached, we have to prepare for it through honest assimilation and enrichment of experience. The first half of the twentieth century in India as elsewhere, may be the breeding ground of a new creative efflorescence that may be in the offing.

Shakespeare as a man of the Theatre

By Prof. SUSHIL MUKHERJEE

IN Shakespearean criticism the dramatist's connection with the theatre has not received as much attention as it should have. Scholars and teachers have often isolated Shakespeare from the stage and the green-room where he must have spent a great deal of his time listening to or conducting the rehearsal of his plays in the midst of the quarrels and arguments of actors over the distribution and interpretation of parts, and the angry outbursts of shifters, stage-managers and property-men,—a common feature of the back-stage world.

"A play that has never found a theatre, actors, audiences, is not really a play at all," says J. B. Priestley, himself a dramatist and a critic. "A dramatist", says he, "is a writer who works in and for the theatre." This is what Shakespeare actually did. A successful dramatist has to know his theatre and the materials available. He has to come to terms with the theatre of his times. If Shakespeare had not joined Lord Chamberlaine's group of players and the Globe Theatre, had he written his plays sitting in an isolated study, he would have been forgotten long ago.

Drama is a practical art and the theatre is a laboratory where this art is learnt best. In this laboratory the dramatist is just one among the many. There are others, the actor, the director, the producer, the stage-manager, the musician, the scene-painter, the carpenter, the electrician, the sound-assistant, the shifter, the property-man and so on. Each has a part to play, though the playwright's part is undoubtedly the most important. A successful dramatist has to work in co-operation with all. A successful drama is the result of a combined effort. Shakespeare worked in this interesting laboratory of play-making—the theatre. His plays show that he was a man of the theatre.

When we say that Shakespeare was a man of the theatre we mean that Shakespeare was closely associated with the theatre; that he learnt his art from his practical knowledge of the stage and the actors; that he wrote his plays for the theatre (and not for the class-rooms); that he sometimes wrote parts even for particular actors; that he never ignored the taste and demand of his audience and tried all possible ways, to draw a big crowd to his theatre; that he always kept in mind the financial interest of the theatre, being the "only dramatist", according to G. E. Bentley (Shakespeare Survey, 1948) who owned stock in the theatre buildings over an extended period" and "whose income was derived from acting, from writing plays, from shares in dramatic enterprises, and from theatre rents".

While there is no doubt that Shakespeare was connected with the theatre in London, how that connection first began is still a matter of controversy. There are various stories, including that oft-repeated one that the young Shakespeare who was compelled to leave Stratford-on-Avon to avoid the wrath of Sir Thomas Lucy, used to look after the horses of the big theatrical patrons as they enjoyed the show inside. This story is now regarded as an 18th century invention. It is now believed that Shakespeare's connection with the theatre began with his almost sure contact with the wandering players who visited Stratford for performance at frequent intervals. Mr. Fripp who carefully studied the records of Stratford has established beyond doubt that between 1569 and 1587 Stratford was visited by 'the travelling fellowship" of players at least 20 times. England had no regular theatre-house when Shakespeare was born and yet there was great enthusiasm for plays among the common people. The popular hunger for dramatic show was satisfied by the 'wandering players' whose counter-parts appear in *Hamlet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and through whom Shakespeare has given an account of the contemporary stage, drama, style of acting, production of plays etc. There were many such groups in Shakespeare's boyhood—the Queen's players, the Earl of Derby's, the Earl of Worcester's, the Earl of Leicester's, Lord Berkley's, the Earl of Oxford's, the Earl of Strafford's, the Countess of Essay's etc. By now it has been definitely established that William Shakespeare was a truant boy with not much attraction for books or the school. It is only natural for such a village-boy to be drawn towards the public-entertainers who sang and danced and gesticulated with made-up faces and performed in the presence of a large crowd and received claps and cheers. It may well be that Shakespeare made acquaintance with some of those players, recited a few lines before them as he had heard in the plays already performed, gave some proof of his histrionic ability or even read out a few lines he had perhaps secretly scribbled in the fashion of the plays he had heard. The theatrical companies needed players and playwrights; and Shakespeare, we may assume, got his chance by 1587, the most probable year when Shakespeare was 23 with his wife and children, and also old parents, to maintain. The family fortune had in the mean time declined and the necessity for earning was urgent. Shakespeare threw in his lot with the players.

But we are not so much concerned with how Shakespeare came to be associated with the theatre as with the fact of the association itself and its influence on Shakespeare's art of play-writing.

Drama depends on stage-convention. This is why the drama of one age differs in technique from

the drama of another. When Shakespeare came to the theatre he had to take into account the condition and the conventions of the contemporary stage and write accordingly. Milton hailed Shakespeare as 'Fancy's child!' But it will be seen that this Child of Fancy kept his one foot firmly on the earth below. We often hear of *Shakespeare Wonder*. If there is anything like it, it is this that here was a man who managed to satisfy the 'groundlings', the London-crowd that paid a penny for entrance into the theatre and witnessed the play standing all the time round the stage, clapping loudly at every bit of good performance and hissing equally loudly at a bad one; as well as the discerning among the audience of his time; and also the scholars and critics of subsequent ages. Shakespeare did not sit in an ivory tower and drop masterpieces from there under divine inspiration or as 'unpremeditated art'. He worked, nay toiled hard, sweated profusely and wrote hurriedly and continuously for the stage, sometimes writing even according to command. It is, for instance, well-known that Shakespeare wrote *The Merry Wives of Windsor* because Elizabeth wanted to see Falstaff in love. Similarly, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was probably written on the occasion of the marriage of William Stanley, Earl of Derby and Elizabeth Vere, daughter of the Earl of Oxford in January 1595 in which function the Queen herself was present. Even a tragedy like *Macbeth*, G. B. Harrison supposes, was written hurriedly on the occasion of a royal visit. Sometimes he wrote to create special roles for some of his fellow-actors. Richard Burbage or Will Kempo and sometimes to suit a particular occasion. This meant writing, altering, editing and even re-writing after discussion with others who were interested. Never for once did Shakespeare forget the business side of the theatre. He had chosen a player's and a play-wright's career which in his time was not a very honourable one. Naturally therefore his determination was to achieve success in the line and establish himself in the society with money and prestige. To this task he devoted himself wholeheartedly and the result was obvious within a few years when Robert Greene, himself a dramatist, wrote with an unconcealed professional jealousy about the emergence of a new play-wright describing him as an "upstart crow beautified with our feathers....his tiger's heart wrapped in player's hide....who supposes himself as well able to bombast a blank verse as the best of you,...." "The reason of this heart-burning was that Shakespeare was drawing a bigger crowd to his theatre. Shakespeare mastered the secret of the box-office with an uncanny instinct. Those to whom the commercial theatre is an anathema will do well to remember that William Shakespeare was one of the earliest products of the commercial theatre.

It was in Shakespeare's childhood that commercial theatre just started in England. Before that, almost up to the third quarter of the 16th century drama in England, was a religious affair and there was no question of profit-earning. It was in 1576, that is when Shakespeare was a boy of 12, that the first theatre-house was built in Shoreditch. It was called The Theatre. Next came The Curtain. The Globe Theatre opened in 1599. Shakespeare came to London in 1587 and joined Lord Chamberlaine's company which played at The Theatre, The Curtain and The Globe and later at the Blackfriar's Theatre from 1609.

To understand Shakespeare as a man of the theatre it is necessary to have an idea of the Elizabethan theatre itself. The Elizabethan playhouse was small, 80 ft. by 80 ft. outside, and 55 ft. by 55 ft. inside. Half of this inside area was occupied by the stage. It was open overhead and there was no seating arrangement in some portion of it. The cockpit or the circular yard was open to the sky. It was surrounded by three tiers of galleries with an oblong stage projecting from one side up to the middle of the area. The players were surrounded by the spectators on three sides. The uppermost gallery was covered with a thatched roof. Over the stage itself there was a roof to protect the players from the sun and the rain. The public theatres performed during the day. The actual stage was divided into three portions—the outer stage, a sort of rectangular platform projecting into the cockpit; the inner stage, i.e. the space at the back of the stage under the balcony covered up by means of a curtain hanging from it; and the upper stage which was a sort of gallery over the back of the stage. The main action of the drama took place on the outer stage. The inner stage was used to show some place of concealment, some cave or tomb, study or bedroom. The upper stage would serve the purpose of castle-walls or hill-tops or upper-room windows, balcony etc. The floor of the stage contained a trap-door for the entrance or exit of supernatural creatures, ghosts, fairies etc. There was no painted scenery. Scenes or locations were indicated either by simple suggestions or by crude pictures on a piece of canvas. There was no front curtain. There was no arrangement for creating illusions by the employment of clever stagecraft. "The key to Shakespeare's stagecraft", says Granville Barker "is in the axiom that illusion lies in the characters and their action and nowhere else." Stage properties were few. And though the dress was sometimes gorgeous, no attempt was made to observe historical accuracy. Shakespeare's Roman characters wore Elizabethan dress. Boys did the female roles. Shakespeare had to shape his plays keeping in view all these limitations, and he eminently succeeded, often turning the limitations to advantages.

VISUAL POETRY

How he did this will be evident from a few illustrations.

The absence of the painted scenery had its effect on the technique of the play-writing itself. We are familiar with the long descriptive passages in Shakespeare's plays,—for example, the description of the Dover Cliff in *King Lear* (Act 4 Sc. 6) or the *midnight* in Macbeth (Act 2 Sc. 1) or the rough sea in *Othello* (Act 2 Sc. 1) etc., etc. Such poetic passages were a substitute for the artificial scenery while at the same time they gave a fine opportunity to the actor for elocution. Shakespeare could present to his audience a vast panorama with words only. These highly poetic words appealed to the imagination of the audience instead of limiting their vision like the scenes drawn on a piece of back-cloth which, however cleverly done, will always be unreal. The condition of the Elizabethan theatre made it necessary for Shakespeare to depend on the co-operation of his audience, and his audience gave it. The Elizabethan theatre was a live institution with an astounding vigour and an abounding vitality. This was not simply because the theatre was a new experience. Elizabethan age itself was throbbing and pulsating with a new life and with a popular sovereign on the throne (who in spite of her personal caprices inspired loyalty and maintained peace at home) was expanding in all directions. The defeat of the Spanish Armada had filled the English nation with a new pride and confidence. National glory was at its height and English language was establishing

its right against Latin which was for a long time the language of the scholars and the statesmen, and French which was a favourite of the aristocrats. The absence of scenery gave Shakespeare an opportunity to exploit the possibility of English words which he used to his heart's content and also, much to the delight of his audience who came to the theatre to hear no less than to see. The Elizabethan audience was word-hungry. They felt the thrill of the spoken words—and what golden words has Shakespeare used in his dramas! As Richard Burbage delivered the long Shakespearean passages with his usual verve and gusto, the groundlings went into raptures. And the young Shakespeare sitting in his 'tiring room' felt inspired to better his previous performance. With no artificial stage-effect to help him Shakespeare made direct assault on the emotion of his audience in such passages as "Blow, wind, crack your cheeks, rage! blow!" (*King Lear*) or, on their imagination as in "Now, o'er the one-half world/Nature seems dead" etc. (*Macbeth*). Poetry was the natural medium for such dramatic speeches in exalted moments and a good actor could carry the house with him by the emotional effect of the rhetoric. Shakespeare had already heard 'Marlowe's mighty lines'. *Tamburlaine* was on the stage in 1587-88 when Shakespeare came to London. Marlowe's resounding blank verse had already set the fashion. It was for Shakespeare to take it up and improve upon it, giving to it a variety, a flexibility and an easy grace. Shakespeare always gave his actor his chance.

IMAGINATIVE APPROACH

How Shakespeare as a man of the theatre converted the limitation of the Elizabethan theatre to an advantage will be evident from the way in which he exploited the bare stage to enjoy freedom in imagined time and space and give speed and variety to his action. The innumerable short scenes in Shakespeare's plays make us wonder as to how these were managed in the absence of a revolving stage. These may cause a headache to the modern producer, but a producer of Shakespeare's time had nothing to worry about because the scene had not to change at all! All that was necessary was that somebody on the stage would introduce the place with a few words and at once the audience would take it as such. "What country, friends, is this?", asks Viola in *Twelfth Night*. "This is Illyria", answers the sea-captain. This is enough. (Contrast this with what we read in modern plays where minutest details are given) The same scene would be one part of the battle-field now and another part immediately after. Shakespeare knew the imperfections of his stage. But as a practical playwright he shaped his plays in such a way that to the audience what appealed most was the play itself,—the story, the situation, the dialogue, the action, the characters, and above all, the performance of the actors. In *Henry V*. Shakespeare appealed to his patrons "to eke out our imperfections with your thoughts"; and in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Theseus, speaking about the performance of Bottom's company, pleads for tolerance and imaginative approach to theatrical representations which, however realistic, will always be unreal in reality. "The best in this kind are but shadows; and the worst no worse, if imagination amend them." (Act 5 Sc. 1) It has been rightly remarked that Shakespeare never shifted the burden of the drama from the person to the place and that he could "abstract his characters from their surroundings altogether, to fix our attention better upon their thoughts or feelings."

Shakespeare's stage had no drop-curtain. As a man of the theatre Shakespeare had to take into account this limitation and plan his plays accordingly. A modern playwright will bring down the final curtain at a point where the spectator's interest is still at a high pitch. Shakespeare had to end his plays differently. In them we find a quiet ending. This is true even of his most thrilling tragedies. None of his great tragedies, *Macbeth*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear* end with the death of the hero. The same is true of *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Julius Caesar* and *Romeo and Juliet*. Things are carried a little farther. Other characters speak a few words, either by way of summing up or comment or indication of things to be done hereafter.

SUPERNATURAL AND CLOWN

As a man of the theatre Shakespeare had to keep in mind the taste and demand of his patrons. Here again he achieved a marvel. With the same stuff he satisfied the 'groundlings' of his time and created something unique from the dramatic and artistic point of view. This will be clear if we consider his use of the Supernatural and the Clown.

In the 16th and early 17th century England-belief in the supernatural was common and ghosts were popular on the stage. Shakespeare's predecessors, specially the writers of Revenge Plays like *The Spanish Tragedy* and others, brought the ghost on the stage but never cared to make the supernatural an integral part of the play. Shakespeare did this. He made the supernatural artistic, psychological and dramatically significant, presenting it sometimes as an objective reality and sometimes as purely subjective, according to dramatic necessity. The ghost of the murdered Banquo which occupies the royal seat in the Banquet Scene ousting Macbeth, is dramatically appropriate, being the vision of Macbeth's half-murdered conscience, just as the dagger in the air which Macbeth could see but not touch, is the projection of his murderous intention. The ghost of Caesar seen by Brutus before the battle of Philipi, is the symbol of the vast posthumous power of the dead dictator, the spirit of Caesar that triumphed after his physical annihilation. The ghost of Hamlet's father comes as a revealer of a closely-guarded secret and acts as an *aide memoire* to the vacillating prince's duty of revenge. Shakespeare sounds a deep note when he makes Hamlet say "There are more things in Heaven and earth, Horatio/Than are dreamt of in your philosophy." But we can well imagine the purely theatrical effect of the ghost-scenes on the mind of the average audience—the blood-stained head of Banquo shaking his gory locks and Macbeth shouting "Never shake those gory locks at me...." etc., or "Approach thou like the rugged Russian bear" etc., or, Macbeth following the airy dagger and soliloquising "Is this a dagger I see before me?" or, the ghost of Hamlet's father solemnly asking the son to 'swear' revenge in the midst of solitude and midnight darkness. Again, consider the Witches in *Macbeth*. How cleverly Shakespeare exploits the popular superstition of the age. In Shakespeare's England witchcraft was a living issue and even King James I seriously believed that the storm on the sea that troubled the ship of his wife Anne of Denmark as she was coming to England, was a mischief done by some witch. Old haggard-looking women with blue, sunken eyes, choppy fingers and skinny lips, were supposed to be witches and burnt to death. Shakespeare dramatically exploited this superstition of his time, drawing his

materials from popular beliefs and Reginald Scot's *Discovery*. But he made the Witches an indispensable part of the drama. The Witches influence the character and action of the hero and also create an atmosphere. Simultaneously, the beared women in their 'wild attire' pleased the audience by their songs and dances, their antics and their story of 'the rump-fed ronyon' and the planned revenge etc.

Take again the Clowns—the Fool in *King Lear*, Touchstone in *As You Like* it or Feste in *Twelfth Night*. The Elizabethan Fool was the direct descendant of the *Vice* of the Morality Plays and a favourite character. The average audience heartily enjoyed the antics of the Motley, Shakespeare, as a man of the theatre, determined to give them what they wanted, and something more to boot. Shakespeare's clowns are only outwardly so. They appear in patches and go through the expected horseplay making the audience laugh. But the discerning among them noted that the Fool in Shakespeare "uses his folly like a stalking horse and under the presentation of that he shoots his wit."

BOY HEROINES

Shakespeare's most remarkable triumph as a man of the theatre is his use of 'boy-heroines'. It is well-known that there was no actress on the Shakespearean stage. When under the infatuation of Cleopatra Antony says "Let Rome in Tiber melt.... etc. he had before him "a squeaking Cleopatra"; and when Romeo burst forth in joy seeing Juliet appear in the balcony and wished that he wore a glove in her hand so that he might touch that cheek, he knew that it was only a 'gawky Juliet' that was standing. Orlando had 'a husky Rosalind' to play love with. The wonder is that Shakespeare could create such a fascinating Cleopatra when he knew that Master So and So would do the role somehow concealing his growing moustache. Shakespeare, in fact, did not feel handicapped in any way because he "did not write Cleopatra in terms of spurious glamour." The charms of Cleopatra have been conveyed through the words of Enobarbus, himself a confirmed misogynist. When such a man says—"Age cannot wither her nor custom stale her infinite variety" etc. everything is accepted.

SOLILOQUY

There was another convention of the Elizabethan stage which Shakespeare turned to his advantage, namely the Soliloquy. Accepting it in the first place as a direct means of self-revelation Shakespeare soon extended its scope, making it even serve the purpose of the classical chorus. Hamlet's first soliloquy "O! that this too solid flesh would melt" etc. not only reveals his character, but also acquaints us with what has gone before and gives us a hint of the weakness of his mother's character, the contrast between the late king and the present one, and so on. Macbeth's soliloquies show us his inner conflict, make us hear the voice of his stifled conscience, demonstrate his punishment and tell the story of the tremendous tragic waste. Iago's soliloquies reveal the darkness of his soul as also his dark machinations that help the plot to develop.

As a man of the theatre Shakespeare did not disdain to adopt some of the commonest tricks of the stage to please his patrons. Nothing is more condemned by the high-brow critics than vulgarity and melodrama and yet nothing pleases the average audience more than these. In Shakespeare both abound. The procession of ghosts in *Richard III* or of the apparitions in *Macbeth* is a melodramatic device. The knock and chatter of the drunken Porter in *Macbeth* is essentially melodramatic (and yet highly artistic). Antony's speech in *Julius Caesar* is full of melodrama. In *Hamlet*, the play-scene, Hamlet-Ophelia scene where Hamlet repeats "Get thee to a nunnery," the scene where Hamlet leaps into Ophelia's grave and shouts "Forty thousandd brothers . . . ." etc. have all melodramatic elements. The entrance of Macduff with Macbeth's head in the last scene is almost crudely melodramatic. Again, consider the Mad-scenes. Mad-scenes have always been popular with the audience as well as with the actors who get a chance of showing their histrionic talent in them. And Shakespeare, as a man of the theatre, gave them.

As a child of the green-room Shakespeare found that one thing which immediately appeals to the average theatre-goer is the reference to the theatre in the theatre. This is quite common in his plays. We may leave out "All the world's a stage" as too hackneyed. But think of *Julius Caesar* where immediately after the murder of Caesar we hear Cassius saying "How many ages hence|Shall this our lofty scene be acted over/In states unborn and accents yet unknown!" to which Brutus replies "How many times shall Caesar bleed in sport" etc. And in Hamlet, the play that follows *Julius Caesar*, Polonius says that when he was a student he played the part of Caesar and was murdered in the Capitol. Shakespeare's audience undoubtedly enjoyed this specially because they once actually saw Caesar stabbed. We may even imagine that the actor playing the role of Polonius also did Julius Caesar! And what dramatic roles these are, Polonius and Caesar, for veteran character-actors! Theatrical imagery occurs not only in Macbeth's "Life's . . . . a poor player|That struts and frets his hour upon the stage|And then is heard no more" but also in the description of the fearless death of Cawdor and other passages. In *Julius Caesar* when Casca describes how the "tag-rag people" clapped and hissed Caesar as he pleased and displeased them "as they use to do the players in the theatre," the Elizabethan 'groundlings' would immediately recognise themselves in the speech. *Hamlet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* contain a great deal of theatrical references which pleased Shakespeare's audience. They also give us information about the contemporary stage, drama, players, mode of acting, rehearsal, production etc. and Shakespeare's knowledge of the dramatic art.

Shaw had a characteristic fling at Shakespeare when in his zeal for 'the purification of Shakespeare's reputation from its spurious elements' he regretted that Shakespeare like a true son of the theatre' was only too ready to 'prostitute' his 'feeling for nature and the knack of character-drawing, fun, and heart-wisdom' to 'any subject, any occasion, and any theatrical employment." We however would say with J. C. Squire, 'The art of playwriting is a special art, with canons of its own and achievements, limitations and perils peculiar to itself. To the practice of this art Shakespeare consecrated the whole of his active life. No man was so lavishly endowed with the particular gifts which the dramatic art requires; none has displayed so sure an intellectual grasp for the exigencies of the stage." Unfortunately for us, Shakespeare has been made a class-text and an examination-puzzle; and to that extent we have missed the real Shakespeare who is above all A Man of the Theatre.

Artist

by Rabindranath Tagore

OUR Gobinda came to Calcutta after passing the Matriculation Examination from the Mymensingh school. His widowed mother had a little money, which was his support. But his best support was in his own unshakable resolution. "I *will* make money, dedicating my entire life", this was his determination. In his vocabulary he always spoke of wealth as "Paysa". That is, in his mind, "paysa" was capable of being seen, touched and smelt, so a very solid substance; in it there was no glamour of a big name; that very common "paysa", the copper smelling "paysa", eroded and dulled with circulation from bazar to bazar, hand to hand, that which was the earliest shape of Kuvera, god of wealth; that which leads people's heart on a dance assuming many other forms as silver, gold, paper or documents.

Travelling through narrow winding channels, at times nearly getting sunk in many sorts of quagmires, Govinda had at last reached paved steps on the banks of his wide flowing paysa-river. He was firmly established as head clerk or Bara Babu of the gunny bag merchant MacDougal. People called him MacDulal (Son or pet of Macdougal).

When Gobinda's paternal cousin Mukunda ended his life's role as an advocate, he left behind a widowed wife, a boy of four, a house in Calcutta, some money and went away to the other land. With the property there were some debts as well. So expenses of food and clothing in his family depended on much economising. For this reason, the ingredients with which his son Chunilal was brought up was nothing to speak of, in comparison with other neighbours.

According to the will of Mukundadada, the entire responsibility of this family fell on Gobinda. From childhood Gobinda whispered in his nephew's ears, "Make money".

In the initiation of the boy, the main obstable was his mother Satyabati. She did not say anything outright, the obstacle was in her behaviour. From childhood she was possessed by a love of art. There was no end to her enthusiasm in creating many strange and unutilitarian objects with the use of flowers, fruits and leaves, cut up paper or cloth, clay, or dough, with the juice of Jam fruits, Falsa berries, Hibiscus or stalks of Siuli flowers. For this she had to suffer as well. Because that which is not needed and without cause has in it the force of sudden monsoon floods—an excess of mobile life, yet is of no use in rowing across the ferry boat of utility. At times, it has been such that Satyabati has forgotten all about an invitation to a relation's house. With her bedroom door closed, she has remained absorbed all day in moulding a lump of clay. Relations said that she was very stuck up. It was impossible to give any satisfactory reply. Mukunda Babu knew from book knowledge only, the good and bad points by which this sort of work is to be judged. His whole being shivered with ecstacy at the glamour of the very word art. But he could not even conceive that this magic word had any place in the handiwork of of his own wife. In the nature of this man there were no projecting thorns. His wife unnecessarily wasted time in her useless hobbies. Seeing this he felt amused, that amusement was soaked in the sweetness of affection. If anyone of the household said a barbed word about this, he objected immediately. In Mukunda's character there was a strange contradiction—in legal work he was expert and experienced, but in household affairs he had almost no practical sense. Enough of money flowed through his work, but never got stuck in his mind to become an object of worship. So his mind was free. He could not tyrannise over dependants to enforce his own will on them. He was very simple in the habits of his daily life. He never made unreasoned demands on his family for his own comport or self-interest. When relations spoke ill of Satyabati for being careless in her household work, Mukunda at once put a stop to such talk. Sometimes on his way back from court, he bought from Radha Bazar some colours, gay coloured wool, coloured crayons and left these arranged on top of the wooden chest in Satyabati's bed room, without her knowledge. One day he might lift up a picture painted by Satyabati to say, "Ah good! this is really lovely!" Once he held a man's picture upside down and decided that the pair of feet were a bird's head. He said, "Satu, this one must be framed,—the crane you have drawn is wonderful!" Mukunda Babu enjoyed in his mind childlike flights of fancy when examining his wife's paintings; her happiness too was in this enjoyment of his, when she heard her husband's analysis of her art. Satyabati knew for certain in her mind that in no other home of Bengal could she expect to find so much of patience and lenience. In no home would they step aside to make way with such understanding for her exuberant enthusiasm in art. For this, on the days that her husband made some queer exaggerated remarks about her compositions she found it difficult to hold back tears.

One day Satyabati lost this rare good fortune also. Before death her husband realised one truth clearly, the responsibility of his debt encumbered property should be given to such a sound person as would be able to take even a leaking boat across to

safety, by his skilled handling. Due to this reason Satyabati and her son went entirely under the control of Gobinda. From the very first day Gobinda made it known that before all else and above all else was "Paysa". There was such deep meanness in this advice of Gobinda that Satyabati bent with shame.

Still, in many ways, in checks on food and clothing the cultivation of money went on. Instead of discussing it every now and then, if there was a little veil on this activity, then there would not have been such harm. Satyabati knew in her heart that by this her child's humanity was being stunted—but there was no way out except to bear all in silence; because that sensitive and tender nature which has an exceptional sense of dignity is the most unprotected of all—to hurt it, to mock at it is very easy for an ordinary, harsh, crude man.

For art some ingredients were needed. So long as Satyabati got all without asking, she never had to feel small. Today she felt dead with humiliation to show in the list of accounts all these objects unnecessary for daily living. So she saved on her own food expenses and secretly sent someone to buy her art materials. Whatever she created, that too was in private. Not out of fear of abuse, but because she shrank from a tasteless man's eyes seeing her work. Today Chuni was the only spectator and judge of her art. Gradually his helping hand began to show in this work. He became most fascinated. This offence of the child could not remain concealed. Spilling over the pages of exercise books it was exhibited even on walls. Smudges on face and hands and clothes gave him away. The god Indra did not hesitate to entice the heart of a little child even from the worship of "Paysa". He had to suffer much punishment from his uncle.

On one side disclpline tightened, on the other his mother gave him greater help in his misdeeds. The Head of the office sometimes went out of the city on work, with his Bara Babu. Then mother and son had unfettered joy. They went to the limits of carefree childishness. The figures of animals which they invented had not yet been made by the Creator—a cat's shape blurred into a dog's, sometimes it was hard to find any difference between a bird and a fish. There was no way to preserve these creations—all traces of these had to be removed before the Bara Babu came back. In the art of these two there was only Brahma the Creator and Rudra the Destroyer, Vishnu the Preserver could not come to take his place in between.

In Satyabati's family this mad love of art ran in a concentrated form. As proof of that spirit, a nephew of Satyabati called Rangalal, who was however older than her in age, suddenly became well-known as an artist. That is, the connoisseurs of the country indulged in hoarse laughter over the strangeness of his paintings. They saw that their ideas were not the same as his conceptions, so they felt a great contempt for his talent. It was surprising, that on this soil of contempt, in the atmosphere of contrary criticisms, his fame went on increasing. Those who most immitated his art strove hardest to prove that he was a fake as an artist, that even his technique showed clear mistakes. This greatly maligned artist one day came to visit his aunt, in the absence of Bara Babu. After hammering on the door for some time, when he was allowed into the room he found it defficult to place his feet on the floor. The truth was exposed. Rangalal said, "After so long, it is seen that the form of creation has come new born fresh from the very heart of the gifted one, there is no trace of any conscious effort in the brush strokes. Its age has a similarity with the age of the timeless Creator who gives birth to beauty. Bring out all the pictures and show them to me".

From where would she take them out? Their workmanship had gone in oblivion to the same place where that Artist who draws pictures on the sky with colours, light and shade and clouds, discards without regret his mists and mirages. Rangalal made his aunt swear an oath on his head and promise, "From now on whatever you make I will come and collect and take them away".

The Bara Babu had not yet returned. From morning the sky was in meditation, in the shadow of the wet month of Sravana. It rained; who knew what time of the day it was? Nor did the mind care to find out. Today Chunibabu had begun to paint a picture of a boat floating on water. The waves of the river were a shoal of mythical "Makaras". With wide open mouths they were about to swallow the boat, this was the idea; the clouds in the sky too seemed to encourage them on, waving their chaddars, (piece of cloth draped round the upper body)—but the Makaras were not what people know them to be like and it would be an over statement to describe the clouds in Sanskrit as "Congregation of smoke, glowing radiance, water and wind". This also should be confessed on behalf of truth, that if boats were buillt like this no insurance office would ever agree to take on their responsibility. Composition went on. In the sky outside the Artist drew as he liked, so did the intense large eyed boy within doors.

They were not aware that the door was open. The Bara Babu came in. He thundered, "What are you doing?"

The child's heart trembled, his face turned pale. Mukunda Babu now understood clearly the reason behind Chunilal's mistake in history dates in his exams. In the meantime the sin became even more apparent due to Chunilal's futile attempt to hide the painting in his shirt. When he snatched it away and looked at it Gobinda was even more amazed—what was this? Even to make mistakes in history dates was better than this. He tore the painting into pieces. Chunilal began to shudder with sobs.

Satyabati used to spend the fast day of "Ekadasi", the eleventh day of the moon, in her prayer room. Hearing her son's weeping she came running from there. Torn pieces of painting littered the floor and on the floor rolled Chunilal. Gobinda was then searching for causes behind mistakes in history dates with a view to removing him.

Satyabati had never said one word in protest against any behaviour of Gobinda's. She had tolerated all in silence, recalling that her dead husband had placed his trust on him. Today she said with a tearful voice, trembling with anger, "Why did you tear Chuni's painting?"

Gobinda said, "Will he not do his lessons? What will happen to him in future?"

Satyabati said, "Even if he is a street beggar in future that is better. But let him never become like you. May the fame of the gift which God has given him be greater than your pride of money. This is my blessing to him as his mother".

Gobinda said, "I will not be able to give up my responsibility. This must not be allowed. Tomorrow I will send him to a boarding school else you will ruin him".

The Bara Babu went to office. A heavy downpour came. The roads were flooded.

Satyabati held Chuni's hand and said, "Come son".

Chuni said, "Where will you go Ma?"

"Let us go away from here".

There was knee-deep water before Rangalal's door. Satyabati went into his room with Chunilal and said, "Baba, you take charge of him. Save him from the worship of 'Paysa'."

Translated by Sheila Chatterjee

A MOTHER TO BE

BY

DakshinaRanjan Bose

HERE is a stamp of light yellow on the two white wings. The birds can be known at first sight. They go in flocks. They are water-fowls.

An electric train runs very fast. After the ear-rending sound of the whistle fades out, one hardly gets a chance even to feel the change of the landscapes on either side. They change in the twinkling of an eye.

So Monika was feeling very unwell. They were returning from Tarakeswar, after worshipping Baba Tarakeswar. Along with Monika there were her husband Sudhakar and Monorama, her middle aged mother-in-law.

They were married only the other day.

Monika came over to her father-in-law's house at Rishra, just two weeks ago. It is her second visit to her own house since marriage. Ever since the marriage Monorama, had strong desire to go to Tarakeswar with her son and daughter-in-law, for the purpose of worship. That had not been possible so long. Now Monorama is perfectly all right for performing that holy work safely today. Even in the midst of the great rush of passengers in the train she went on invoking, for her son and daughter-in-law, the blessings of Baba-Taraknath with an undivided mind. Such is the way with the mother of a child.

But all these acts of her mother-in-law appeared to be a great fuss to Monika. In the midst of such a big crowd Monorama went on muttering all sorts of things, striking her hand against the forehead again and again in the name of Taraknath. Monika was feeling much ashamed to hear all those things. So she was looking out almost all the time.

Monika could secure a seat by the side of the window in the corner of the third class compartment. Sitting close to her somehow, Monorama also went on muttering within herself. Sudhakar took his seat somewhere else. Another station passed off. Monorama did not notice the name of the Station. The touch and go of an electric train made it impossible. But, for sometime, Monika's attention was diverted to other direction of the road that fringed the station, and led to the new colony. Probably, the people of the colony constructed this road by their own efforts. For want of earth work, year after year this road also has met with the same fate as all other kutcha roads. The road to the colony of Monika and others also is almost the same. Now there are various party feelings in Motilal colony. Today nobody pays any more attention to the repairing of the road and to the improvement of the colony. For the same reason, the conditions of all colonies are deplorable. Monika went on seeing and thinking.

Just beyond the colony, there are vast marshy lands and paddy fields. Monika very much liked to keep looking in that direction. Her eyes feasted on it. Suddenly a flock of water fowls came flying and sat down just by the side of the railway track. The thought that it would have been better to have a station here pleased Monika, for, in that case, she would get a chance to see the water fowls a little better.

Just while she was thinking in this way, the train approached another station. And, just at that time, a lady sitting in front of Monika suddenly asked her, "Probably you are newly married! Had you been to Tarakeswar to worship Baba Tarakeswar?

"Yes" Monika was a newly married girl. The shortest reply was only natural from her side. But, when the darkness of unfamiliarity dispels by way of conversation and when there is a happy extension of intimacy the veil of hesitation is removed, strength increases. Monika too, before her mother-in-law began talking with that lady in a very simple way.

"Had you been to Tarakeswar for worship? Hadn't you been there with your husband.

"Yes".

"Where is your husband?"

"There he sits, on that side." Turning her face, Monika pointed to him with her finger in the opposite direction. It was not difficult to understand, for his dress and manners showed the newly married.

"That tiny little boy? What does he do?" Seeing the young husband, the lady asked Monika, being extremely surprised.

"Do you ask what he is? A goldsmith."

A goldsmith! The lady was startled, as it were, to hear this. The goldsmiths have fallen upon evil times; does any sensible man give his daughter in marriage to a goldsmith at this time! It seemed that the mind of the lady was suddenly shocked for the sake of Monika. The desire that the vermilion mark on her hair-parting and the symbolic iron wristlet in her hand may last for ever struck up a note in the mind of the lady.

The news of the suicide of some fine boys seemed to flash upon the eyes of the lady one after another. For about two minutes, no word came up to her lips. Suddenly the lady heaved a deep sigh. Then she said, "what will common men like us understand the useful purpose served by the Government by throwing thousands of goldsmiths out of employment in this way? But the responsibility of making some provision for these men lies with the Government, for it is the Government that has created this situation."

These words of the lady were not, at all, pleasing to Monorama. They seemed to be rather ominous. So she turned back her face. Why Sudhakar has not learnt to read and write, has he not passed the school final examination? Then, what's the worry about bad times? Being angry with the lady, Monorama was thinking in this way within herself.

"Where is your shop? In Calcutta

"No, our old shop is in the market-place of

Rishra and the new shop is at Serampur." Monika gave a reply in a few words and hearing that reply the lady was startled.

"It is difficult to run one shop in the present market, but you have two shops, I see! Are they running? Or, are they closed?"

"You may say closed."

"Thinking that his two sons would run two shops in two places, my father-in-law set up the new shop at Serampur some years ago. It is understood that good business was being done there. My husband's elder brother was looking after that shop along with his father. I hear that he will set up some other shop there."

"And, what will your husband do?"

Monorama could bear no longer. Hearing this question of the lady, she thundered, "What do you think of my son? He is not, at all a fool. Sudhakar has passed one Examination. And, why will he not be able to secure a job like others? Then he has his father, what's the anxiety about?" Simple-minded Monorama began to tremble violently, as she went on saying. Such was her anger. Even though Monorama stopped, on understanding that all the eyes in the compartment fell upon her simultaneously, the lady was quite dumbfounded getting her snubbing.

Monika was very much ashamed. Really, the lady did not tell her anything so objectionable and she was speaking to her. She did not even know that Monorama was her mother-in-law. Would it not do to avoid insulting the lady for nothing and unasked-for? So thinking Monika was ashamed. Still, she tried to get over the whole thing. She said very sweetly.

"Aunt, you please don't mind what my mother-in-law says. Truly, my father-in-law said two days ago, that business in gold would no longer continue. At least with the help of some one of the masters Sudhakar would have to be employed."

"Oh, is that it, that's good." Saying this, quite calmly, the lady kept silent.

"The whole district knows the gold shop of Prankrishna Roy Judges, Magistrates and the Zamindars of the neighbouring villages — all are the customers of my father-in-law, so it will not be difficult for him to get a job for his son. That was what my mother-in-law wanted to tell you." Her own hopes too were echoed in these words of Monika.

"I understand that," the lady said. Though Monika did her best to heal up her wounded feeling, she was unwilling to get into fresh troubles. It is only an acquaintance of some seconds, what is all this trouble for!

No, there is no more trouble. This is the end of the journey. There is sufficient joy in the receipt, but only the journey is troublesome. Now ends that trouble.

There was a great rush as soon as the train stopped at Rishra Monorama got up startled at the call of Sudhakar. Here, the call to the mother also means the call to Monika, that need not be explained clearly. So, Monika too got up at the same time and, catching hold of her mother-in-law with a strong hand, pushed ahead through the crowd.

But Monika made no mistake in taking leave of the lady with a smiling face. What was the gain in wounding the sentiments of others for nothing? So just on getting down at the platform with her mother-in-law, and at the time of the departure of the train, she saluted the lady again with folded hands. Monorama then turned her face to the other side. How will she look at her who has taught of her son ominously and who has expressed it in so many words and how will Monika understand it? Monika was not yet a mother.

After putting them down, the electric train seemed to fly away with an air of haughty neglect.

What happened after some days — Prankrishna returned from the market with a newspaper in his hand. From that time on till noon, he was turning over that paper and thinking of an unknown thing. His whole face seemed to be enveloped in sadness in a dark dream.

"Well it seems that you will have no bath or meal to-day. There is the new daughter-in-law at home, even that will have to be thought of a little. We cannot take our meals without feeding the master of the house." At the call of Monorama, and her loud voice the whole house seemed to receive a rocking.

It was much like the experience of an earthquake. As soon as the master heard the call of the mistress, he put down the newspaper in his hand and stood up straight and saying, "I am going." Taking the napkin on his shoulder and the pot of oil in hand he went straight towards the pond.

At the shrill notes of Monorama, even the daughters and daughters-in-law too got out of the house. Seeing the master going towards the pond straightaway and taking it for granted that there will be no more storms, they became calm and composed.

During that time, Monika picked up the paper left by her father-in-law. O my God! What news is this! Her heart burst out. It was the news of suicide of a Goldsmith of twentysix who took Nitric Acid. Gazing at the picture of the deceased Monika's eyes were blurred with tears.

Wiping out her tears with the border of her "Sari" and going through the news over again, Monika was startled to see the picture of the unfortunate wife of the Goldsmith, with a child of one year on her lap.

On her lap also will come a darling before the world goes out. But, before it will know its father this baby too like that one.....Monika's head reeled as soon as she thought of it. Her heart began to throb. It was dark all about. In that darkness, she made her way to her room somehow and lay down on her bed.

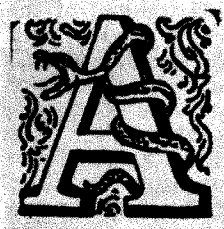
Now Monika can understand why anything evil about the child cannot be thought of or imagined.

Only a day before, Monika's sister-in-law whispered to her! "Then you too are going to be a mother!" From then on, that one word has been ringing in her ears all the time.

"well it seems that . . . . bath or meal today"

INVOCATION IN AUTUMN

By SWAMI RAMANANDA GIRI



UTUMN the "Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness", is come flooding hill and dale. It would take a poet describe the beauty of the deep blue cloud sometimes assailed by shaggy white cloud. Nature is decked in a mantle of deep green. And the mind of Bengalees is so attuned to the season that they sing with the poet:

"Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find
Thee sitting careless on a granary floor."

There is a good deal of truth in what a great poet says. He catches a snapshot of the passing reality and expresses it in choice words. In the exuberance of joy Bengalees put a halo round the head of Autumn, and Keats's words:

"Where are the songs of Spring?
Aye, where are they?
Think not of them,—thou hast thy music too,"
find an answering echo in their hearts.

The Bodhan heralds the advent of the Divine Mother, the Goddess Durga. The joy of expectancy inundates their soul. The beast in them is killed and they turn their backs on the sorrows of this work-a-day world. They think and act as though they are on the lap of the Divine Mother. India, Queen Eternal, has been worshipping Her. It is towards the Eternal that our journey tends.

Now, what does the word "Akal" mean? It means where there is no question of time, something endless, something that stands the wear and tear of time and something that cannot be cut to pieces and something that is ageless. The word "Mahalaya" has a touch of eternity about it. "Alay" means abode. The person whose soul is as wide as the blue sky and as white as a lily mirrors the love of the Goddess Durga for Her children and also Her infinite strength. Misery shows a clean pair of heels. To him the earth seems to be "Apparell'd in celestial light." "In such a mood as this he sees the truth of what Wordsworth has said:

"But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home:"

Many are the ways through which great joy born of the realisation of the profound truth is expressed. And as it has its roots in the knowledge that the Gooddess Durga is the source of all strength and whose love is our sole sustenance, so the worship of the Divine Mother begins from Amabashya. Great though the power of Evil is yet the utterance of the name of the Goddess Durga makes it take to its heels.

Ramlila, Nabaratri and Bhawanipuja are synonymous with Durga Puja. During the Puja one fraternises with another and the rich rub shoulders with the poor. Their joy knows no bound. The cardinal principle on which they take their stand is "No more shall grief of mine season wrong:"

The Tantras would have it that so far as creation and the "Siva-sakti", are concerned there is no difference between man and man and between the children of the soil and the foreigners. "Siva-sakti" or some other Power is the Fountain of all joy, and that Power which pervades the universe is Real. Those who worship in the shrine of 'Siva-Sakti' would have no truck with those who would have us believe that the universe is an illusion and that there is no intelligence behind creation. Life is real and the universe full of diversity owes its origin to "Siva-sakti" and "Siva-sakti" alone. Siva and Durga are the manifestation of "Siva-sakti." And the Goddess Durga Who is the source of joy is the only reality.

On the one hand the Divine Mother is smaller than a split atom, on the other She is taller than the tallest mountain, bigger than the stars and the suns put together. She pervades the universe and She Herself is Heaven. The only avenue close to her is devotion.

Those who are wedded to the cult of the Tantras have got to perform some rituals in order to come near to the Divine Mother. And a Tantric must be pure in mind, thought and in deed. He must turn his back on the things of the world. When he is in such a state he is immersed in the Divine Mother, the Goddess Durga. She is his sheet anchor.

The sob and the cry of a helpless child for his Mother melts Her heart. So if we cease to think of any prop and let our body be saturated with the thought of the Divine Mother and do not let the beast in us to get the better of us then we would come in for a fair share of our Mother's love.

FRASERGUNJ ON THE BAY

By DEBABRATA DHAR

ABOUT seventy miles of shining black-top road amidst a mild mid-June pre-monsoon shower took us to Namkhana in Diamond Harbour Sub-Division. The woolly clouds wafted inland by the southern winds soon melted and down came the long awaited relief for the parched millions. If variety lends spice to life, a drive to Namkhana and beyond to Frasergunj is indeed full of hot spices. A shimmering slate upto Diamond Harbour the road acquires interesting contours between Diamond Harbour and Kakdwip and beyond.

At Namkhana we had our Jeep ferried across and drove on to Frasergunj through seventeen miles of real excitement. Except three or four miles of unravished earth the entire road had been recently done up and so driving in a Jeep was real fun. The new road from Namkhana to Frasergunj is likely to be completed in a few months' time. Driving to Frasergunj we passed through ten hamlets of luscious vegetation lanky coconut trees and prolific paddy-fields spreading out liberally into the distant horizon. Groups of village belles pink with chewing Pan and sturdy villagefolks sweating away in the fields indeed made our drive gorgeously exciting.

However incredible it might seem, it is a fact that the initial reclamation of the beautiful sea-resort of Frasergunj was in a way the outcome of some sort of intransigence on the part of Mr. Sunder, the Settlement Officer in the Sunderbans in 1904-1905. The Govt. of Bengal had decided in 1904 that the first centre of raiyatwari colonisation in the 24 Parganas Sunderbans should be at Frasergunj situated on the seaface of the Bay of Bengal. Mr. Sunder was placed in charge of the reclamation work and it was decided by the Govt. that this work should commence from the north of the Island. Mr. Sunder, however, decided to flout the decision of the Govt. and on his own authority commenced work from the south. Although fear of Cholera amongst the Coolies was cited as the cause for this deviation from the Govt. policy, the real cause which led him to commence colonisation from the south was to develop the southern area with a view to converting it into a seaside resort. But the work of reclamation of Frasergunj had gradually become a very expensive adventure and the Government did not fail to notice that for the enormous outlay there was no adequate return. The nature of the Island was such that it was necessary to reclaim the whole area at a time and it was estimated that the capital of about 3.5 lacs of rupees would have to be sunk before any return could be expected. It certainly speaks for the sound historical perspective of Mr. Sunder that he was so serious about his scheme for converting Frasergunj into a sea-side health resort for the people of Calcutta nearly sixty years ago. This led him to implement his scheme on rather extravagant lines but he soon ran into rather rough weather with his Government. Asked by the Government the then Commissioner of the Presidency Division inspected the work of colonisation of Frasergunj and submitted a report to the Government which was far from hopeful. Sir Charles Stevenson-Moore described Mr. Sunder's

scheme as "a wild-cat-scheme for converting Frasergunj into a sea-side resort for Calcutta business people and this no doubt contributed in a measure to the extravagant lines on which the experiment was run ....." It would thus be seen against what stiff opposition and caustic criticism Mr. Sunder had to carry on with his scheme of colonising Frasergunj.

It would be interesting to mention here that the local name of Frasergunj was Narayantola and the Admiralty charts referred to this Island as Mecklenberg Island. With the Bay of Bengal washing its southern shore this extensive Island in the Diamond Harbour Subdivision in the district of 24 Parganas in West Bengal has Edwards Creek on the west and the gorgeous Saptamukhi river on the east. The Island's northern frontiers are fringed by the mighty Ganges. It covers an area of approximately 15 square miles. It got the name of Frasergunj after Sir Andrew Fraser, the then Lientenant-Governor of Bengal. A few old brick kilns discovered in 1904-1905 in the southern part of the Island and a number of house sites with large tamarind and *monsa* trees near about bore unmistakable testimony to the fact that the Island had been previously inhabited. It is interesting to note that a survey of this Island had been undertaken in the year 1903-1904 before the colonisation scheme was finally accepted by the Government. This points to the suspicion that the original intention of the then Government of Bengal was more the foundation of a sea-side resort for the Calcuttans rather than implementation of their colonisation scheme. This is confirmed by the fact that by the year 1906-1907 approximately four miles of circuit embankment, two miles of cross embankment and twelve miles of embankment and roads had been repaired. By then most of the jungles in the southern area had been cleared and a golf course was also under preparation for the sea-side resort.

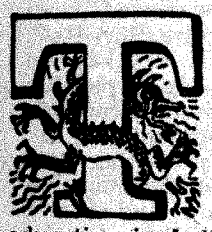
There is evidence to show that a week-end Steamer named the "Khatri" used to run to Frasergunj and back thus adding to the attractions of Frasergunj as a holiday resort for the business community of Calcutta of those days. An ambitious programme was undertaken clearly to attract people to Frasergunj. This programme envisaged damming of 58 *khals* and construction of 15 miles of outer embankment. By the end of 1907 Frasergunj had a dak bungalow, a golf course and a landing stage. Besides these an amount of Rs. 1,19,163/- was expended during 1906-1907 for the improvement of Frasergunj. It is clear that Mr. Sunder selected this Island as a sea-side resort and spent so much money on it mainly because the Island possessed high lands which would be easier to protect from the high tide of the Bay of Bengal. Another reason which might have prompted him to take a fancy on Frasergunj was the situation of the Island on the route of the Assam Steamers. The availability of good drinking water in the southern portion of the Island must have also been an ally to him in his determination to reclaim Frasergunj. It will thus be seen that even the official frown of the Divisional Commissioner and the righteous indignation of the Provincial Government failed to deter Mr. Sunder from his determination to make Frasergunj into a lovely sea-side resort for posterity.

It is, however, a pity that after the initial work of reclamation had been done nothing worth mentioning was done for the improvement of Frasergunj by the then Government of Bengal. It was allowed to become a neglected Island and it gradually fell into decay during the subsequent decades. Till the Independence practically nothing was done to improve the economic and other conditions of Frasergunj and its people and the original plan to convert it into a sea-side resort was apparently put into the cold-storage during a period of about forty years. After Independence Frasergunj with its extensive sandy beach running into a series of sand dunes and nearby lagoon did not fail to capture the imagination of the Government of West Bengal. Fully aware of the pitifully small number of holiday resorts for the people of Calcutta at a reasonable distance from the city, the Government decided some time back to open up Frasergunj overland for the holiday-makers of Calcutta. It constituted a high-powered body called the Sunderban Development Board with a view to bringing about the long-felt improvement of the entire Sunderbans. This Board has formulated lots of plans and accordingly a new 17-mile-long road from Namkhana to Frasergunj is nearing completion and Frasergunj is going to be soon "resurrected" from its state of oblivion into a Tourist centre. Shri P. C. Sen, Chief Minister of West Bengal is very keen to open up Frasergunj overland as quickly as possible not only for the Tourists but also for the economic uplift of the local people of Frasergunj and its surrounding area. For this reason the existing Rest House belonging to the State Government would be suitably expanded in the near future and several cafeterias are also likely to be set up there for the tourists. The beach would be renovated so as to make sea-bathing for the holiday-makers safe and enjoyable. The casual tourists should also find in the incredible varieties of sea-fish available there a source of fascinating excitement. Another great attraction of Frasergunj is its proximity to the famous Sagar Island considered as a holy place by the Hindus all over India. Several lakhs of pilgrims from all parts of India visit that Island every year in the month of January for a holy dip in the confluence of the Ganges and the Indian Ocean. From Frasergunj to Sagar Island it takes one by launch only about an hour. Apart from its religious importance Sagar Island deserves a visit from any foreign tourist because of its fascinating natural scenery. The Island commands the full view of the Indian Ocean with both the mighty Ganges and the Bay of Bengal constantly washing its shores.

It would be possible for the Calcuttans in the near future to spend a delightful week-end at Frasergunj at very little expense and with less difficulty. From Calcutta a black-top road would take them to Namkhana in about two and half hours; and after ferrying across their automobiles another stretch of tarmac road would take them to Frasergunj in half an hour. The close proximity of Frasergunj to Calcutta coupled with the bewitching panoroma of its sandy beaches with its tall coconut and palm trees standing like sentinels right against the heaving Bay of Bengal would undoubtedly make this Island an alluring holiday resort right in the lap of the sea not only for the residents of Calcutta but also for those foreign tourists who can normally spare only about a couple of days for Calcutta. Even without the hard and expansive beach of Digha, the hill-high breakers of Puri and the lovely shanties of Juhu, Frasergunj can still boast of a natural scenery unrivalled by any of the other sea-side resorts of India. The azure Bay constantly paying its homage to the long line of coconuts and palms with the southern winds getting them often in an adorable confusion and the westering sun flooding with streams of gold the Bay of Bengal freckled with countless fishing canoes indeed combine to make Frasergunj a thing of beauty and a joy for ever. The day is not far off when Frasergunj would be a "must" in every tourist's itenerary.

WHAT VALUES SHALL WE INCULCATE IN OUR CHILDREN

By Dr. SUKUMAR BOSE



HE educational philosophy of modern India was developed in harmony with the latest social philosophy of the country. Recent educational plans have been designed to prepare learners for adjustment to a swiftly changing democratic society. As such the modern progressive concept of education in India is more than a departure from outmoded practices of the traditional education system. Post-independence thinking on education is marked by an emphasis on the relationships between the activities—intellectual and practical—of the individual and the community. It points out that the main purpose of school education should not be limited to the three R's. The more important thing is to provide training in character formation so that young people may grow up with a full realisation of their duties and responsibilities as worthy citizens of the State.

Today it is a recognised fact that secondary education the most important stage in the educational career of an individual plays a very important role in the development of democratic personality. It is at this stage that children are trained to value the rights of citizenship and to realise its duties and obligations.

Values as educational outcome: Values, as educational outcome are to be identified in the perspective of our national ideal. Here the word 'value' implies the worth of an individual for living in a democracy with maximum efficiency. In a democracy we are members of a society which advocates equal opportunity, freedom of thought, and encouragement for the development of the individual. One of our national objectives is to create citizens endowed with health, happiness, joys of creation, and sensitivity to the cause of unity and peace. The spirit behind is human welfare.

Another important thing is the sense of belonging. This sense generates the spirit of cooperation and sharing, sharing as a right and sharing as a responsibility. Thus the individual and society are gradually inseparably interwoven. The more citizens will be thus involved the more will the country step towards achieving national unity in spite of diversity.

Education in the secondary phase, must contribute to the development of habits, attitudes, qualities and character. Secondary education as the end of all formal education to the majority of citizens, must make them fit to maintain the progress so far made towards a national ideal, and to take the next steps. Values, though subjective become objectively evident through expression of behaviour. These expressions are generalisations based on experiences and constitute highly significant educational outcome. These may be considered as conditioned reaction-tendencies either towards or away from some experience, for or against some person, situation, ideas, conditions, and so forth.

THE IDEAL PROGRAMME

It is needless to mention that without the help of an ideal programme in secondary schools, it would not be possible to inculcate those values in children. The programme of the secondary school must be directed towards securing effectively dynamic and functionally integrated learnings to inculcate the desired values in our children. The programme must be helpful to develop the potent effects of social facilitation, utilising the dynamics of an effectively coaching group. The children are to be made to participate in the form of a purposive group in terms of common problems in ways permitting profitable individualisation, socialisation of learning, enabling them to be competent for effective participation and cooperation in life situations. The programme should be highly effective to provide a consistent 'two-way-integration' so that a learner may acquire, through learnings, relationships representing both 'belongingness' and 'becoming'! Educative experiences are something more than 'doing'. The 'doing' must be genuinely purposive and tuned to the principles of inter-integration and connection. Each successive 'doing' must bear a change with each reaction to qualify 'doing' as a dynamic process of purposing-doing-evaluating. The programme is to be made useful to develop self discipline and consequent self-directive skills, persistently. So the programme is to be planned and administered to provide sufficient practice in self-discipline with intelligent understanding. With the perfection of judgment and understanding, in children, the imposed discipline is to be gradually minimised till they become fully self-directive.

The whole programme must be planned in such a way as to help the children to gain something worthwhile to express and step towards gaining mastery over self-expression. The children must be processed to form a co-active group with efficiency in identifying, defining, and solving individual and group problems through utilising their all required higher mental faculties. The programme must be enriched with activities to develop their power of adaptations not merely to survive in a given environment but also to utilise this power to

create a better environment for happy and healthy living.

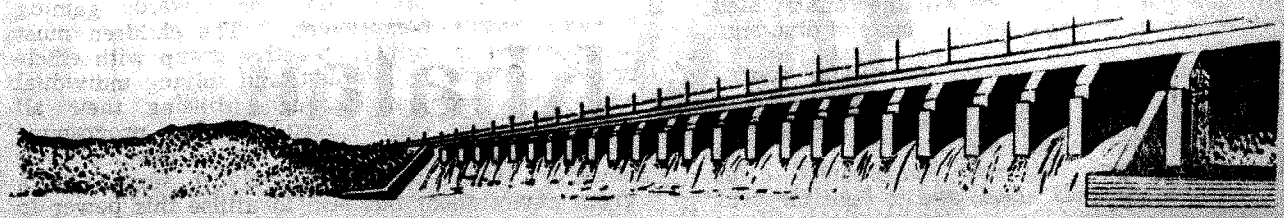
The practice of social cooperation must be given a priority in the programme of secondary education, within limit, displacing competiton. The programme should involve all children in such a manner that children must get a regular opportunity to learn to apply cooperative efforts to keep pace with the day-to-day school activity and progress, with efficiency. Another important fact is to be borne in mind, during designing the programme, that the programme should be such as to be considered as a helpful medium to develop all intellectual and socialised skills to reach group solutions, effective group participation and cooperative effort along other consequent skills to establish new standards related to individual and group conduct. All these are the prevalent requirements for democratic living. Field workers, in their respective positions, should be conscious about the degree of practice a programme offers to develop these skills, with progression, i.e. with steps with increasing difficulty and complexity.

Simple to gradually socialised recitation should be a regular feature of the programme to prepare our children for successful democratic interaction. They must participate regularly in activities like group discussion (teacher-led), group conferences (under the guidance of resourceful persons), and before-an-audience group discussion (under indirect control), et cetera. All care should be taken, while designing and administering the programme, to make our children conscious about the purpose of the phase of life to be spent as student of secondary schools and to help them to realise the utility value of school life in, community, society and in their greater sphere of life. To improve the relation between school and community, rather to make school-community relations inseparably interwoven, the children should be encouraged to render their best services to build-up new facilities and to improve the existing facilities in their own schools and in the vicinity, for a more integrated community life. To create, utilise, and improve the facilities should be an all level joint enterprise—involving both legal authorities and participants of the programme. 'Facilities are not available', should not be a cry but instead by a joint enterprise we must be determined to create all facilities, according to our means and limited resources, to satisfy our needs and interest. We should consider everything to enrich the secondary education programme to yield a clarity of thought and intellectual understanding, about own self and the relation of self with society in the perspective of immediate reality, and about what he should be to qualify him as competent in the perspective of a changing reality—a life situation in a dynamic and progressive democratic society.

While designing the programme for our secondary school children, one of our essential duties would be to consider the physical basis of education. It is now a university recognised fact that certain types of 'big-muscle-activities' are highly potent with educational values. If we fail to include those as a regular feature of programme the programme would never be a scientifically sound and wholesome, in the truest sense. Moreover, there are some values which can never be inculcated as educational outcomes if there lies no provision for a regular participation in the 'big-muscle-activities'. The standardised methods and activities prescribed for physical education, health education, school recreation and outdoor education should be considered as a 'must' and an essential complement to a wholesome programme of secondary education to develop democratic personality and with all relevant values or qualities for democratic competency. Nobody can deny the significant bearing of the educational leadership in the successful operation of the programme-mechanics. It may be easily recognised that in some prominent levels of administration and teaching the inertia of the past orthodox and static type of mentality is still present. All efforts should be made to eradicate that influence. Educational leadership of old and semi-old type must be removed to prevent the radiation of their obsolete thought incompatible to the needs of a highly technological age. We feel the importance of seminars, conferences and in-service training programme to enrich our knowledge and to acquaint us with latest developments of education, a highly specialised branch of science. The whole system of secondary education would be adversely affected if we fail to provide foreceful educational leadership with highly progressive outlook. Educational leaders of modern days would be the key-personnel for all future progress of Indian democracy.

THE UTILITY ASPECTS

We have identified sets of values to be inculcated in our children; we have discussed the programme-mechanics quite compatible to inculcate those values. The said values in children will never be present in isolated forms, rather those cannot be kept apart, in practice. Every action of our children thus valued, will reflect a sum total of these values. The whole life of the children in school, in community, and in wider areas will be transformed. "Discipline will be increasing self- discipline; the curriculum-experience will replace much class teaching, extra-curricular activities will be developed on a self-governing basis. It will help us too if we can keep clear the vision of the ends to which the democratic ideal beckons us: "Joy in the creation of personality, friendships, community, truth, beauty and goodness. The next step is a realisation of imperfection in oneself and of superiorty in others, followed by conscious and repeated efforts to make the better way one's own". They will be disciplined to achieve success in every realm of their life. They will be characterised by all character of discipline, independence, fearlessness self-confidence, self-reliance, a readiness to tackle problems, a readiness to render best service to the needs of the community as a freely cooperating member, a high degree of endurance and tolerance and a good order, would be expressed in their behaviours of their daily life. Values, as educational outcomes, thus give them a preparation of life in the widest sense, including a keenness and ability to use their leisure constructively. They will thus become competent to represent India with all glories and India will be able to represent them in the greater spheres of International Democracy.



"LOOK FOR KHATAU MILLS' SELVEDGE MARKS ON EACH METRE"

shopping with KHATAU voiles

Shopping is so enjoyable when you shop for KHATAU voiles. There's such a fabulous array of colours, prints and styles. Only KHATAU bring you such a heavenly selection at such down-to-earth prices.

A really striking voile in a glamourous modern print. "Tobacco" shades are top fashion favourites this year and KHATAU have used them to full advantage in this elegant voile.

THE KHATAU MAKANJI SPG. & WVG. CO. LTD.

Head Office:
Laxmi Building,
Ballard Estate, Bombay 1.

Mill: Haines Road,
Byculla, Bombay 27.

Whole Sale Clothshop:
Govind Chowk,
Mulji Jetha Market,
Bombay 2.

Retail Show Rooms:

18L, Park Street,
Entrance Middleton
Row, Calcutta-18.
149, Mahatma
Gandhi Road,
Calcutta-7.

any time...any place...any occasion...you look your best in

Khatau
VOILES

SISTAS KMS 335

THE SHOW-BUSINESS

How to keep our audience to ourselves

By N. K .G.

THE strain of concern and sorrow uttered by writers over the difficulties faced by the Bengali film industry is too real to be missed or ignored. Almost everyday the woes of the producers are mounting mainly owing to the spiralling cost of making picture and visibly diminishing returns for their products. The jumble of inhibitory laws and regulations coupled with shrinkage of the market of Bengali language films near and inside home are things which cannot be skipped over with the remark that things are going to improve in the near future and all that is required of producers is only good cheer and patience.

Yet when the difficulties of the producers are accepted as real, one should not forget to note that sincere attempts are being made by some people of worth in the line and the Central Government not only to improve the quality of films produced here and in the rest of India but to widen the market as much as possible in the prevailing circumstances. These efforts may not yet be considerable but counterbalancing the disheartening aspects of today for producers, they are important because they may induce thinking and planning in other quarters which are likely to put things in a better shape in the days to come. The need of the hour is planned thinking and not groping in the dark aimlessly.

And what are these efforts ? It is difficult to put them in a cut and dried form. Producers are thinking variously with mainly three aims : (1) How to better the quality of Bengali films so that their revenue will go up by sheer quality; (2) how to widen the area of exhibition of Bengali language films and (3) how to combine a bit of Hindi films in Bengali ones to attract non-Bengali patrons. These are certainly practical thinking on their part and one cannot speak for certain whether that will or will not succeed. One cannot effect wonders overnight when a whole industry is so palpably endangered. So credit must be given to such thinkers for some amount of original ideas to counteract the present difficulties.

Let us examine the three broad lines of thinking for what they are worth. To try to improve the quality of films and thereby increase their earnings is all right on paper. The difficulty lies in the meaning of the word 'better'. It is a very common term but very elusive at the same time. The question may arise in this context whether many of our films are not already sufficiently good or fair to be patronized in a more liberal manner. Adolescents, specially those without educational background, are seen to be enamoured of Hindi films. That is not bad in itself. But their fondness is largely exclusive. Many of them are averse to Bengali language films because, according to them, the latter are not sufficiently exciting or jolly—a charge to which most of our films will proudly plead guilty. But the fact remains that everyday we are losing a section of our youthful factory workers, day labourers and gad-abouts to Hindi films. The fault does not lie with Hindi films. It is traceable, if at all, to the over-serious and over-artistic tone of our own products or to the latent hunger for cheap entertainment in our adolescents and many grown-ups. Therefore the problem is how to keep our limited audience to ourselves. Herein comes the question of the need for making our films a little less serious and a little more easy-going. Needless to point out, a programme of improvement of the general quality of Bengal films militates against the need for relaxing the serious tone to make them easier stuff for the man in the street. It is for the film trade and producers in particular to see that a balance of the two needs can be, if ever, effected. The seeming contradiction is there but the problem must be resolved too. For Bengali films must earn more, at least 25 p.c. more; otherwise there is little chance of its survival against the onslaught of economics.

STIFF QUESTION

The problem of widening the market of Bengali language films involves a good many aspects. This is indeed a stiff question because we have not only to halt progressive tightening of our existing market but substitute it by a state of expansion. Expansion at whose cost ? And expansion where ? As things stand, one can hardly prevail upon stations, which do not show Bengali films being sparsely populated by Bengalees, to introduce Bengali language films in their theatres. Eyes may be cast across the borders of this State where there are concentrations of substantial Bengali populations. Such Centres in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh are not closed to our films but the screening is on a very restricted scale. A city where at least 25,000 Bengalees live can afford to have a week-long run of two shows a day of a Bengali language film. But that would not be. I am in the know of a proposal mooted some time ago that the Eastern India Motion Picture Association should take State Government help in the construction of modest-sized cinema houses for Bengali films in cities like Delhi, Kanpur, Lucknow, Banares, Allahabad, Patna etc., Shri Ashit Choudhuri, a prop of the industry, also thoughtfully proposed that selected Bengali films may be shown in London and elsewhere profitably. The pity is that with their preoccupation with day-to-day film business big producers and distributors have hardly any time to devote themselves to this kind of expansion of their market. Compulsory showing of Bengali language films for a scheduled number of weeks by every cinema house of the State was one of the proposals said to have been seriously considered by the State

Suchitra Sen's latest is in "Sandhya Deeper Sikha."

Film Enquiry Committee presided over by Mr. Justice K. C. Sen. But as things stand, there is little likelihood of the implementation of this proposal in the foreseeable future.

I do not believe in a system of enforced exhibition of products of any class or variety. Things ought to be done on a voluntary basis. Sometimes forced showing becomes inevitable as it happened in Britain to keep the British industry out of water against American competition. But a better way would be to make our pictures in a manner as would ensure their patronage by all sections of our people as well as by cultured non-Bengali residents of West Bengal. Widening the market in the existing circumstances is therefore going to be an arduous process but it is worth trying whatever the current obstacles.

It will again be prejudging things if one blessed the current vogue of combining a Bengali star with a Bombay one in a Bengali language picture and thereby try to build up stellar strength in an indirect way. Two considerations may be presumed to be behind the thinking. The first is a combination of two glamours likely to win back faltering patronage at home and also to economise because the Bombay star, willing to make a Bengali picture, is reported to charge less than a reigning star, male or female, here. Whatever it is, the novelty of the combination sometimes pays rich dividends and is therefore worth a trial. In that path deferred prosperity may come to our production industry. But whether this is going to be a profitable proposition lies in the womb of future.

Among other efforts to make the industry look up must be mentioned export promotion. Promotion of export is an all-India effort and Bengali films are not unlikely to be benefited by its success. The limitations of the market for Bengali films have already been referred to. Yet there can be no doubt that with our increasing ability to reach the international standards, we can send some films abroad as valuable foreign exchange earner. Therefore much would depend on the quality of the Bengali language film of tomorrow for its ultimate wellbeing in the scheme of the Indian motion picture industry.

The impending Film Festival sponsored by the Central Government is another very important step towards bettering the quality of our films when an opportunity will be offered to compare our products with overseas ones. Nothing helps self-improvement more than an opportunity to assess oneself in the light of manifold ideas contained in other examples. Therefore, in a larger sense the coming Festival should go a long way to evolve a programme of betterment of our films through exchange of ideas and personal contacts.

Thus no pessimism should be allowed to cloud our thinking on films. The times are hard for an entertainment industry with serious limitations all around. But planned and optimistic thinking is bound to pay good dividends. The movie industry may draw consolation from the fact that the bulk of our people consider Bengali films with an attitude of affection. There is no denying that decisive fact. The need of the hour is a total attack on the ills of the industry by the corporate body of film people without departmental consciousness. The portents for tomorrow are not entirely gloomy though there are solid reasons for anxiety. Let us take courage in both hands for the fight—the battle against inflation and its attendant weaknesses.

Film-making— an enjoyable profession

THE film director's part is always most important in the making of a picture. Ever since the deep-seated crisis has come to lay its grip on the motion picture industry in Bengal this importance has increased a good deal. Today not only the tradesmen in films but the people who go to see films have learned to lay, most of the credit for a good film or blame for the failure of a picture at the director's door. In that sense the director of today may feel satisfaction over the recognition he is getting as the most important functionary of a film production.

The director has joined the profession consciously and with some amount of pardonable self-valuation. It cannot be argued that man becomes a film director generally by accident though there may be instances of accidental gravitation to the film world. The general experience about the whole thing is that a man becomes a film director in either of two ways: he starts at the lower rung by becoming assistant to a director and some day is promoted to independent direction without any previous floor experience. Sometimes a technician like a cameraman or a sound recordist or an editor chooses to become a director. Speaking personally,

I was first in the sound department of movie production. My heart was in my job but I ached for more active participation in film-making. That ambition goaded me in my years of beginning and I am in it these days full steam.

DIRECTOR'S LOT

As I hinted earlier, the film director's responsibility is nowadays very pronounced. People have come to believe that it is the director who makes or mars a film. The other agencies of production are quickly ignored and the overall blame falls on the shoulder of the director. I shall not suggest that this is an unjust thing. In many cases the director is one who has to carry out the dictates of the producer like a human robot. He would not dare offend his producer by putting forth his points of view often divergent to the producer's. He is content to carry out and have his money. It has been seen from experience that even when he had no hand in the selection of story or its cast or its musicians, he is given a bad name by all and sundry people. Similarly, there are directors who choose their own film stories, the artistes, technical hands and musicians without interference from producers. So when their pictures click at the box-office most, if not all, of the credit goes to them. Inversely, in case of failure hundred per cent of the bad name becomes his sad monopoly.

The conscious and conscientious director can hardly be dictated to at every step. In this respect the producer's position vis-a-vis the director has also to be considered. It is his money that is being invested and the profit or loss will touch him first and the most. In that cases he cannot afford to remain a mere spectator in a scheme of expenditure of his own money On the other hand, the director's assignment is such an all-pervasive responsibility that he can hardly shape his picture after his heart without a free hand in selection of staff for his picture. Thus the problem is how to strike a balance between the producer's right and anxiety and the director's freedom to choose story, artistes and technicians. I do not think that either neutralises the other. There should be a balancing of the two positions and all things being favourable, a film can be happily produced and put before the public for their judgment. I have worked in the above manner and have nearly always found my producer's interests and mine own running parallel to each other.

JOY OF CREATION

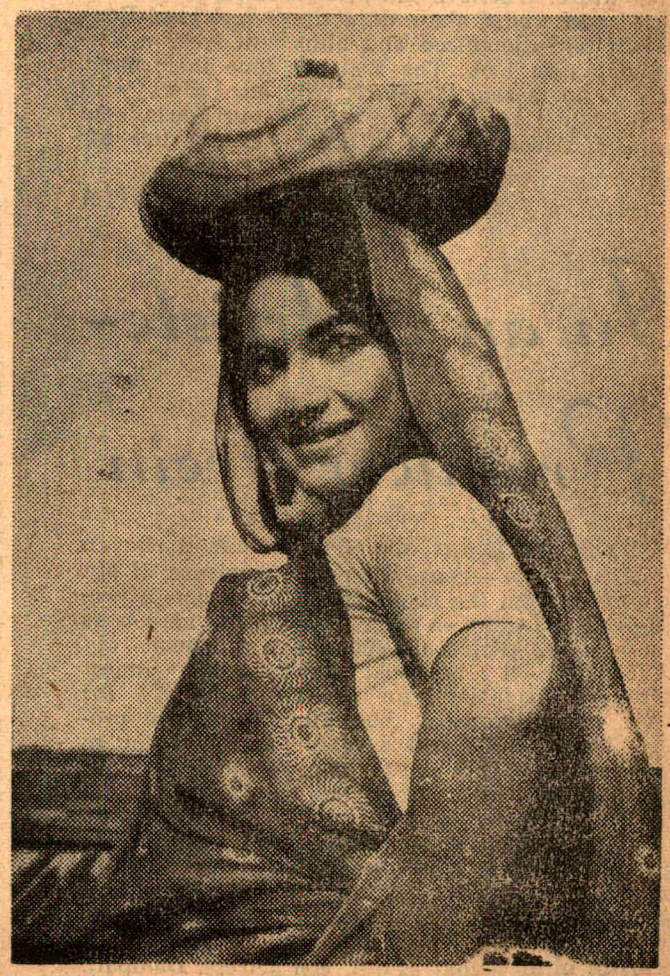
I find film-making an enjoyable profession, though nerve-racking and full of responsibilities of so many kinds. The joy I have been fortunate enough to derive from my work has come from public recognition, sometimes middling, sometimes high, of my pictures. This has been entirely a joy of creation. I shall never claim, where success has blessed my efforts, that this success has been my monopoly. My artiste friends, technical co-workers, studio owners and producers have all a rightful share in my successes. I claim only that which is my due and no more and that in all humility.

As a film director I have filmed varied kinds of stories. There is a world of difference among the outer contents of the films directed by me But I have discovered a sort of spiritual unity among them all. I do not know how best to explain myself when I say that. This is entirely a personal experience—an experience of common satisfaction from self-application to a task whose contours may be different but which is always a challenge to the maker. Thus from "Ankush" to "Arohi" my heart has sung the same song like a singer who feels all occasions suited to his song. The joy in work and in its recognition has been my greatest incentive.

What about the future of film-making in Bengal from the director's point of view? That is a natural question and most difficult to answer in a tone of generalisation. Everything concerning the future is difficult to foretell. One can only state his conclusions in a vein of hope. It would be audacious to claim absolute correctness.

IFS AND BUTS

I have no hesitation to say that the future of Bengali films is girdled with many ifs and buts. For an industry which is practically confined to a sliced-off territory compared to its area seventeen years back it is hard indeed to make the two ends meet. I have been told there are not more than 200 cinemas, big, medium and small, in which Bengali films are shown in West Bengal. And this total is available only to a film which has done very well in Calcutta. Otherwise a quarter of the number falls off. At the same time the cost of production has been rising steadily during the last ten years. Today the average cost of a Bengali picture is twice that of a pre-partition day film. Naturally, the struggle the producer and his distributor have to make is enormous and often frustrating. Considered against this deplorable background, the task of the producer to induce capital is becoming increasingly hard. And the director as the engine of his expense-train has also to get involved in this compulsion of economics. He is today a much involved



Kumari Naaz in R. D. Bansal's "Morey Man Mitwa".

man in a production. His old permitted aloofness from the economics of production seems to be gone for ever.

The great problem at this moment is how to cut down production cost without lowering the norms of current film-making. Other things being equal, the only chance is in discovering new talents and putting them over. But such suggestions for the employment of "new talent" are often glibly made without a realistic approach. Talents are not born by the score. In films so many things are considered essential to a new film hero or heroine that most of those who try to come in are found lacking in essential qualifications. The eyes and the ears of the cinema-going public are so wide open that a director must be absolutely certain that the new young hero or heroine he is putting over must appear pleasant and dramatically capable from the audience point of view. It would not be doing justice to the director to say that he is averse to taking chances with new faces.

As I look at it from the personal angle, he is and should be ready to infuse new blood in the body of the movies to the extent it would not be risky to do so. Mere new face is not enough. He or she must have the modicum of acting in him or her which will show impressively under the guidance of the director. Thus new talents must be introduced to ensure continuous flow of our productions in the days to come.

Whatever the complexion of the present crisis of the industry in West Bengal I am an optimist as to its future. I believe the present hurdles will be crossed and one of these days the industry of Bengal will be rationalized and films will wear a distinctively new look. The Bengalis love their films. There is no reason, therefore, why our films will not look up if of course we can put our house, now chaotic and looking low, in order. Let us live for the day.

— TAPAN SINHA

In an Artiste-Producer's vein

FOR one who joined the film profession as an actress it is certainly a new experience, if not a departure from the chosen path, to become a producer. I do not think an actress is worse as an actress because of her choice of becoming a producer. My idea about it is that she gets almost unfettered facilities for better work for herself and others by becoming her own producer. There are, of course, points which might go against my statement just made. I shall try to judge both sides in course of this article.

To press home my point that it is the consideration of trying to make a good film according to one's own light, it is necessary to go into a brief personal history. My first film was Kashinath, that fine Sarat Chandra film directed by Nitin Bose for New Theatres. I was very lucky to be pronounced successful in my debut as a screen actress. Dampati, directed by Niren Lahiri, was my next film. A number of other films succeeded the first two mentioned. But I did not take long to discover that things could be done more satisfactorily (once again I hastened to add as I considered it) if I had a say in those productions. But that could not be. So my husband and I were encouraged by some friends to produce our own pictures.

Needless to say we were thrilled by the new prospect. In those days to be a producer was hardly that easy as it is now. A producer in the forties, almost as much as in the thirties, had of necessity to be equipped with almost the whole amount needed for a production. Naturally it was a risky proposition from any point of view. But our enthusiasm for producing for ourselves soon got the better of our economic considerations and we steered ahead regardless of consequences.

Under the banner of S. B. Productions we have produced quite a number of films. As the public knows some of these films were attended with financial success and productional prestige. Others, unfortunately, were not, although we always tried to make sure that they did not suffer in prestige. But financial failure is oftener than not the sad lot of a movie producer in our country. He or she cannot absolutely have it his or her own way. A picture either hits or flops or turns out mediocre. Even most careful calculations, oftener than sometimes, are belied by results.

For my part I have always tried to make my pictures around subjects that, at least on paper, should have popular appeal and be so paying. With regard to casting I have seldom consciously taken much liberty. Even the technical staff including the director were chosen after due assessment. Yet I would be very wrong to claim that my efforts at production have been always successful.

After all these years of toil and anxiety I have learnt one lesson. A film producer must not take things for granted. Films are, and will always be, economically uncertain commodities in spite of all our planning and calculation. So film production cannot be a fool-proof profession. The great uncertainties that constitute another name for film production will always be there and a film-maker has got to take it in his or her stride.

Having fashioned one's mind in the above way it is easier to keep to the profession. In that way you may be said to have developed that amount of balance which is so essential to a film producer's mind. I would never suggest that the producer must be more a stoic than a business man. The commercial mind with its capacity for assessment of the pros and cons must be more pronounced than the stoical. What I mean to say is that the producer must be constantly prepared to face the prospects of a loss, sometimes a catastrophic loss.

But I shall do every body, specially my fellow producers, a disservice if I continue to sound pessimistic With all its inevitable uncertainties film production is an exhilarating profession. You feel the joy of creating something for the appreciation of thousands of men, women and children. This joy, when success attends your efforts, is very definite and downright. For your picture not only reflects its quality on the box-office but much of it is audibly praised by the onlookers. To one who has tasted success it is most difficult to cut oneself away from film-making. He or she irresistibly remains a film producer.

For years I have not produced films. There is such an atmosphere of confusion, competition and inflation about film-making today that I am not yet free from trepidation with regard to my next venture. Being convinced that things are not likely to

improve in the near future and that one cannot wait for years at a stretch, I have decided to go into production once again.

My next film is going to be made around the early British days and is entitled "Anthony Feringhee". This would be a biographical film showing the famous "Kabiyal" in all the manifestation of his bardic talent and his domestic life which was full of many dramatic incidents. A good amount of study of the period, mainly of its historical and cultural details, will be inevitable and my screenplay is going to take serious account of them. It is perhaps not known widely that there is a street in Calcutta named after this romantic figure of the bygone days. I am fully aware of the big responsibilities we have undertaken and I hope the picture will be able to portray the man and the period adequately and to public satisfaction.

BENGAL'S PAST

In choosing "Anthony Feringhee" as my next production I was guided by the thought that the past life of Bengal has an intrinsic appeal to the onlookers. The period with its specific style of living contains a physical and emotional atmosphere that must kindle interest in what our dear land once was. The pivotal character of Anthony Kabiyal is also to my thinking a focal point on which eyes and ears are likely to be concentrated. His was a colourful life—that of a foreigner who completely identified himself with Bengal.

It would be silly to pose as wise and prescribe an infallible code of film production for my brothers and sisters after the emphasis I have so strongly laid on the uncertainty of film-making today. What I do not believe myself as a panacea for all ills and uncertainties I should never advance for others' consumption. Yet I would seriously request my colleagues in film production business to read the portents of the moment and cease making experiments. Let us not forget that experimental and off-the-beaten-track pictures are more likely to flop than homely themes. Among the latter class I include stories based on our soil. When witnessing a picture with an of-the-soil theme large sections of our showgoers are prepared from the very beginning to mentally walk on familiar grounds on which an attractive pattern is going to be enacted. That is why producers were so keen some years ago to make films of Sarat Chandra stories. Sarat Chandra stories are so ideally suited to rousing homely emotions which are always so strong and so universally evoked. The successful films in this State are generally those which call up simple sentiments like paternal affection, filial duty or sacrifice, conjugal fidelity etc. I am of the opinion that we should produce films at least for some time which eschew difficult and doubtful paths and concentrate on films which are easy to make and easy to understand for both educated, partly educated and uneducated people. Therein lies a common ground among all sections of the people. In spite of the new predilection among certain people to rave over daring themes emanating from Hollywood and other Western areas, there is reason to hope our films will, and should, remain basically Indian.

— *SUNANDA BANERJEE*

Indian children in Netherlands

WHEN we landed at the beautiful Schipol air terminal in Netherlands, there were many friendly faces to receive us. Amongst them were Dr. Bokma and Madame Hans Snoeke, my collaborators in the International Children's Theatre Conference in London. It was 6.25 P.M. and the children were in high spirits. They had to divide into two parties — one under the care of Sm. Nihar Chatterjee left at once for Amsterdam while the other with five children under Mrs. Sengupta had to proceed to Hilversham 25 miles away for a Television appearance. I was indeed in a panic—how could you face the TV cameras within two hours complete with costume and Make Up! But then we reckoned without our Host's capacity for organisation!

Within a matter of minutes the children and the stage properties passed through the Customs and the two station wagons roared through the crowded roads at 140 Km per hour. Before this, I never knew what land speed could be. In 25 minutes we were at Hilversham—stopping before what appeared to be a small church. It was indeed a church now converted into a Tiny T. V. Studio. Unlike the BBC TV studio in Hammersmith, it was a small but compact unit. The Studio Manager explained that the different sections of the T.V. organisation were scattered all over. We apologised for the delay due to late arrival of the plane but hastened to assure him that the children were quite familiar with T.V. takes and that they would need no rehearsals! So up they went to the Dressing Room to change over to costume; but there was more trouble. The speed of our Recorded music was 7.5 which would have to be changed to 15. The Recording Studio was closed: Out went Radio calls requesting the Recording Engineer to hasten to the Recording Unit for changing over the speed of our music.

We were impatiently waiting in another small building about a quarter mile away when a two-seater car came into view and two lanky youths in Beat attire entered the building. These were our Engineers. Madame Snoeke got busy and in about 20 minutes our Job was over and the two Engineers went back to their Cinema show. At 8.50 P.M. we entered the studio where there were three different programmes in queue. The Director was surprised when he was told that rehearsal would not be necessary. The children waited patiently in their costume and right on time they jumped on their right feet in step with lilting music. We saw them in the studio T.V. set where almost the whole staff converged to see the group dancing in gay abandon. This was indeed a good introduction of the Indian children throughout Holland.

We motored back to Amsterdam and to Hotel Adolesce just by the side of a canal. It was a tiny Youth Hostel and the children from SCHIPOL had the advantage of settling down to a noisy view of their friends at Hilversham on the Hotel TV set. The Hostel was run by a young lady and the children had for their fellow boarders a large group of school children from Canada.

Dr. Bokma, our host, had placed at our disposal, the Assistant Director of the Scapino Ballet group to act as our friendly interpreter—a tall

young man whom the children christened 'Chorda' and were soon in the best of terms. The children were berthed in two rooms each having 18 seats of double decker beds. There were only two toilets and one shower. This however is the pattern in almost all Youth Hostels in the Continent and the C.L.T. children were already familiar with this set up. The bed linen and the blankets were clean and warm.

Next morning was our big day at the Amsterdam Municipal Theatre. We had early breakfast in the dining room where we found young children were helping the landlady to lay the table. "What a lot of children our Landlady has—"remarked one of our children. "No"—said our interpreter. "These are all Canadian children just helping the Land-Lady."

There were hurried whispers amongst our children and they trouped into the kitchen to bring their own tray and finished up by washing their own dishes. None briefed them or advised them. The Landlady was pleasantly surprised! "How fast they adapt themselves!" she remarked.

And then we marched to the serene streets of Amsterdam. On the brink of the canal, there were rows and rows of cars. We slowly made our way to the area through the surprise gaze of Dutch families. We felt that they knew us well enough; had not they seen some of our children in last night's TV?

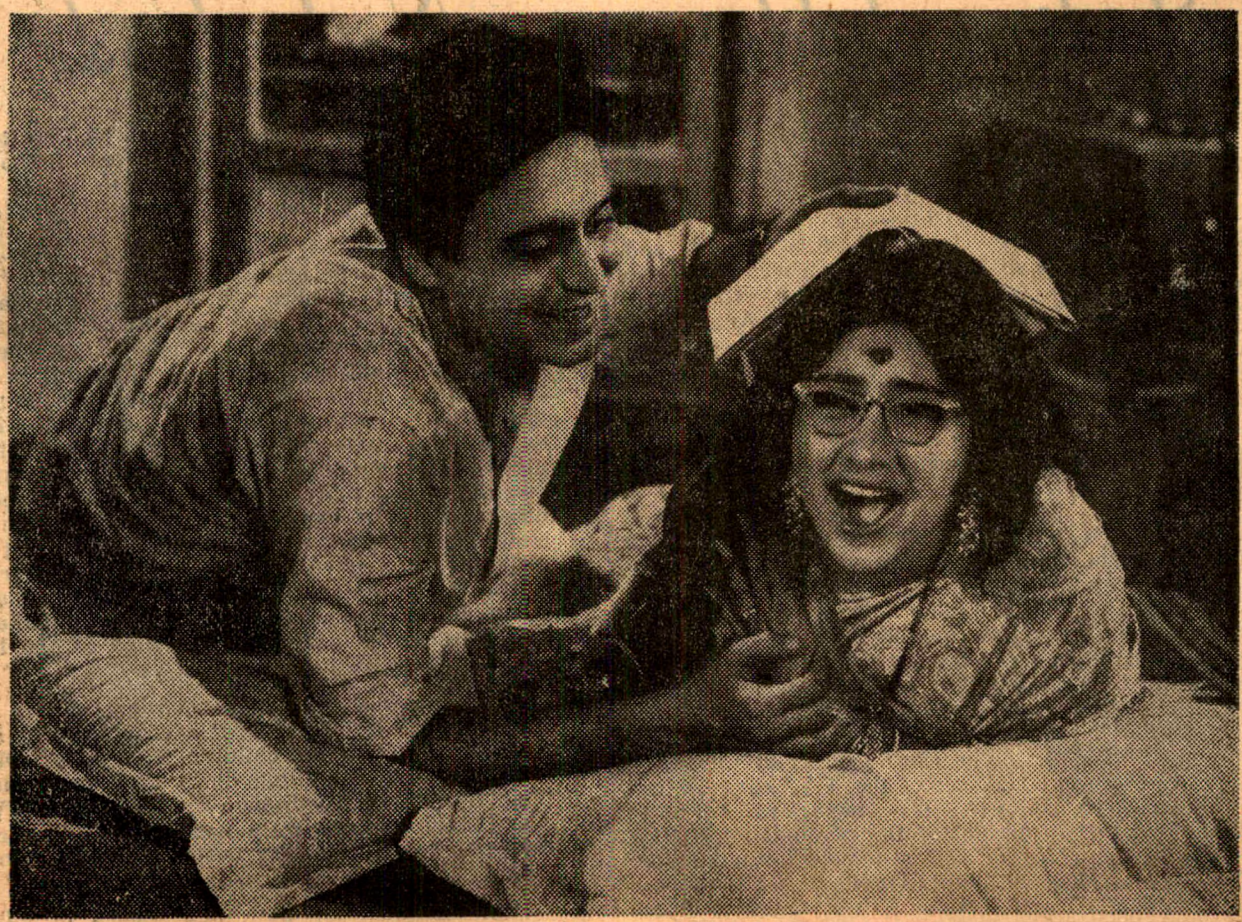
The Municipal Theatre front had Posters heralding CLT shows with paper cuttings from Copenhagen's newspapers. The mammoth stage took our breath away. While our Technicians grappled with stage fixtures with the help of friendly stage hands, our children flocked to the Rehearsal Rooms where the famous Scapino Ballet group were rehearsing Pinocchio with Tom Graaf in the title role. Madame Snoeke had a novel lunch plan. Each of the Boys and Girls of the Scapino took one of our children as personal guest and after a good look at the Ballet rehearsal they went to the lunch canteen in the basement.

Back in the dressing room the children set about making each other up. There were dozens of cameramen taking scores of colour transparencies. The Chief of the News Reel and TV requested a few rehearsals pieces of SONG OF INDIA in costume for world coverage and our children complied gracefully although they needed no rehearsals.

The reaction of the audience and the people of Netherlands was one of spontaneous applause after each piece of SONG OF INDIA. The Dutch commentator INDRA KAMADJOJO had to request the audience to limit the applause so that the non-stop recorded programme was not interrupted! The show ended in a dream and little did we foresee the re-action of the Dutch Press closed on Sunday—till these came up with big headlines on Monday.

Sunday morning was also a refreshingly lovely day—a fact which our hosts Scapino mourned. "You see we need a properly soaked city to bring in people at the Theatre. Sun means ruin to us Theatre people!" Hans Snoeke sighed. After breakfast, we sped in a sleek coach towards Rotterdam—50 Kms. away. Scapino followed in another one. There were green pasteurs and miles and miles of tulip fields. The small villages and provincial towns were picturusque. This Sunday morning was

(Continued on page 250)



Soumitra Chatterji plays opposite Sandhya Roy in "Ek-tuku Basa" based on a story by Monoj Basu.

"RHYTHM AND TUNE"

By SADHONA BOSE

THE number of musical instruments in use in India excel those of Europe. Of these, the Vina is probably the most outstanding. Legend has it that the Goddess Saraswati is eternally playing upon her Vina to amuse her lord and herself. There are two varieties of this instrument in popular use today, one in the North and the other in the South. It consists of a fret-board mounted on two large gourds and seven strings. Four of them actually pass over the frets and the other three serve as a drone to provide a pedal-point background. The instrument is played by strings plucked by the right hand and the notes made with the left. It is said to be capable of an infinite number of microtonal grace.

The Sitar is a popular stringed instrument in North India and so is Sur-bahar. The invention is credited to a Persian poet at the Court of Alauddin Khilje in the fourteenth century. It has seven strings and is played by a metal nail-shaped plectrum fixed to the finger.

The Sarode is in common use in Northern India, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Bengal. It has a deep seated tone and is played with a plectrum too but of a flat form, which is held by the fingers.

The Mridangam perhaps is the most developed and the most ancient of all instruments in the country. It served as a drum for chamber music in old times. It is now used as an accompaniment for both vocal and instrumental music. The Mridangam of the South and the Pakhawaj of the North are designed on the same principles and differ only in minor details. Among the lighter drums, Khol, Tablas, Dhol, Madal, are in frequent use to-day.

Time and Rhythm: Timing and rhythm play an important part in every sphere of natural and artificial activities. We have mornings and evenings, the seasons, births and deaths, maturity and such other phenomena in a regular and specified time. Even in our daily life if we do anything against the prescribed time, it brings in disorder. In every work, whether it be physical or mechanical, time automatically comes in.

Timing and time beatings in music and dance are somewhat akin to those of metre. Versification is an art of making up words placed together to produce a metrical effect. A verse is a series of rhythmic syllables, divided by pauses. It also denotes a series of sounds ordered and measured in a particular way. That is why a Poet or Lyrist is also a scientist at heart knowingly or unknowingly.

Rhythm and time sprang up from Siva's *Damaru* (Drum), the time-giving instrument. Damaru gave the first sound "Nada" and gave birth to the rhythm of the creation of the universe.

The rhythm of verse stimulates the attention and gives to speech a musical and hightened quality, which makes the language so ordered and appropriate, spiritual, emotional, and imaginative.

It may be said that the dance rhythm in its origin included verse or song rhythm. The evidence of collected national songs shows that rhythmical effects have been allied or subordinated to expression in warlike or other emotional dance and songs.

What is this rhythm? It is the movement generated and regulated by harmonious restriction. This is the creative force in the hands of the artist. So long as words remain in an uncadenced prose form, they do not give us any lasting feeling of reality. The moment they are taken and put into rhythm they vibrate into radiance. It produces a music in our consciousness by giving it a swing of motion synchronous with its own, i.e., in perfect rhythm the art form becomes like the stars which in their seeming stillness are never still, they twinkle at you in rhythm too.

It can be said that there is movement not in perception or an actual materialistic movement but there is an artistic movement in imagination and aesthetic observance.

All dancing is ultimately derived from expressive gestures which have become rhythmic through the balanced arrangement of the human body which makes it difficult for similar actions to be frequently repeated irregularly.

A few thinkers are of opinion that rhythm arises out of sound. If there is no sound there is no rhythm. But that conception too is absolutely wrong. Photography, painting and sculpture have rhythm, though there is no sound.

As the rhythm of verse can be well distinguished from its metre, so rhythm or "Laya" of Indian music can be distinguished from timing or "Tal" and also rhythm of dancing from time beatings. "Tal" and "Laya", though they go side by side, the idea of time should not be confused with that of tempo which is a term related to the pace and not to time in the technical sense.

The broad and wide beatings are divided and sub-divided even into the farthest possible factions and they constitute together a particular "Tal". These "Tals" are various in number and even when their beatings seem to be the same, in the long run they differ from each other. Every "Tal" bears its own particular name.

In order to bring out a marked distinction among the various Tals, the "Chhandas" or compositions are to be noted. Chhandas are metres which are the guiding principles of Tal and an Indian musician is deemed to be perfect only when he, without asking the Tal or Chhandas begins to give beatings to the compositions.

An Indian time-giver or keeper sits with his drums and is so well versed, and his ear so sharp, that as soon as he hears the composition or tune he comes to know of the particular Chhanda and Tal, and automatically begins to beat in time.

These time measurements and beatings are done on many instruments, a particular instrument for a particular theme of dance and the kind of tune produced by the musicians. These instruments are, "Tabla", "Mridanga" or "Pakhawaj" "Khol", "Dhol", "Nakkara" etc. Everyone of them has its niceties and fineries.

Talas for Indian songs, music and dances, have various types of rhythms, tunes, and beats. These vary from three beats to eighty-four beats. Some are reserved for classical demonstration and the other group for folk-songs and folk-dances.

MACHINES THAT HAVE MADE THEIR MARK

- VERTICAL COTTON & PAPER COVERING
- VERTICAL BRAIDER
- HORIZONTAL COTTON & PAPER COVERING
- TAKE-UP & PAY OFF STANDS
- WASTE PAPER & WIRE BAILER
- JACK SCREWS FOR LIFTING DRUMS STEEL REELS, SPOOLS ETC.

Manufactured by :

M/S. BALILIAS ENGINEERING CO.,

137, CANNING STREET, CALCUTTA-1.

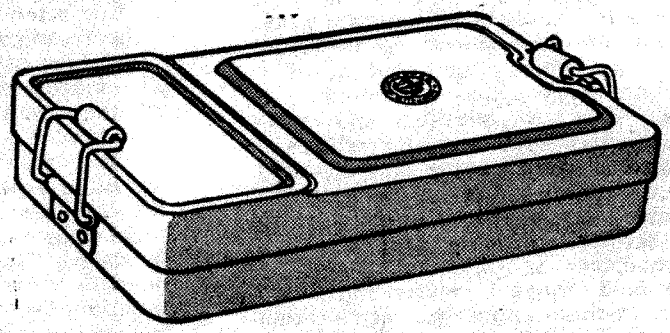
Phone : OFFICE : 22-6667

WORKS : 66-4285

Gram : BALLANGKO

CONVENIENT LUNCH BOX

THE JEEWANLAL'S LATEST



IS ANODISED ELEGANT DURABLE AND HANDY

You will simply love it. Available in beautiful soft colours and designed to prevent your food from spilling. It has enough room in it and a separate container for semi-liquid food. The Convenient Lunch Box is made from thick gauge aluminium sheets and bears the I. S. I. mark.

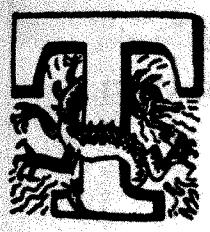
PURE ALUMINIUM THE CROWN
IS:21
ISI
SIC
ANODISED

Jeewanlal (1929) Ltd.

CROWN ALUMINIUM HOUSE
23, Brabourne Road, Calcutta - 1.
Phone : 22-7659.

SPIRITUALISM: ITS EFFECT ON LIFE

By K. C. CHATTERJEE



HE body perishes as soon as the soul leaves it; but the soul is indestructible. In our scriptures we find that the soul again and again takes life-form. Death intervenes two living forms and as such the poet Tagore sings :-

"Birth and death are twins in our
progress wide,
Like raising and felling of steps
in strides".

(via death each time) Man is an eternal wayfarer —and journeys till he reaches the goal. Generally speaking the gap between life and death is narrow indeed. But those who do not know the mistery of life and death are frightened at the thought of death—they consider it as a leap in the dark. For he who knows what death is, has nothing to be afraid of: it is a natural and normal progress. Sri Aurobindo in his Life Divine has said that religion, religious practices, spiritualism and soul force are the four methods of awakening one's inner being. It seems that for a beginner "spiritualism" is a convenient method—provided he can practise it properly.

Indians have been practising spiritualism since the dawn of history and we find examples of it in the Mahabharata. Many religious stalwarts were spiritualists. To cure incurable diseases, and to rectify the maimed are no strange things. Unfortunately in West, they derided even a scientist who had faith in spiritualism. In West spiritual practices started in 1848 (when Fox sisters heard rappings). In the "Science of Life" H. G. Wells. Julian Huxley and G. P. Wells, do not deny spiritual phenomena. The plea is that they are not done under sufficient scientific rigidity for a scientific acceptance. In a scientific experiment, the scientist is the controlling authority. But here the spirit is the controlling authority and a spirit, in general, resents if there be not mutual goodwill or if there be mockery. It is however accepted now a days that a patient makes better progress if his mind be cheerful. Because the material body is useless without the soul or spirit. Anyone who has seen fire-walking (which is done as a part of religious undertaking) would say that fire-walkers do so while in trance and that if the trance goes away he would be burnt. Yogies work wonders because they completely subordinate their physical body under soul force.

SRI AUROBINDO AND SPIRITUALISM

As matters stand, spiritualism is practised. As indicated by Sri Aurobindo, it is a way to awaken our inner being. When a near and dear one is dead, are we not comforted if we get in touch with his soul? It opens the door of mercy. I know of a barrister who records a sublime poetry at the dictation of a spirit. It is said that some well-known books of a famous English author were dictated by a spirit. Once the great bard JOYDEB of Bengal was unable to put his sublime thought in a suitable verse and he went to take his bath in the adjoining river. On his return he found the required verse written on his manuscript. I know of a spirit—the soul of a great Yogi—who gets departed souls to communicate with their friends and relations. In some of those communications, the writings were similar to those of the dead. The communication of the living and the so-called dead, the description of the invisible region and the mode as to how the departed spend their time there reveal the real meaning of death. It strengthens our faith in our scriptures—as they agree absolutely. It all depends on the inner virtue and vitality of a person to communicate with the soul of a great departed Yogi communicates to us about the other world and just to know what happens after death. The spirit of Sir Aurther Conan Doyle communicated through Mr. Kazi (vide Mr. Kazi's book "The Great Mistery-as dictated by a spirit)".

EFFICACY OF SPIRITUALISM

Through sympathy and goodwill we can be benefited by the spirit. As an example, it is probably be not out of place to say that I got a medicine for my obstinate *asthma* which eminent medical men could not cure, and with it I was cured in fifteen days. I also got many sound advice as how to live in this world. We used to meet in a family circle in which one of the members used to fall into trance to take the place of the departed and in that family circle the meeting was perfect, only the departed member used to write with the hand of the member in trance while we used to speak. It thus took away the sting of death of that dear departed. One day when his mother asked the soul as to how he was getting on in the other world he wrote :-

"When I was alive upon the world,
On me many desires had their hold,
Leaving everything I had to come;
Anxious was I for what to become,
Coming here found nothing to worry,
For everything is nice and glory".

and then he added "Mother, I wanted to put it nicely but could not do so as I never practiced poetry".

Spiritual practices vary very widely—from table rapping to wildest orgy, from light mood to concentration and communion. In most cases of modern spiritual practice, there is one who is called

"medium" (or go-between) and whose business it is to go into trance—the departed soul acts through him. In Western countries they prefer special cabinet behind which the medium goes into trance and some kind of misty substance comes out of him and takes shape. Often they show wonders: but it should be remembered what is magic for the finite is logic for the Infinite.

There is also a code of conduct for the spirits. For example, they are forbidden to disclose anything in this world which would create a flutter here. Great souls also work for the good of the world—they do not remain idle in the other world. It is not unusual to find a patron-spirit to guide one. To reach an ailing relation, I was once directed to travel immediately in cyclonic weather with the assurance that when I would reach the river bank I would encounter fair weather to cross 12 miles of water in a country boat and it did happen.

There is however a warning. Communication must not be made with base or mischievous spirits who are described as "Essentials" in Kazi's book. Such a communication is called "spiritism" and *not* "Spiritualism". To confabulate with a base spirit is injurious and is dangerous. Further the method of communication must be such that one can avoid any possibility of false personification and one should avoid base spirit or ghostly orgy. Further there should always be a limit to practising spirit communication. When the inner being is awakened, Sri Aurobindo advises us not to rely on spiritualism, religious or religious practices but to depend solely on one's soul-force. God is the SUPREME SPIRIT and spiritualism has no meaning unless the ultimate object be to have a communion with GOD.

At the outset I mentioned that in our wider journey we are to pass through life to life via death (each time). The evolution theory is that at the beginning there was life of lower order in water and then in animals living in water. Then living animals appeared on land—from baser animal to man. Our scriptures say that we are gradually to improve from life to life. Even there are many lives to live as human being before one becomes ultimately fit to reach God. Spiritualism helps us to look at death as nothing alarming—it is a natural process which everyone must go through. In general, the next life is higher or better than the previous one. It is by death alone that we go to the next higher or better stage. Sri Aurobindo even speaks of Life Divine. As one rises higher and higher over a staircase, so we rise higher and higher by death. Through death alone we can pass to the next higher stage. Death is a necessary way to go higher up. Hence really speaking DEATH should be looked upon as sweet. It is through spiritualism that we know what is there after death and it is through spiritualism that we can communicate with the dead and as such spiritual practices embolden us to feel that death is really sweet—and is a way to have a rise in the wider scope of life.

INDIAN CHILDREN IN NETHERLANDS

(Continued from page 246)

not for indoors. Thousands of motorists on the autobahns and motorboatists on the canals could be seen enjoying a perfect day. There were the lovely windmills but none of them stiring now.

Passing through the new city of Rotterdam, its zoo, its famous port, Central Station, Town Hall, we came to the Rotterdam Theatre. It was to be a combined show—first half by the Scapino and after interval Song of India. The children were excited not for their own show but to see their friendly ballerinas playing in Pinocchio. Tom Graaf played the Marionette and the Doll maker made them roar in laughter. Admittedly a wonderful ballet, Pinocchio, the children sat spell-bound.

The children got a standing ovation from an appreciative crowd. It was still a day and mixing the two ballet troupes together the two coaches raced towards Den Haag where a reception awaited them at the Indian Embassy.

Den Haag (The Hague) bewitched us. This garden city (indeed there were more gardens and woods than buildings) has miles and miles of wooded bungalows and when we stopped before the Embassy we felt as if we were in a piece of setting seen in National Geographical Magazine. The Indian Ambassador Sri Raghunath Singh received us. He said that the image of India we had shown on the day before still haunted him. Yes, he was proud of us. For Sm. Singh it was a pleasure to speak to some one in Hindi. The huge compound of the Embassy provided ample space for the children to play and late after dusk we bade goodbye to our Chancery people. Back at Adolesce, we relaxed happy. In the thought that CLT had achieved its object of projecting the image of India in a friendly foreign land. There was no show tomorrow and we could well see more of Amsterdam in a relaxed way before leaving for Brussels on Tuesday.

One of the most magnificent way of seeing Amsterdam was by a motorboat. On the 25th May the Dutch Education Ministry arranged for such a trip. Crisis-crossing through numerous canals on both sides of which stand many historical houses of Netherlands, we reached the Port of Amsterdam and the sea. There, the barges, steamers, tugs and ships of all tonnage converged to make it one of the richest port of Europe. Reclining on the comfortable lounge seats in our beautiful boat, the children sang all through. "There" they said "is our JALAPUTRA" and we could see many brown hands on the decks with our own tricolour on the mast head.

Returning, to the city we had lunch with the Director of the International Cultural House.

Tired yet happy, the Troupe returned to Hotel Adolesce, would they sleep tonight? But that is another story.

In the evening before our departure for Brussels, we were given a summary of the Press re-action. We expected it to be good because the applauses in the Municipal Theatre still rang in our ears, but surely not so good!

Kamphoff, the most famous and dreaded critic, said "This no longer could be called Children's Theatre, but it was the work of great artists." J. Van G. another critic said. Such a degree of perfection could never be reached by Dutch children of the same age unless their schooling was put on a Professional basis".

— *SAMAR CHATTERJI*

ADVICE TO BOXERS

By J. K. SEAL

LET us make no bones about the fact that there is a vast deal of difference between professional and amateur boxing. The thought at the back of the professional boxers is money and more money. But amateur boxing is not a savage affair. Nor are amateur boxers barbarians. It is all very well to talk about the accidents that turn out to be fatal. But they are comparatively few. Lots of players get hurt in the playing fields. India's cricket captain had to undergo a serious operation. Some players cannot accept defeat with a good grace and they cast sportsmanship to the winds. Pray, tell me then, why do you single out boxing. Yes, any stick is good enough to beat boxing with.

You get a hard knock. Your opponent gets in a blow in your face. Your opponent catches a blow on his chin. But do the blows damage you, make you invalid. If you scan the lives of some of the good amateur boxers you will find that boxing did not come in the way of their cutting a good figure in the university examination. Mr. P. L. Roy is an M.A. of Cambridge University. Dr. Robin Bhatta did fairly well in his M.B. examination. Dr. Sukhendu Mookerji is a brilliant student of our university. I could add to the list. But I am afraid it would run into volumes.

To guard against eventualities rules have been amended. A boxer is subjected to searching medical examination. Besides, there are the doctor judges.

We, Bengalees, are a brave race. We took to boxing like a duck to water. Are we to believe that the Devil has played havoc with our power of judgement? A boxer makes a good soldier. One cannot defend one's country if one cannot defend oneself. I appeal to our boys and young men not to listen to the scare-mongers who would stick at nothing to do boxing down.

WORD OF ADVICE

Advice to boxers in various departments of their craft. A few words are necessary on their conduct out of the ring.

I will assume that every young man on the threshold of his career is full of ambition to rise to championship class. There are many, I know, who are physically strong and dislike work, and who turn-up at the ring for an "easy" winner. They would not possess sufficient enthusiasm to read a book on boxing, and in any case they soon find their level.

The greatest curse among young pugilists is the disease popularly known as "swollen head." They are discovered and encouraged by some man who is experienced in management, and if he knows his business he matches them in such a way that they begin to win a few 3-round contests. Defeats at the start of a career often break hearts and kill enthusiasm.

But once they find themselves winning they become small idols among their own circle of friends, and they believe they are very much better than others but their trainer know their future.

There are many classic examples of promising boxers being ruined in the way I have mentioned.

CONTRACT

True, the man who 'discovers" a boxer may do so entirely for his own ends, and may not be competent to handle his affairs. Experience alone will prove his worth. Therefore, it is ridiculous for a boxer to rush into signing his name to a year's contract, as so many do. Let him agree to be managed for one year, with the understanding that if at the end of that period everything is satisfactory he will sign for another similar term.

The arrangement at the outset must not be a "friendly" one, but a sound business proposition. Friendships do not always last for ever, and there is nothing like money affairs to strain them to breaking-point.

One of the secrets of Georges Carpentier's success is that, whatever wonderful victories he has achieved, he has never parted from the man who found and made him. It is all to the good of their partnership that outside business they are like father and son, but you must understand that there is no sentiment about their relations.

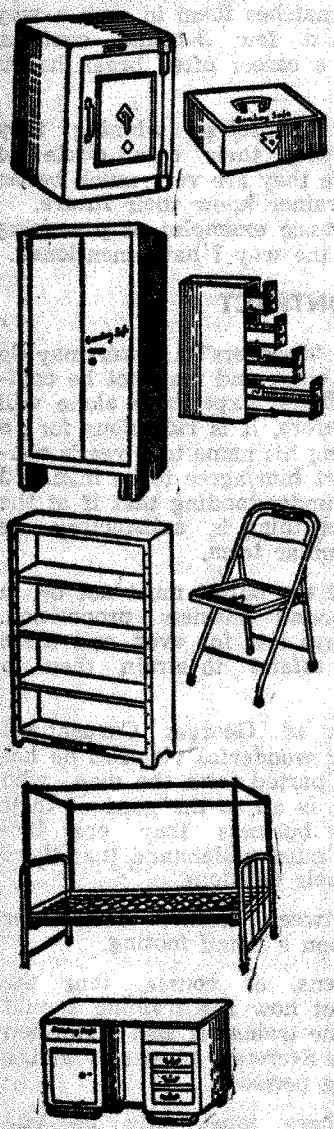
The relationship between trainer and boxer should also be placed upon a sound footing.

It sometimes happens, of course, that the trainer knows best about how the training should be conducted, whereas the trainer is also a glorified masseur. In that case the Secretary must stay at the camp during the training period.

But in any event there must only be one "boss", and on no account should he be the boxer. Mutual arrangements must be made before training starts, and there ought to be no change of plan afterwards.

The boxer has quite enough to do to get fit. He ought not to be allowed to trouble his brain about any details of management whatever. He has selected his trainer beforehand and has confidence in him. He will see that he turns-up in time by the night of the fight, and he can concentrate [illegible] the work in hand.

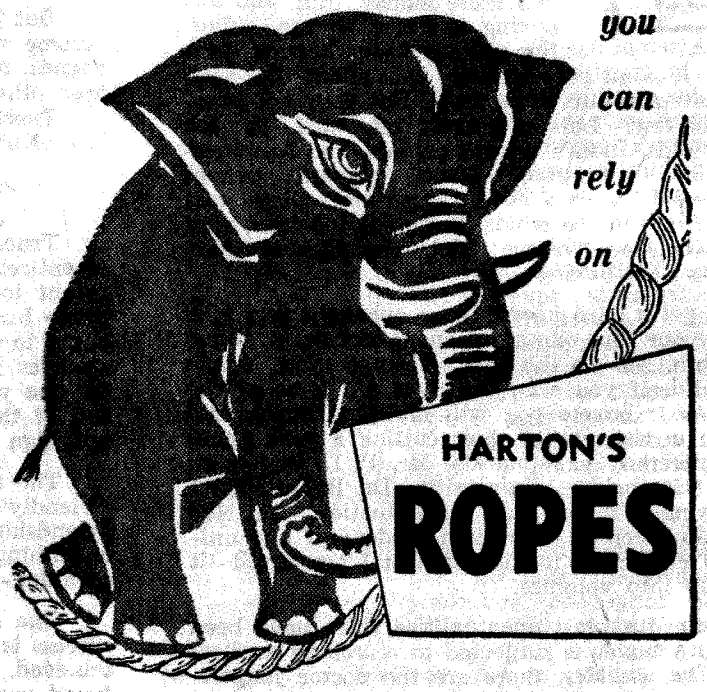
In this
Age of Steel
MODERN
ATTRACTIVE
STEEL FURNITURE
have become
A MUST
for
HOME & OFFICE
DECORATIONS



BOMBAY SAFE & STEEL WORKS PRIVATE LTD.
56, Netaji Subhas Rd., Calcutta-1
Phone: 22-1181 & 22-8716
Authorised Dealer:
UNIVERSAL MERCANTILE CORPORATION,
2, Chowringhee Road, Calcutta.

*

FOR **BIG** *JOBS*
AND SMALL
you can rely on



Known for their quality strength and durability.

W. H. HARTON & CO., LTD.
8, Dalhousie Square East, Calcutta-1
Gram: HARTONCO Phone: Office-22-2878, Works 66-2011

*

THOUGHTS ON RANGER SEVEN

By ROBERT STEVENS

THIS observer has been plagued with the vague feeling that Ranger Seven, in the wake of its magnificent performance, has some subtle prophecy to offer. Not that one day men will land on the moon or discover the origin of the universe; no, this prophecy has to do with what will become of mankind in the remaining years of this century.

Attempting to analyze this dim ember of a thought leads along rambling, ill-defined pathways. On the morning that Ranger Seven was scheduled to make its photographs and then shatter itself on the moon's surface, a taxi was taking me to an auditorium at the headquarters of the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration, where instantaneous news of the flight was flowing in.

The taxi driver was growling at the slow pace of the Washington traffic, three lanes of which were trying to squeeze through a one-lane outlet ahead. We were about one mile (1.6 kilometers) from our destination. Ranger had more than 2,000 miles (3,200 kilometers) to go. It was uncertain which would arrive first.

As I sat envying Ranger its clear sailing, my mind wandered far afield. How would the moon look, at this instant, if I were aboard the spacecraft? What if two of those six gleaming television eyes were mine?

My fantasy was interrupted by the taxi pilot's announcement that we had broken free of the traffic congestion and would arrive at the auditorium just in time for the climax of Ranger Seven's flight.

The auditorium was reserved for the press and for members of the space agency's headquarters staff. It was connected electronically to a similar auditorium at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory on the opposite side of the continent at Pasadena, California. The laboratory was responsible for the flight and the spacecraft. News of Ranger's picture transmissions, which were received by an antenna station near Pasadena, was flashed to the two auditoriums simultaneously.

As I entered the Washington auditorium—crowded beyond belief—the sound of the picture signals was already coming through the loudspeaker. It had a kind of unreal, continuous bell-tone. Almost at once, a voice radiated out of the speaker announcing that picture signals were being strongly received from all six cameras and that, while the actual pictures would not be seen until later, the quality of the electronic signals indicated that the photos would be excellent. There was some restrained applause.

The disembodied voice from California continued reporting — "video signal strength continues high.....all six cameras continue to operate.....we are still receiving pictures" — and the bell-tone rang on.

Finally, the voice began counting the seconds until impact. At this, I felt a tension developing inside myself, and a glance at some nearby faces showed that others were undergoing a similar transition. "Twenty seconds," the voice said, ".....10 seconds.....we are receiving pictures to the end".

The bell-tone stopped.

The audience roared, and roared, and when we finally stopped, the crowd in California could be heard over the loudspeaker. They were not only enthused, they were jubilant. If there was uproar in Washington, there was pandemonium at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

The results—those wonderful close photographs of the moon and the mechanical perfection of the flight—are history. How pure and simple it now would be to regard the event as a crystallized bit of the past to be relegated to history books. But, now that the shouting has faded somewhat and the scientists have settled down to study the pictures, the nagging thoughts in the deeps of the brain grow more persistent.

My taxi driver was an angry man. He had a machine, a powerful machine, at his command. But he was contending with other individuals with equally powerful machines, and he was irate. The target of his feelings was not so much the other drivers, but rather the inadequate and impersonal traffic regulatory system that was obstructing his route.

If the entire system had broken down that day it would only have caused some further delay. I would have missed my assignment and hundreds of other persons would also have been late, but eventually the situation would have cleared without any critical damage to the life of the city. Nevertheless, as congestion grows over the years, a high degree of computerized control will be needed, lest the city strangle itself on its own traffic.

I remember May 5, 1961, at Cape Canaveral, when most of us on the press viewing stand developed stomach flutters as the countdown approached zero for the slender rocket and for Alan Shepard, the first American astronaut. Tension grew to an almost unbearable level. And when the launching occurred and it became obvious that the flight was going well, we shook the viewing stand with our cheers and shouts.

Shepard was not an individual at odds with a huge system, as was the taxi man. He was an integral part of the system. So, too, were the spacecraft, the booster rocket, the tracking and communications networks, the computers, the recovery ships, and all the personnel manning the stations and equipment. Everything and everyone had to be coordinated. The system could compensate for minor malfunctions. But, major breakdowns in the system could have brought destruction to the astronaut, as well as failure of the mission.

Never before did the life of a single man depend on such a complexity of men and machinery. Perhaps this is why the weight of the cheering was directed at Shepard, the man, rather than at the

(Continued on page 256)

A FEW BOOKS
For Your
LIBRARY
By

MAHATMA SISIR KUMAR GHOSH

AMIYA NEMAI CHARIT (6th Volumes) — Each Volume Rs. 3.00
KALACHAND GEETA (6th Edition) Rs. 3.00
NEMAI SANYAS (Drama) (2nd Edition) Rs. 2.00
NAROTTAM CHARIT (3rd Edition) Rs. 2.00
LORD GOURANGA (Two Volumes)—(English) Each Volume Rs. 3.00
PROBODHANANDA AND GOPAL BHATTA Rs. 1.50
MAYSO RUPIA O BAZARER LADAI (8th Edition) Rs. 1.50

AVAILABLE AT
PATRIKA BHAVAN
CALCUTTA-3
&
Important Book-Stalls.

YOUR HEALTH NEEDS
NUTRITIOUS FOOD AND IT IS FROM
GREAT EASTERN HOTEL
BAKERY & CONFECTIONERY
Automatic Machine Made and Fully Vitaminized

Milk, Brown & Sliced Bread, Twist Rolls, Crescent Rolls, French Rolls, Raisin Rolls, Current Loaf

* * *

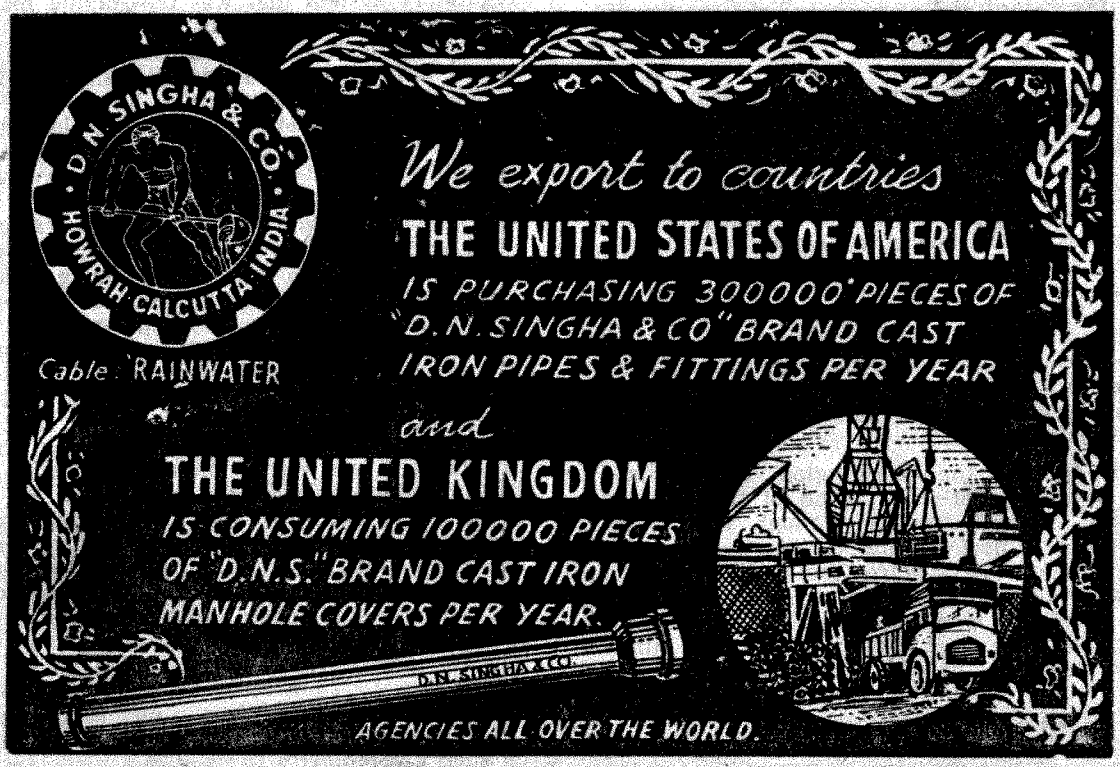
Pastries, Cakes, Biscuits, Chocolate, Pudding

* * *

Prawn Cutlets, Vegetable, Mutton & Chicken Patties

Visit our Air-conditioned Selling Centre at
29, Waterloo Street, Calcutta-1
and at
E-132-134 S. S. Hogg Market

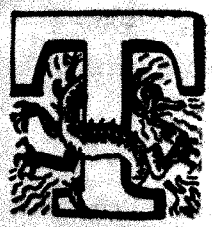
GREAT EASTERN HOTEL LTD.
CALCUTTA - 1.



Short Story

HIGHEST PRICE

By H. P. BASU



HERE was a variety of rumours about her. Some said she was a woman of the town, according to some she was a dancing girl and yet another section held that at one time she was a pick in the fashionable society. Basudha was ruminating on the events of the last ten years of her life, sumetimes muttering to herself as she tried to solve the mystery relating to her mother. Even a year ago, her mother did not disclose to her how the expenses of the household were managed, where the money came from. So far as she was aware, it came from land but she knew nothing about where the zamindary was located or how much its income was and she had not the time to enquire about it. After her mother's death it was for the first time that she came to know about her birth. All along she knew that her father had expired in her childhood but today she learns that her father is still alive and is living somewhere in the city as a respectable citizen.

Basudha also learnt that she was the product of a union which is shrouded in mystery and it was for this reason that she has been reared up outside the pale of society. She did not know who her father was or what he was. So she could not accept the offer of marriage from Manimoy a young barrister, who made the offer out of pure love without going into the history of her antecedents. On the contrary, she had to break away from love to conceal herself in a hovel of darkness.

Her maidservant entered and reported, "Badri has come with that gentleman". Basudha was sitting absorbed in thought and this sudden appearance startled her. At that time a dismal future was staring her in her face, a legion of claimants—landlord, furniture suppliers, and others, pressing their bills and she having nothing to meet their demands. She had tried for some employment and actually got some jobs but everywhere the story was the same—carnal appetite, the lust for flesh. She also got offeres for marriage from some admirers but ultimately these offers ended in smoke. The way back to Manimoy was now closed and she had not the courage now to hold her head aloft before Manimoy even if he agreed to take her.

Damini the maidservant again spoke out, "Mother, what shall I say to Badri?" Basudha still remained silent.

Damini repeated, "Although a little advanced in years, Akhil Babu is a man of means".

As if aroused from a slumber Basudha said, "Bring him here, well, wait, I shall myself go and receive him". She advanced towards the door like one lost in a trance.

A few months passed and many change took place. Basudha become the owner of the house, purchased with the money supplied by Akhil Babu. The old man was a good choice because he was satisified with the bare minimum.

One day Basudha met her aunt Reba while going for a bath in the Ganges and invited her to her house.

It was ten in the night. Akhil Babu was enjoying the songs sung by Basudha for a long time. Suddenly he got up and was about to say good bye. Basudha complained "Why so early? Can't you wait longer when I like your presence so much?" Akhil Babu smiled approvingly. But when Basudha lifted her eyes to his face, he dropped down the lids which urged Basudha to complain "Why don't you look to my eyes?" Akhil Babu muttered, "It is the difference in age between us. I cannot forget that I have simply held you in bondage with my money". Basudha gets a shock which she cannot explain why. Akhil Babu continued, "Oh! the old habit still clings to me, I cannot shed it". Then suddenly Basudha endearingly said, "Why, can't you pass one night at least here?" Akhil Babu said that he could not, on any account, stay out of his home in the night and he moved forward. At the doorstep he accosted a lady and asked "Who are you?" The reply came from Basudha, "She is my aunt. She was a great friend of my mother".

Aunt Reba, on the plea of latching the outer door advanced towards it with Akhil Babu and Basudha stopped there thinking over the behaviour of this strange gentleman. While standing in this posture, her eyes caught a strange sight through the neighbouring window in the well-lit room before her. There were a young couple, the husband approaching the cot stealthily where the wife was lying with a mind to make pranks with her. The wife sought to hold him up on the plea that the baby was awake. Not deterred by this warning, the husband advanced and lo! the switch was out. Basudha felt as if she was stung by a scorpion and rushed into her room and closed the door.

A few minutes later, there was a knock at the door. Controlling herself a little Basudha opened the door and asked "What is the matter, auntie, you return again!"

Reba pushed her inside the room and said, "Come in. There is something to tell you." They went in and occupied a seat side by side.

Reba asked "How long this gentleman is visiting your house".

"Oh, it will be a good many days."

Reba looked around casting her eyes on the costly furniture on all sides and asked, "These are all gifts from this gentleman, I think?" Like a sporting girl Basudha replied, "Certainly. Even this house has been purchased by him in my name. He has also given me many ornaments. Will you see them, auntie?"

Raba bypassed this unpleasant episode by saying "Oh, it is too late; I must leave tonight. I will look at them some other day", and advanced towards the door. Basudha sought to hold her back but Reba smilingly said, "Let me go now, I shall come again".

"You have spent a long time in visiting temples and holy places throughout India. Then I had not

the opportunity to meet you. Today when I have got it, I must make use of it by keeping you here at least for this night. I am fed up with the lonely nights."

"What about Akhil Babu ?"

"He never passes the night here. He is always true to his watch; comes in time and leaves in time, never irregular by a minute."

"Strange!" ejaculated Reba and slowly vanished in silence.

(2)

Reba has lost her sleep for a few nights. She has been brooding over the events since she saw Akhil Babu in Basudha's house. "Can this man be the same Akhil Babu." She was recapitulating the past, the events of the last twenty years. She was trying to call back the details of the picture to her mind. "Can it be that a big change has taken place in his appearance. May be, he has grown in years and age has changed the youthful look and countenance. Still she grew restless. She could not control herself. As if she heard an inner voice crying, "Oh, that cannot be. She must not allow it. She must disclose everything to Basudha." But suddenly the excitement came down and she thought. "What if Basudha disbelieves her story and thinks that it is nothing but a trick, a malicious propaganda? She may think I am jealous of her affluence." Thus weaving a shroud of loose thoughts for a few days, Reba at last decided to go to Basudha's house and one day reached there in the evening. When she entered the house she saw Basudha entertaining Akhil Babu with her songs. As soon as Basudha saw her, she advanced towards her. Akhil Babu on that day was a little more intoxicated than on other days and was resting loose on his pillow. Suddenly he was startled at Basudha's absence and cried out "Where have you gone, Basudha ? Why did you stop your singing ?"

Basudha replied from outside, "Oh, I am here" and implored Reba to spend the night with her.

"All right," replied Reba.

Basudha rushed into the room and began to sing again.

Reba stayed there at Basudha's request.

Akhil Babu was deeply intoxicated and practically lost his power to get up and bid good bye for the night. Basudha implored him not to take any more drinks.

"All right, if you say so, I will not. I cannot disobey you. I so much like to heed your request, I know not why."

Basudha made no reply but aside Reba's eyes sparkled out as those of a serpent.

"Give me a little water."

"Let me fetch it," replied Reba from behind her veil. She handed over the glass to Akhil Babu and in a trice slipped out.

After taking that water Akhil Babu died. From Police report it transpired that the water contained poison which brought about Akhil Babu's death. Basudha was produced as the accused because Akhil Babu was suspected to have been murdered in her room where his lifeless body was found.

The story of murder and the fact that Basudha was going to face the murder trial as the accused in the case reached Reba in time. On hearing it, she lost herself and like one mad, she ran up to Manimoy. She knew that Manimoy was a barrister and he once loved Basudha and it was he alone who could save her.

"I say Manimoy, Basudha did not administer poison. It is I who did it and do you know why?"

Manimoy looked on inquisitively.

Reba went on, "I knew Basudha's mother and also Akhil Babu. I know that Basudha is Akhil Babu's daughter."

Manimoy was startled. "Is it so?" He said.

"Not a bit of it is untrue. There is God overhead. I wanted to disclose everything to Basudha but at that time much water has flown down the river and I did not dare to turn the tide of events. So I took upon myself the task of bringing the curtain down then and there."

"Did not Akhil Babu know about Basudha's identity."

"Possibly not, otherwise he would not have had to pay the highest price for it with his precious life."

This set Manimoy athinking but Reba interrupted him by dragging his hand, "Get up Manimoy, there is not a moment to lose. We have got to save Basudha at any cost." Reba could not control her feeling any more and burst into tears and clasped both the hands of Manimoy in excitement. Manimoy ordered the driver to keep the car ready.

THOUGHTS ON RANGER SEVEN

(Continued from page 253)

system (with Shepard as a cog in it). Perhaps, in the minds of the observers, the individual retained his value and his dignity, over and above the incomprehensible system.

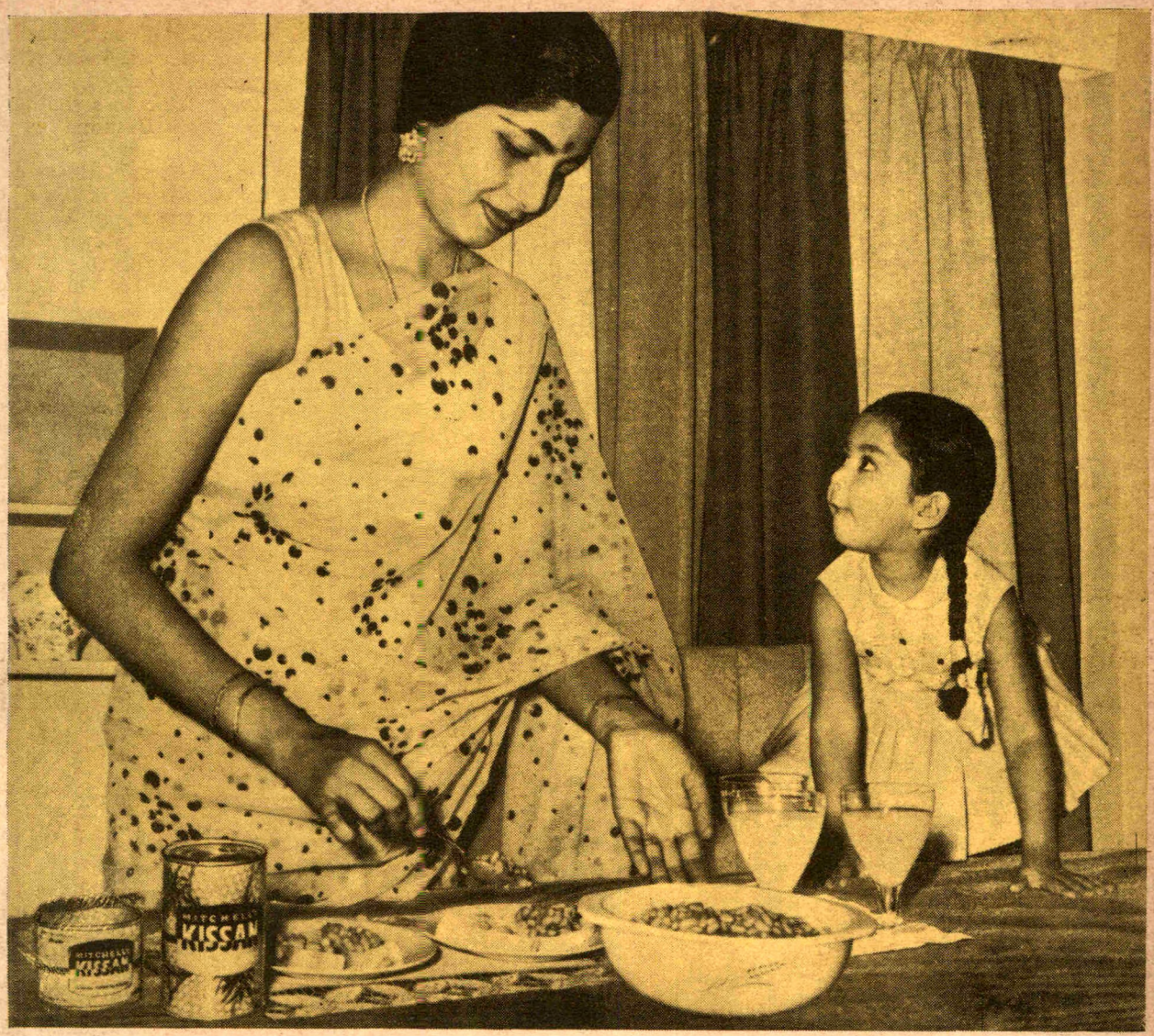
On the surface, the human reactions to the Shepard and Ranger Seven flights were similar. Yet, the ringing response to the Ranger success was remarkably different in its undertones. The applause was for the complicated man-machine system — for the power, precision, delicacy, beauty, and efficiency of the machine components; for the intellectual power, the mechanical genius the determination, and the team work of the human components.

The applause seemed to carry a suggestion of awe in the ability of men to conceive and construct such a system. Indeed, the cheers seemed to convey man's sense of wonder in himself. But, in this case, there was no individual, no hero, like Shepard.

As mankind moves on in the next three or four decades, the world will become more thickly populated, more complex, and (through advanced communications) nations will be closer together. The peoples of the world will come to depend more on each other. They will have to be more aware of their fellows, more tolerant, more cooperative. And, not only for their progress, but for their survival as well, they will have to develop national man-machine systems to be able to control and live with the fast-moving events of their time. Indeed, the world may be interlaced with such systems. This is something to think about.

EDITOR — TUSHAR KANTI GHOSH

Printed and published by TULSHI KANTI DE BISWAS, on behalf of the Amrita Bazar Patrika Private Ltd. at the PATRIKA PRESS, 14, Ananda Chatterjee Lane, Calcutta-3.



An appetizing combination!

NUTRITIOUS KISSAN BAKED BEANS AND DELICIOUS PINEAPPLE JUICE

Non-fattening, nutritious beans packed in rich sauce of sun-ripened tomatoes come to you as a well balanced,complete food. Ready to serve, they are handy when unexpected guests arrive.

SQUASHES, CRUSHES, SYRUPS, JAMS, JELLIES, MARMALADES, CANNED FRUITS, JUICES AND TOMATO PRODUCTS.

KISSAN PRODUCTS LIMITED, BANGALORE.

PRINTED BY N. K. GOSSAIN & CO. PRIVATE LTD. CAL.-12.

Regd. No. C 58

Mirth spreads from leaf to leaf, my
darling, and gladness without measure.
The heaven's river has drowned its
banks and the flood of joy is abroad.

GITANJALI

'LAKHMI GHEE' carries that
joy to every home.

Amrita Bazar Patrika

PUJA ANNUAL 1965

"She creates the world of souls and matters
This Universe vast and fine
And graciously brings salvation to all
She, the Mother Benign"

(SRI SRI CHANDI 1,56)

ISSUED BY Boroline

THE CREAM THAT WILL KEEP YOU FRESH, RADIANT AND

BOROLINE HOU

CALCUTTA-3

Femila SNOW

the foundation cream and skin food that allows every modern woman to be serenely beautiful in the tradition of all history's lovely women.

BOROLINE HOUSE • CALCUTTA-3

the festive season demands the best
and the best for any hair
is to put it on
KEO-KARPIN care

Keo-Karpin

the hair oil that brings you the festive mood

Dey's DEY'S MEDICAL STORES PRIVATE LTD.
Calcutta . Bombay . Delhi . Madras . Patna . Gauhati
Cuttack . Jaipur . Kanpur . Secunderabad . Ambala . Indore

PX-DMK/E-18

Puja Greetings

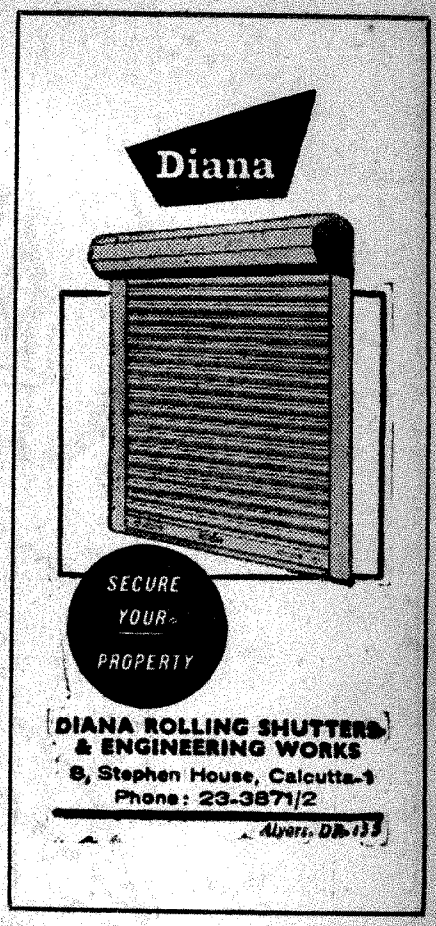
Life Insurance Corporation of India

CMLIC-36

Contents

	Page
THE ADVENT OF THE DIVINE MOTHER By Dr. Mahanambrata Brahmachari	9
MOTHER THE MOST BEAUTIFUL By Dr. Roma Chaudhuri, Principal, Lady Brabourne College, Calcutta	11
THE MOTHER GODDESS By Hiranmoy Banerjee	13
SRIKRISHNA ON DEFENCE OF DWARAKA By Ramani Datta Gupta	15
THE SOCIAL & HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE ADVENT OF SRI CHAITANYA By Dr. Srikumar Banerjee	17
WOMEN'S ROLE IN THE PUJA By Bijoya Bhattacharjee	20
AN UNFORGETTABLE CHARACTER By Dilip Kumar Roy	21
SANSKRIT THE ONLY NATIONAL LANGUAGE FOR INDIA By Ashutosh Lahiri	25
AMARNATH THE HOLY CAVE By Bireswar Prosad Banerji	28
ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER By Dr. Sudhir Nandi	32
NOTABLE PLACES OF WORSHIP IN INDIA	
Puja Photo Feature	35
- Do. -	37
- Do. -	38
- Do. -	40
- Do. -	44
- Do. -	46
- Do. -	48
- Do. -	49
- Do. -	51
- Do. -	53
- Do. -	56
- Do. -	57
- Do. -	60
- Do. -	62
- Do. -	64
THE MAN WHO NEVER SMILED By Prithwindra Mukherjee	34
TWILIGHT YEAR OF INDIAN NATIONALISM By K. P. Biswas	41
CLASSIFICATIONS OF NAYIKAS IN INDIAN EROTICS By Prof. O. C. Gangooly	45
WHY I JOINED THE ARMY By P. L. Roy	50

(Continued on Next Page)



DIANA ROLLING SHUTTERS & ENGINEERING WORKS
8, Stephen House, Calcutta-1
Phone: 23-3871/2

Alyars. DR-131

IF IT IS A
DIANA
SHUTTER
EVERYONE IS HAPPY

DIANA SHUTTERS PROTECT
YOUR HARD EARNED PROPERTY

Details from :
DIANA ROLLING SHUTTERS & ENGINEERING WORKS
8, STEPHEN HOUSE, CALCUTTA-1
PHONE : 23-3871/2 CABLES : MIZALTOB

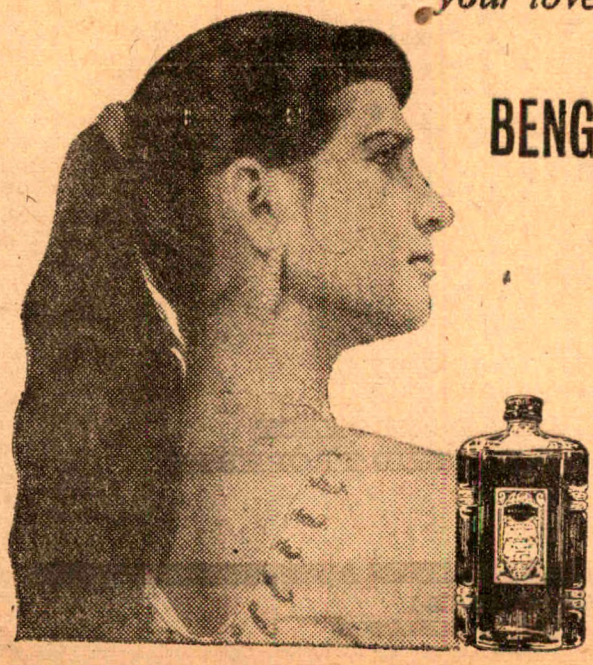
LPE-Aiyars.DR-204

Consult
K·HORE
for beauty aids

Contents

	Page
THE FUNDAMENTALS OF MUSIC OF THE ARABS — By Swami Prajnanananda	58
HUSBANDS MUST BEHAVE: THE MATRIMONIAL PENAL CODE — By Mukul Gupta	65
THE FOUR POSTER — By Narendra Nath Mitra	69
PARULDI — By Kamakshiprasad Chattopadhyaya	77
A DREAM LOST IN SOUL — By Swaraj Bandyopadhaya	81
THE KEEPSAKE THAT PRICKS — By Pasupati Bhattacharya	85
TWO SISTERS — By Jatish Bose	89
THOSE GLOSSY CURTAINS — Rajendra Awasthy	93
CONFLICT — By Asha Purna Devi	97
REVERIE — By Banaphul	103
THAT ATOM OF SAND — By "Atchyut"	105
TICKETLESS TRAVEL — By Raj Bhalla	107
DEAD MOTHER REGAINED AND AFTER — By Mukulika Banerjee	109
SOMNATH—THE SHRINE IMMORTAL — By Phani Bhattacharyya	113
HALF AND HALF — By Keshab Chandra Gupta	117
THE FORSAKEN MERMAID — By Tushar Kanti Ghosh, W.B.C.S.	121
RED ROSE — By H. Basu	125
PALACE OF A THOUSAND DOORS — By Annada Sankar Ray	129
OUR EDUCATION — By Dr. U. P. Basu	137
GETTING TO KNOW AUSTRALIAN WRITERS — By William Walker	139
WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS — By R. K. Das Gupta	141
KALLOLYUG— THE GRASSROOTS — By S. L. Ghosh	143

your lovely hair needs care and nourishment



BENGAL CHEMICAL'S

cantharidine
hair oil

helps to promote growth of long lustrous silken-soft tresses. Extract of Cantharides contained in it prevents falling of hair.

BENGAL CHEMICAL

CALCUTTA · BOMBAY
KANPUR

Contents

	Page
TRANSPORT ON THE WAY By Biren Das	149
ALL OVER AGAIN By T. C. Ghosh	151
TRAVELLING AT HOME By Kobita Sarkar	159
YOUNG FOLK'S CORNER—	
TO YOUNG FOLK By "Big Brother"	161
A HAUNTED HOUSE By Saila Chakravortty	162
WINTER MORNING By Basabjit Banerjee	162
WHAT MY FEET CAN DO By Sudakshina Kar	162
KONTU OF CONDORE By K. S. Kumar	163
CARNIVOROUS PLANTS By Pradip Chakrabarti	163
THE SONG OF YOUTH By Young Folk's League	163
CHITTARANJAN AS I SAW IT By Mrigendranath Adhikary	164
ON GETTING UP LATE By David Sassoon	164
THE HYPOCRITE By Adhir Kumar Bose	165
THREE GENERATIONS By Shyamal Datta	165
WE ARE CHILDREN By Young Folk's League	165
HEAD PHONE By Subhendu Ghosh	166
SWAMI VIVEKANANDA By Pradeep Kumar Ghosh	167
FATE AND THE PRINCESS By L. N. Birla	169
AN EXAMPLE OF PATIENCE By Subratuma Sarkar	171
MY FIRST AIR-TRAVEL By Rajagopal Sarma	171
CHILDREN'S THEATRE IN EDUCATION By Samar Chatterjee	174
FISHING WAYS AND MEANS (Pictorial Feature)	180
- Do. -	181
- Do. -	184
- Do. -	185
- Do. -	188
- Do. -	192
PARIKSHIT IN TIGER-TRIAL By Sri Dhirendra Narayan Roy	178
DISCOVERY OF TELENAPOTA By Premendra Mitra	186

(Continued on Next Page)

FOR JOB, CAREER & Competition

Better read and subscribe

Current Careers

(English Monthly)

The only dependable Career-journal of the East.

Per copy :— Re 1/- Annual Subscription Rs. 10/-

Published on the 1st day of every English Calendar month.

Current Careers

3A, Dr. Jagabandhu Lane, Calcutta-12.

CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY PUBLICATIONS

		Rs. P.
1.	**Acharya P.C. Roy** Centenery Volume.	15-00
2.	**An Enquiry into the Nature and Function of Art**—Dr. S. K. Nandi	10-00
3.	**Aryamanjusrinamasangiti** (Sanskrit and Tibetan Text) Edited by—Sri Durgadas Mukherjee	
4.	**Bengali Folk Ballads** from Mymensingh Dr. Dusan Zbavitel	12-00
5.	**British Relations with Hyderabad** —Sri Nanigopal Chaudhuri	10-00
6.	**Classical Indian Philosophy** —Dr. S. C. Chatterjee	5-50
7.	**Catalogue of :—Early Indian Coins in the Asutosh Museum**—Sri Chittaranjan Chaudhuri	10-00
8.	**Catalogue of :—Folk Art in the Asutosh Museum**—Mrinal Kanti Pal	10-00
9.	**Elements of the Science of Language** —I. J. S. Taraporewalla	20-00
10.	**Ethics of the Hindus**—Dr. S. K. Maitra	8-00
11.	**History of Sanskrit Literature** —Dr. S. N. Dasgoopta and S. K. De	30-00
12.	**Hadith Literature**—Prof. M. Z. Siddiqi	15-00
13.	**Industrial Finance in India**—Dr. S. K. Bose	18-00
14.	**Jaina Prayer**—Dr. Harisatya Bhattacharya	5-00

		Rs. P.
15.	**Kamala Lecture (The Buddha)** —U NU (in English)	3-50
16.	**Kamala Lecture (The Buddha)** —U NU (in Tamil)	2-00
17.	**Kamala Lecture (The Buddha)** —U NU (in Hindi)	2-00
18.	**Kamala Lecture** (Indiaism and the Indian Synthesis)—Dr. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee	8-00
19.	**Kamala Lecture** (Indian culture and Religious Thought)—Sri Asutosh Sayanam Iyyanger	5-00
20.	**Logic value and Reality** —Dr. B. K. Bhattacharyya	10-00
21.	**Nepali Language its History and Development.** —Dr. Dayanand Srivastava	10-00
22.	**Old Bengali Language and Text.** —Dr. Tarapada Mukherjee	12-00
23.	**Origin and Evolution of Indian clay Sculpture.** —Dr. Charu Chandra Dasgupta	25-00
24.	**Religious Essays.**—Dr S. K. Maitra	10-00
25.	**Some Materials and Social Education of Tribals in E. India.**—Sri K. P. Chattopadhyaya	5-00
26.	**The Problems of Philosophy.** —Dr. S. C. Chatterjee	6-50
27.	**Yoga Philosophy of Patanjali** (Rendered into English)—Sri P. N. Mukherjee	20-00
28.	**Religious Essays.**—Dr. S. K. Maitra	10-00

For further details please contact :—

Publication Department, University of Calcutta

48, Hazra Road, Calcutta-19. Phone : 47-1766

FORMAL WEAR

DRESS WEAR SPECIALISTS
OF CALCUTTA SINCE 1897

Contents

Page

EITHER OR
By Kabita Sinha .. 193

BOMBS BURST IN LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
By Jatindra M. Mukherjee .. 213

THE VISION OF DANTE
By H. M. Williams 217

QUEST IN THE DARK
By Dakshina Ranjan Bose .. 221

RENAISSANCE AND SYNTHESIS IN ART FORMS
By Sadhana Bose 224

ART MOVEMENT IN DELHI
By Vivek Bhattacharya .. 225

THOUGHTS ON COMEDY
By Satyajit Ray .. 229

FIFTY YEARS OF BENGALI FILMS
By N. K. G. .. 233

A CASE FOR MYSELF
By Mrinal Sen .. 236

THE CAMERA AND I
By Dilip Ranjan Mukherjee 237

THE ACTOR'S MASK
By Soumitra Chatterjee .. 240

SPORTS AFTER INDEPENDENCE
By Sunil Bose .. 241

Contents

Page

STRAY THOUGHTS
By Pearson Surita .. 243

CHANGING BADMINTON TREND
By Pronob Bose .. 245

SOME HAVE GREATNESS THRUST UPON THEM
By K. C. Addy .. 246

THROWING AND JERKING
By Rusi Modi .. 249

TENNIS COACHING IN WEST BENGAL
By Dilip Bose .. 251

A PLEA FOR RAIN RESEARCH
By Prof. S. K. Ghosh .. 253

CLOUD OVER CAMPUS
By Sisir Kumar Ghose .. 255

ART PLATES

THE MOTHER

NILACHALE MAHAPRABHU

BEAUTY SPOTS IN INDIA
8 Pictures.

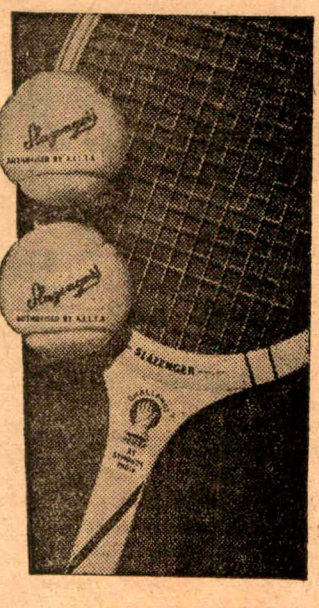
CHILD STUDY
2 Pictures.

SWEETS & TOFFEES

JAMES LORD & SONS LIMITED
CALCUTTA-1.

M-18

TENNIS



CHOICE FROM

SLAZENGERS

Made in India

By

'SYMONDS'

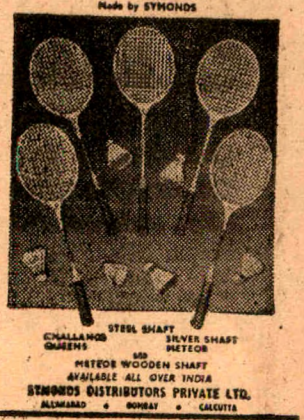
Available All Over India

BADMINTON

Get off to a good Start with

Slazenger

BADMINTON RACKETS
Made by SYMONDS



Contact

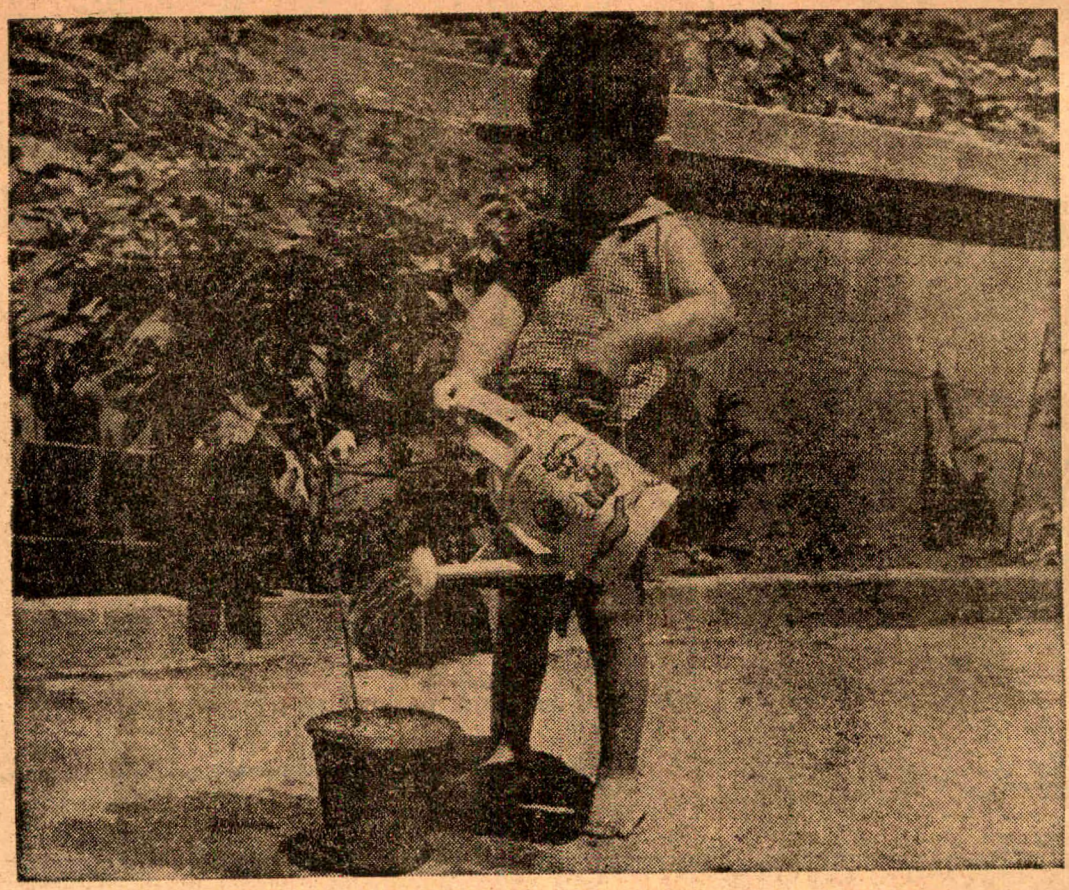
Registered Dealers of :

SYMONDS DISTRIBUTORS PRIVATE LIMITED

ALLAHABAD
15, Elgin Road.

BOMBAY
249, Dr. D. Nauraji Road.

CALCUTTA
18, Netaji Subhas Rd.



It's never too early to learn

Little boys learn early that plants need water to keep them alive and growing. This simple fact, once learned, is never forgotten.

Another lesson you must teach your children *now* is the regular care of teeth and gums, so that in years to come they will thank you for protecting them from tooth decay and gum diseases.

Teach your children *today* to care for their teeth and gums with Forhan's Toothpaste. Created by a dentist, Forhan's is the only toothpaste in the world containing Dr. Forhan's special astringents for the gums. Used regularly it ensures sparkling white teeth and sound, healthy gums.

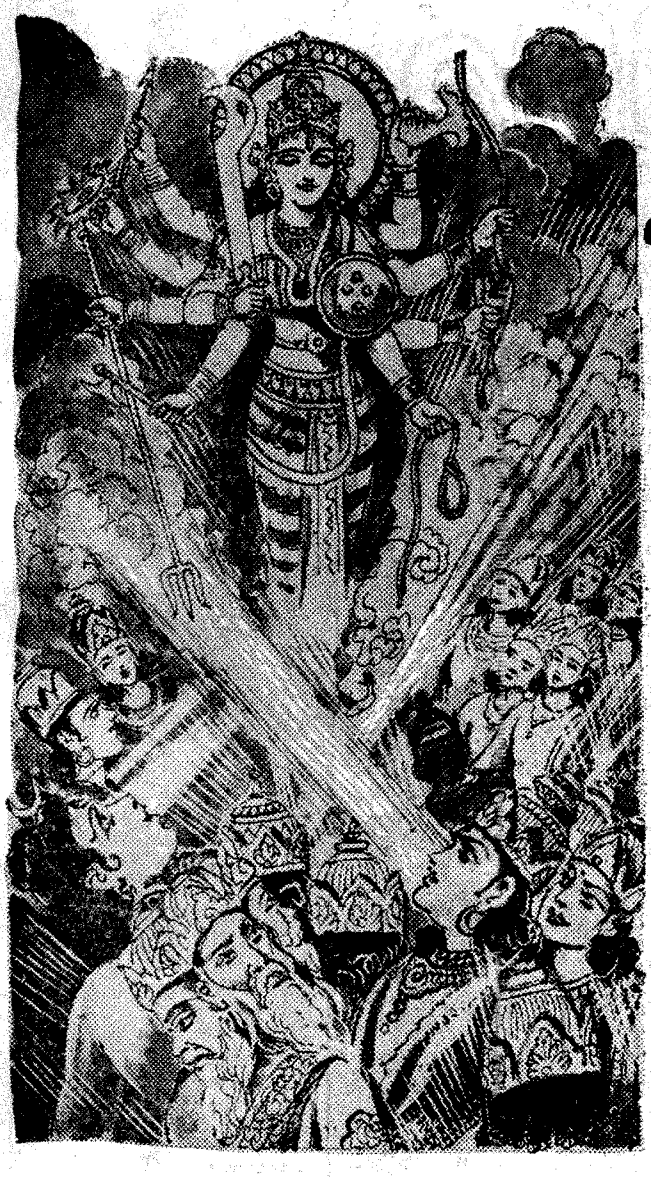
FREE! COLOUR BOOKLET ON "CARE OF THE TEETH AND GUMS"

For this booklet, available in various languages, send 10 p in stamps (to cover postage) to Dept. A 1 Manners' Dental Advisory Bureau, Post Bag No. 10031, Bombay 1:

Name .....

Address .....

Please underline language wanted:
English, Hindi, Marathi,
Gujarati, Urdu, Bengali, Tamil,
Telugu, Malayalam or Kanarese.



THE ADVENT of the Divine Mother

Dr. MAHANAMBRA BRAHMACHARI

THE mundane existence of human being is replete with strife, struggle and miseries. Sufferings of innumerable sorts are tormenting the human life and make it all the more woeful. A total cessation of these evils, emancipation from the clutch of bondage and attainment of a state of perpetual bliss are all that are yearned by suffering humanity. But man's superior intellect, wisdom and inventions failed to bring a real solution to these problems. An aggravation of all these is experienced, on the other hand. To-day, the confusions of the world make it, so to say, a vicious circle. Man has created such an environment that it reacts unwholesomely upon him. Mankind is terribly heading as if towards a total annihilation by committing licentious suicide. Heart-rendering cry for peace, happiness and poise is heard from all corners of this bewildered world.

The state of affairs resembles that of the Devas in the reign of Mahisasura. In the course of the eternal strife of the Devas (Gods) and Asuras (Demons), the former being defeated, the latter reigned supreme in the heaven inflicting inhuman sufferings to the Devas. The helpless Devas came to Brahma, the creator of the world for alleviation of their distress. Brahma, afflicted with the sorrows and sufferings of the Devas, led the commission of the Gods to Vishnu and Shiva for apprisal of the grave situation and redress.

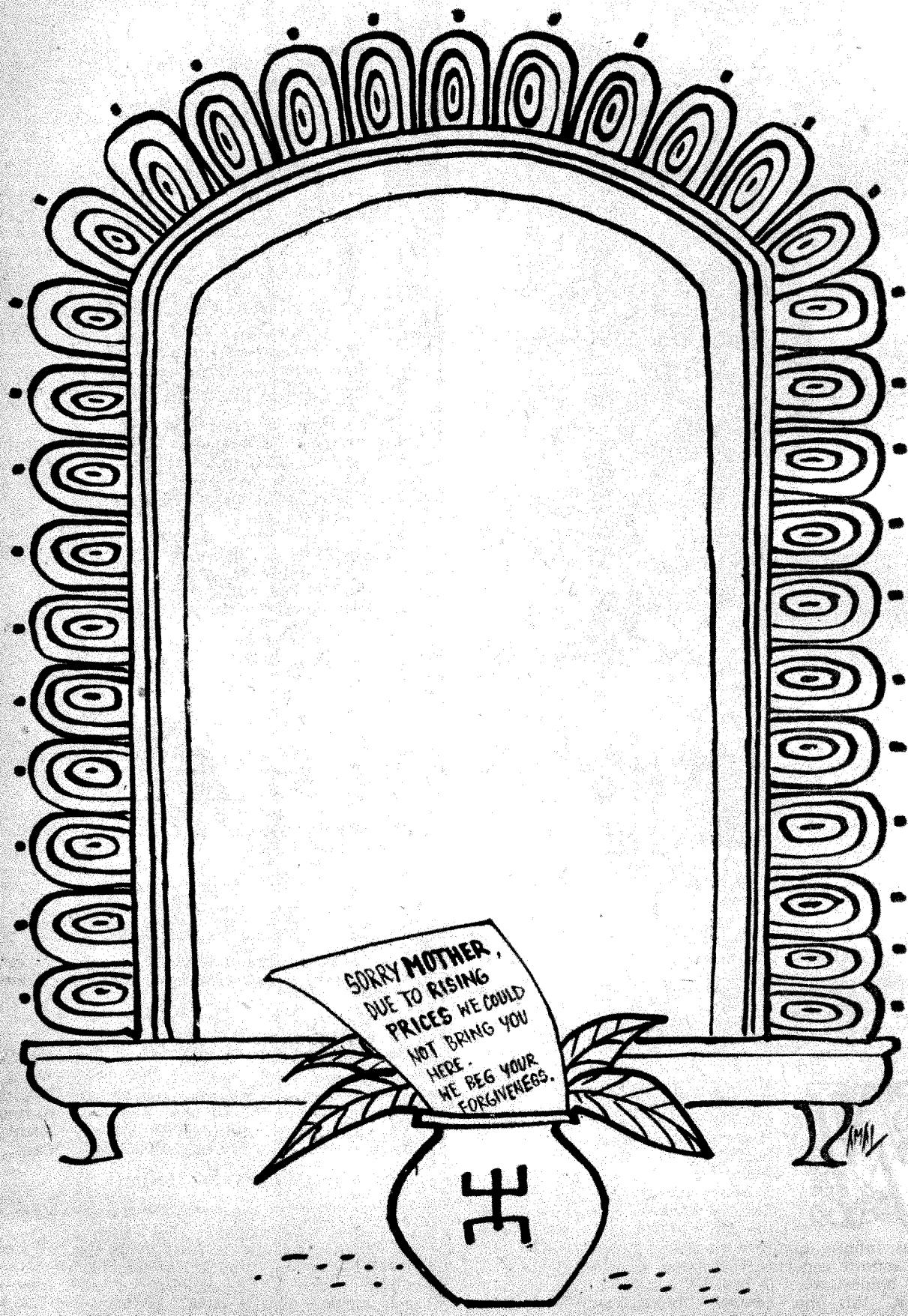
The tales of intolerable attrocities of Mah'sasura raged vehement anger in Vishnu and Shiva and in a feat of this, vital energies in the form of burning flashes came out from them. This created similar reaction among the Gods whose vital energies too came out in like manners. These energies took the form of an unmatchable, sublime and superb woman.

This Divine-embodiment of all spiritual energies had decoration with the numerous weapons offered by the Gods. Thus descends the Divine Mother, the Supreme being, Energy-incarnate embodies in Herself the multifarious modes of life. She happens to be too affectionate to Her children to become fierce to those who pretend to do evil to them. All contradictions merge in Her Magestic personality. She is tranquil and turbulent, serene and fierce, Soumya and Roudra at the same time. This is because Her all embracing motherliness makes Her intolerant of those that are inimically disposed of towards Her human and divine children.

The Divine Mother in a feat of destruction raised such a tumultuous uproar that frightened the Asuras came out in large numbers being equipped with armours and weapons and the severe war that followed between Her and the innumerable Asuras brought the ruin of Mah'sasura. The other Asuras met the same fate. The heaven was recovered and the Devas cheered the victory with an elegant hymn addressed to the mother.

The obeisance of the cheerful Devas to Mahadevi Durga is a revelation of Her Divine Personality. She is the Progenitor of the Universal process in its entirety. She is the Presiding principle of the cosmic manifestation and the scource of ultimate

(Continued on page 12)


SORRY MOTHER,
DUE TO RISING
PRICES WE COULD
NOT BRING YOU
HERE.
WE BEG YOUR
FORGIVENESS.

MOTHER
THE MOST BEAUTIFUL

Dr. ROMA CHAUDHURI

"Gracious to the good, but adverse to the bad,
Amongst all beauties, the Most Beautiful;
Amongst all bests, the Best Thou alone,
The Highest, the Goddess, Supreme,
Cool"

(Sri Sri Candi 1.81.)

WHAT an absolutely exhilarating, exalting, exquisite description:—She is the Best, the Highest, the Most Supreme; but above all, She is the Most Beautiful — *"Atisundari"*!

Above all — we purposely use the clause—above all! For, the Divine Mother, undoubtedly, has infinite qualities, infinite powers, infinite sides, infinite aspects. But above all these stands out in boldest relief in broadest outlines, in brightest colours, this one central characteristic—Beauty! She is Beautiful, Beautiful to the core, Beautiful eternally; for, Beauty is Her Nature, Her Essence, Her Soul.

But what does *"Beauty"* mean here? What are its characteristics? What, marks?

Really, "Beauty" is one of the indefinables—something to be felt, but not described. Yet, if we have to describe it, we may simply say—Beauty is Expansion, Beauty is Fulness, Beauty is Harmony. In the terminology of Indian Philosophy, Beauty is *"Bhuma"*, Beauty is *"Purna"*, Beauty is *"Eka"*.

CONCEPT OF "BHUMA"

Refer to that wonderful description given in the celebrated Chandogya Upanisad—

"Where none else is seen none else is heard, none else is known—that is *Bhuma*. But where some one else is seen, some one else is heard, some one else is known—that is *Alpa*." (Chand Up 7.25.1.)

Hence, the *"Bhuma"* is *"Sarva-Vyapi"*—all-pervasive; there is nothing outside it, nothing besides it, nothing over and above it—it is whatever there is. That is why, there is no question of its seeing, hearing, knowing some one else — there being no *"else"* outside it.

But is there any *"else"* inside it? Here the two celebrated schools of the Vedanta differ fundamentally. For, according to the Monotheistic schools of Samkara and others, the *Bhuma Brahma* is an Abstract Reality—with no parts, qualities, powers as Its *Svagata-bhedas* or internal differences; and so there is no *"else"* even inside it. But according to the Monotheistic Schools of Ramanuja and others, the *Bhuma Brahman* is a Concrete Reality, with *Jiva-Jagat*: Matter and Souls as His *Svagata-Bhedas*: and so, there are "elses" inside Him, though not outside. But let us not quarrel about words. For the fact stands out, whatever theory you accept, that whatever *is*, is *Brahman*, call it a *Svagata-bheda*, or not.

CONCEPT OF "PURNA"

Hence, the *Bhuma* is *Purna*,: Full. A non-full object essentially needs something else; but *Brahman* does not; as a matter of fact, cannot—for, as pointed out above, there is no one else than *Brahman*. There cannot be anything outside Brahman, He being *Sarvavyapi*. There is also nothing inside Brahman which is non-Brahman, that being absolutely impossible.

CONCEPT OF "EKA"

Hence, *Brahman* is "Eka"—One. If we are strict Monists then to us, Brahman is One. If we are not, then, too, to us, Brahman is One, the very idea of two or more Brahmans being an impossible one. If *Brahman* be not a whole of parts, as held by the Strict Monists, then there is no question of Harmony at all. But if *Brahman* be a whole of parts, as held by the Monotheists then Harmony is His essence, He being a harmonious, organic whole ! In one sense, of course, here, too there is really no question of Harmony. For, if the parts inside *Brahman*, viz. *Jiva-Jagat*, were disharmonious with the whole, viz *Brahman*, then how could He have existed even for a single moment, not to speak of, eternally? Hence, Real *Existence* and *Harmony* are synonymous. Yet, as from the worldly point of view, Existence is always disharmonious, it is necessary, from the philosophical point of view to point out explicitly the essence of Real Existence in the very beginning.

THE MOTHER BEAUTIFUL

And, such is our Mother Beautiful! A very common description of the Supreme Reality in Indian Philosophy is that It is *Satya-Siva-Sundara:* Existent—Auspicious—Beautiful. Another equally well-known description of the Supreme Reality is that It is *Sat-Cit-Ananda:* Being—Consciousness—Bliss. Thus, every where, the core, the cream, the climax is, as natural, mentioned last: *Sundara—Ananda:* Beauty—Bliss.

Can you not realise it through profound knowledge, as done by a philosopher? Can you not taste it through deep feeling as done by a poet? Can you not catch it through holy works, as done by a philanthropist? Then do one thing, one simple thing —just glance inside at your very own soul; just glance outside at your very own world.

Then, what will you see? You will see that in spite of apparent discrepancies, degradations, disappointments, there is an incontrovertible Beauty of Being, an explicable Joy of Living. You will feel that externally or internally, it is worth being, worth living, worth loving! But why? Simply because Beauty — Bliss — Love constitute the very core, the very cream, the very climax of this Universe of Matter and Souls, this universe of ours. However much you may try to escape this sweet conclusion, as a pessimist—you cannot, you cannot, simply because that will be going against your own nature.

And this is the sweet and simple, serene and supreme, soft and sublime message of our beloved Sri Sri Candi:—Just realise what is inherent in your Soul, what is inherent in your World — and that is one thing and one thing alone, one Truth and one Truth alone, one Reality and one Reality alone, viz. the Mother, the Mother Beautiful, the Mother Blissful, the Mother Bountiful. Bow down to Her in love, and in reverence, and in gratitude; bow down to Her and Her alone.

"Ya Devi sarva-bhutesu Kanti —
rupena samsthita,
Namastasyai namastasyai namastasyai
namo Namoh."

(Sri Sri Candi 5.55)

"The Goddess who is present in all
In the form of Beauty Supreme,
Obeisance to Her, obeisance to Her
obeisance to Her —
Life's Lovely Cream!"

The Advent Of The Divine Mother

(Continued from page 9)

goal of all perfection and attainment of all existence. She is essentially Unique and One. The Mahadevi is Omnipotent, Ubiquitous and Omniscience. But strangely enough, all extremes emanate from Her. Both bondage and bliss spring from Her divine nature. She is the fountain-head of the highest good—both spiritual attainment and material prosperity.

The Superb homage to the Divine Mother pacified Her outrageous demeanour. The turbulance faded away and took the turn of infinite pleasure and affection so much so that She was prone to bestow any offering to the Devas on prayer. The Devas seized this golden opportunity not only for themselves but for the suffering humanity as well. They were assured of eternal security on mere memorizing the Mother in times of danger. At the same time, it gained Her acceptance that anybody in his distress eulogizing Her with this particular hymn (Mahisa-hantri Stuti) would receive the Divine grace, relief from all his afflictions and a profound bliss.

The worship of the Divine Mother would ensure our communion with Her. The constant communion with Her would promote the development of friendly relations and universal fraternity. It would endow us with the realiasation of unity in multiplicity. We, the suffering humanity stand in the same platform of universal brotherliness in relation to the Divine Mother. May our Mantra Puja become fruitful. To-day, when barbarous acts have outraged the conscience of the mankind and a threat of total annihilation hovering upon us, we pray to the Divine Mother for succour to save us from the tyranny and turmoil of national and international life of a confused world-order.

THE MOTHER Goddess

HIRANMOY BANERJEE

THERE is something in the soil of Bengal which makes the Bengali highly emotional. May be it is the soft silt deposited on it bountifully by the spill water of the holy Ganges. May be it is the lush green vegetation that flourishes on it. This trait in his character, it appears, has not only influenced his life but set the course for the development of his culture. Thus the Bengalee flourishes where the emotional faculty finds scope for free play. He excels in creative efforts like fine arts, literature poetry, drama etc. . . . Bengal produced the first great painter of Modern India. It gave India her national Poet. It has built up one of the finest literatures of the world.

No wonder, the same trait shapes his attitude to the gods of the Hindu Pantheon. Its numerical strength provides scope for choice according to his mood and sentiment. Even the same god is permitted to be worshipped in different manners at different times. Having had this option of a wide choice, the Bengalee has selected the Mother Goddess Durga among the gods of the Pantheon and then again showed his preference for the form of worship which takes place in autumn, a departure from the approved practice laid down in the Puranas.

In fact, the normal form of worship is the one practised in spring. Appropriately it goes by the name of *Basanti Puja* which means worship conducted in spring. It starts on the seventh day of the full moon in the month in Chaitra, the last month of the year. The Bengali pays little attention to this Puja and has relegated it to a position of secondary importance. No doubt spring is the King of seasons when nature renews her youth and is decked in a fresh mantle of green. But spring has its own special festival, namely the Dol Festival centering round the frolicsome cowherd God Krishna, which stills the show. May be that is one of the reasons why the Bengalee showed his preference for the variant. which times the worship of the Mother Goddess in autumn. There is no doubt, however, that he let his preference for this second form get the better of him because it suits his temperament.

In fact, this variant which takes place in autumn is looked upon as a departure from the approved practice. The story goes that it was Rama the hero of the national epic Ramayana, who introduced this practice for the first time under pressure of circumstances. He was engaged in a life and death struggle with Ravana the King of Singhala for the rescue of his consort Sita whom the latter had abducted and wishing victory in his fight for this rightful cause, he thought of worshipping the Mother Goddess Durga at an unusual time. She had to be specially invoked for this and so, in the worship provided for in autumn there is a special preliminary ritual called Bodhana which means special invocation. In the form of worship prescribed for the approved ceremony which takes place in spring, this is not provided for as one is accustomed to worship the goddess at this season.

Strangely enough, Valmiki's Ramayana does not support the theory that it was Rama who introduced the autumn variant. In fact, it gives a different version altogether. It says that the famous sage Agastya who brought the light of Aryan culture to the South, advised Rama to invoke the blessings of the Sun god for ensuring victory against his adversary Ravana. He, therefore, worshipped the sun and not the Mother Goddess Durga. Evidently, the story gained currency at a much later date during the age of the Puranas. It is in the Kalika and the Brihannandikeswar Puranas that the story has been narrated for the first time. It finds mention in other Puranas as well.

Evidently, the Bengalee exercised his preference for the autumn variant because it suits his mood. The spring has its own charms any where in the world, but the autumn as we experience it in Bengal, has an appeal of its own. Here, it is not

the season of strong winds which rob the trees of their garment of leaves. It is not the season when the leaves shed their lustre and turn yellow and brown with age. In fact, in Bengal autumn is like a second spring. The bounty of the rains pouring life-giving water on the trees and shrubs and feeding the rivers and streams and ponds in the country-side makes the vegetable Kingdom luxuriate in a spurt of vigorous growth. The touch of age is still far away. What colour it lacks in contrast with the flower show of spring, is more than made up by the serene beauty of its landscape bringing into relief the contrast of the deep green of the foliage, the sparkle of the water of the streams and ponds studded with water lilies and the light green of the vast expanse of paddy fields. It is indeed the proper season for the celebration of the most colourful religious festival into which the Bengalee has transformed the autumn variant of the *Puja*.

DIVINE MOTHER'S LOVE

This ground alone would have justified the selection, but there are other grounds as well. The Durga is not worshipped alone, she is worshipped with her family of children who in their own rights are gods of major importance. Her daughter Lakshmi is the goddess of wealth. Her other daughter Saraswati is the goddess of learning, while her elder son who has the distinction of having an elephant's head planted on his body is very much in demand as his blessings spell success in all enterprises. It is a whole family of gods with the Mother Goddess as the supreme head. Individually she is strong enough to give protection against danger and shower bounty on her worshippers but as a team they are capable of fulfilling all the major wishes of a common house holder. They can protect him from evil, shower on him wealth and learning and bring success to his worldly pursuits.

AGAMANI

The fact that the Pantheon comprises a whole family exercises a special charm of its own. Autumn marks the turning point in the fortune of the village folk of Bengal. Gone are the days of worries when a spell of drought or heavy rains would mean threat to the growing crops. With the weather clearing up and the blue sky uncovering itself, the period of peace and tranquility is ushered in brightened by the hope of a bountiful harvest. In such a frame of mind, the Bengali housewife is reminded of her married daughter who has gone to live with her husband away from home. She yearns for reunion with the exiled daughter so to say and looks forward to her daughter's home-coming. The husband is not welcome at all as in a way he is the person who has brought about the parting with the daughter, but the grandchildren are by no means unwelcome.

This mood of the Bengali mother fits in nicely with the worship of the Mother Goddess along with her family of children in the happy days of autumn. The mother's feelings for the absentee daughter become transferred to the Goddess and in the process she is brought down from the aloofness of her heavenly home in the high regions of the mighty Himalayas to the earthly homes of the villagers in the countryside. The Mother Goddess becomes completely humanised and is affectionately looked upon as the daughter of the family living away with her husband and paying her annual visit to her parents to pass a few happy days with them to revive old nostalgic memories.

This mood is so catching that it affects the mind of almost every housewife. It exercises such a pervasive influence that it provides the theme for many folk songs sung by the village people. These are called *Agamani* songs because they bring the happy news of the home-coming of the beloved Goddess. It is worth while quoting a typical example. The first lines of the song read like this:

Oh King of mountains,
Please fetch quickly home my
precious Uma;
I can no more endure her separation,
my mind is restless.

So the King promptly complies with her wishes and Uma is brought back to her parents' house. Her mother thereupon plants an affectionate kiss on her cheek and asks the significant question:

The consort of the King Kisses her
daughter and asks
Say, divine daughter, did you pass your
days happily in my son-in-law's home?

GODDESS HUMANISED

This is a pertinent question indeed from the mother's point of view, who has her misgivings about her daughter's prospects of happiness in wedlock. So, in these folk songs the Divine Mother has been transformed into the married daughter paying a short visit to her parents' home. The Goddess has been completely humanised.

It appears that Bankim Chandra Chatterjee whose contributions imparted dignity to Bengali literature, understood the Bengali mind very well. Perhaps that is the reason why in his *'Ananda Math'* he conceived the grand idea of transforming the Mother Goddess into his homeland. The virile West is wedded to the idea of looking upon the country of its birth as endowed with fatherly qualities. So it is father land to him, But to the Bengalee who is cast in milder mould prefers to look upon it as a mother. To his eyes, the father stands for stern qualities and excites a feeling of awe, but his relation with his mother is tinged with a sweetness, which excites only reverential affection. So he prefers to call it mother land. Bankim Chandra took his cue from this and in his famous song *Bande Mataram*, he not only looks upon the land of his birth as his mother but further identifies her with the Mother Goddess Durga. He even goes further —than that. He identifies her with her daughters Lakshmi and Saraswati and conceives a new trinity in which the Mother Goddess stands for the land of birth which not only protects the children of the soil from aggression but sustains them with bountiful crops and provides for imparting education to them. The relevant lines read like this:

Thou art Durga, the wielder of
ten different weapons;
Thou art the goddess of wealth who
delights in lotuses;
Thou art the goddess of learning who
showers the gift of knowledge;
I bow down to Thee.

He knew that the best way to rouse patriotic feelings in his countrymen is to appeal to their emotions. He also knew that love of the country of one's birth was a new feeling to the Indian but love of God is a feeling with which he is very familiar. So by ascribing to the mother land the image of the Mother Goddess he struck upon the happy idea of harnessing religions fervour to the cause of patriotism. History bears witness to the fact that the experiment succeeded beyond expectation. The Bande Mataram provided all the inspiration that was necessary to enthuse the first band of fighters for freedom. It sustained their spirits during the darkest days of struggle and steeled their hearts against the stiffest opposition. In fact, it continued to play this great role throughout the long period of struggle until freedom was achieved.

SRIKRISHNA ON DEFENCE OF DWARAKA

RAMANI DATTA GUPTA

SRIKRISHNA was a multiple personality. In him wonderfully combined the greatest of the Incarnations of God, a profound philosopher, the ablest exponent of spiritual truths — love, devotion, knowledge, psychic control and selfless work —, a practical harmoniser of faiths, a sweet pastor, a heroic kingmaker, a wise statesman and an astute diplomat.

When Jarrasandha, king of Magadha, repeatedly attacked Mathura, Srikrishna concerted a successful plan to avoid further attacks from that redoubtable enemy. In the hilly island of Dwaraka he ordered a town as well as a fort to be built. When that was completed, he removed Ugrasen's capital to that place, well-protected by the hill-fort of Raivataka.

The Pandavas went to the forest for the sake of righteousness. Led by Srikrishna many mighty heroes of the dynasties of Bhoja, Vrishni and Andhaka, and the well-wishers of the Pandavas met in the forest to confer and determine the best method of tackling the critical situation. Drupada princes, Dhristaketu, king of the Chedis and the heroic princes of the Kekaya dynasty severely condemned the evil-minded sons of Dhritarastra. With due respect and salutation to Judhisthira Srikrishna said, "The battle-field will suck the blood of ignoble Duryodhan, Karna, Sakuni and Dushasan. We will kill them and also defeat those that are their followers. A just and virtuous king as thou art, thou will be re-installed in thy rightful kingdom, in as much as the persons who do harm deceitfully deserve to be annihilated — this is the time — honoured and eternal virtue."

While heartily sympathising with and giving solace to the bereaved and destitute Judhisthira, Srikrishna remarked that such a deplorable misfortune could befall the Pandava king only because of his absence. If he was present he could have surely baffled the evil design of the Kaurava conspirators.

Judhisthira most humbly wanted to know the reason of Srikrishna's absence at the time of his play at dice with Sakuni. Srikrishna remarked, "After haughty Sishupal was done away with in the assembly of Rajasuya sacrifice, his brother Shálwa, a past-master in assuming illusive appearances, with a view to wrecking vengeance on his brother's annihilation, made a surprise attack on Dwaraka with a powerful army. He destroyed the beauty and grandeur of rich Dwaraka, ransacked its treasures and property, and killed a large number of children, women and heroes. Returning to the capital I was engaged in a terrible fight with the indomitable Shálwa."

The city of Dwaraka was attacked by the mighty forces of Shálwa. Srikrishna, a wise statesman and an astute diplomat as he was, rose equal to the occasion and took strong emergent measures for the

defence of the capital. He thus gave Judhisthira a vivid account of the defence measures taken against the enemy:

"The wicked-natured Shálwa concentrated a vast army and besieged the city of Dwaraka. He himself disposed troops in military array and took his position in a special aerial plane. The news of the attack by the enemy spread like wild fire. The army officers, upon whom the sole responsibility of the city's defence devolved, were alert. They took all possible measures for defence. War banners were hoisted on all sides of the capital. Outer gates were closed and powerful armies posted at danger spots so that the enemy could not penetrate the protected area. Cannons were kept ready for action on the crests of surrounding city walls. Spears and other piercing weapons were kept at proper places."

"Poisoned javelins and arrows were buried at particular roads. Plenty of food-stuffs was procured and stored up. Many structures in high places and many hidden doors in suitable places were built for throwing darts and rockets. Too many trenches were dug for making the enemy fall down. Steel plates and shields were placed at different spots for warding off the molten zinc-balls, bombs and other offensive missiles. Many domes were built over the forts. Kettle-drums, bugles and various kinds of war drums were gathered for use. Lances, iron-hooks, ploughs, shields, balls of stone, axes, sharp weapons etc., were kept ready at places. Gun-powder was stored up underground. Aerial planes of different types reconnoitered for chasing the enemy."

"Military guards lifted on the forts the cavalry along with the banner-holders. Interior of the city of Dwaraka was also well protected. The public were forewarned to face the emergency. Drinking of alcohol was prohibited in the kingdom. Ugrasen and Uddhava were authorised to enforce that prohibitory order. Many amusement programmes were cancelled for saving money and curtailing expenditure. All the actors, actresses, dancers and musicians were externed."

"Bridges on many rivers were dismantled for repelling the attack of the enemy. Prohibitory order was promulgated on communication by boats. Tanks and ponds were rendered dry and useless. Areas covering two miles around the city were made danger-zones with explosives. Trenches were screened with stakes."

"The fort of Dwaraka was naturally invulnerable, well protected and fully equipped; yet it was rendered particularly invulnerable with offensive weapons at the time of the attack by the enemy. As a precautionary measure and for prevention of unlawful infiltration, passport system was strictly enforced. When king Shálwa attacked Dwaraka, none could leave and none was allowed to enter the city without showing the passport (mudrá)."

"At that time legions of infantry and cavalry, and elephant soldiers were concentrated in all roads, thoroughfares, crossings and lawns big and small. All possible precautions were taken for the maintenance of peace and order in the army. The due salaries of the soldiers were paid. Necessary food-stuffs, dresses and weapons were supplied in time. No soldier was appointed without pay. Salary of no soldier was left unpaid. After special scrutiny and enquiry new soldiers were recruited. None was admitted into the army on favour or grace. Only able-bodied and fit persons were recruited and they were paid handsome salaries. The city of Dwaraka was thus well fortified and protected against the enemy. King Ugrasen was entrusted with the responsible work of defending the city".

"Thus spake Srikrishna about the measures taken for the defence of Dwaraka. A serious battle took place. In that conflict the city of Dwaraka sustained heavy losses. A large number of soldiers were killed or wounded on both sides. In the meantime Srikrishna returned from Judhisthira's Rajasuya sacrifice. Kritavarma narrated to Srikrishna the siege of Dwaraka by the enemy. Srikrishna was immediately ready to give battle to Shálwa and made this solemn promise: "I am determined to kill Shálwa. Know it for certain that I shall not return to Dwaraka without putting an end to the inveterate enemy."

Srikrishna was true to his word. Shálwa was killed in the battle. It was always Srikrishna's grim resolve and encouraging exhortation to rise equal to the occasion and take all possible defensive and offensive measures against the enemy. Do or die: fight the inveterate enemy, win the battle and enjoy the earth, or die in action to go to heaven — this is Srikrishna's eternal exhortation to us.

SHREE SHREE DURGA
worshipped by Baghbazar Sarbojanin Durgotsab Committee

THE SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE ADVENT OF SRI CHAITANYA

DR. SRIKUMAR BANERJEE

THE emergence of Sri Chaitanyadev in the distracted environment of Bengali life in the 15th century seems a paradox, if not a miracle. Bengal in that eventful century was passing through the throes of an alien rule not yet acclimatised to the soil, torn by the whirlwind of rapid dynastic changes, and lying prostrate under a chronic mis-government which suppressed her cultural and literary life and denied the very elements of order and security. There were little signs of intellectual activity in the two centuries following the Turkish conquest and no discernible stirrings of a new spiritual consciousness. Bengali literature was driven completely underground after the composition of the Charyyapadas usually believed to have been continued from the 8th to the 12th century. The only relics of literary activity apparent in those centuries of dumb, inarticulate sowing of seeds were some Sanskrit lyrics and treatises on Smriti, Dictionary and other such branches of the literature of knowledge and religious prescription. The only other yearning of the people found its expression in the half-conscious social impulse towards adjustment of the non-Aryan and Aryan pantheon in a composite pattern to appeal to the religious feeling of the masses and the literary cultivation of these new Synthetic cults in the composition of the first embryonic forms of the Mangal Kavyas. These Mangal Kavyas, which attained their perfection of form and the purity of devotional fervour only in the Post-Chaitanya period, did not offer much evidence of elevation of sentiment or of a finer view of life-sense either in the authors or their audience; they must be taken as representing the average mentality of the Bengali race in the centuries that immediately preceded the advent of Sri Chaitanya. Nor is there any evidence, either internal or external, forthcoming in support of the usual thesis that Mangal Kavyas mark a conscious effort on the part of the people of Bengal to strengthen the sense of national unity as a reply to the challenge of foreign conquest and its threat of cultural disintegration. The Bengali mind, specially sensitive to religion and almost indifferent to political issues, did not take any serious notice of the problems posed by foreign subjection, except as they related to religious and cultural aspects of life. What happened in the Mangal Kavyas was merely the cultivation of a long-continued process set afoot long before the conquest in which the mixed racial elements of the population entangled in the conflict of the transition from decadent Buddhism to resurgent Hinduism were sought to be reconciled in a harmonious fusion of creed and culture.

The finer flowering of the racial mind was evident in the rather thin stream of lyric poetry and the tidal flow of religious emotion fostered by secular eroticism, which formed the basis of the Radha Krishna love cult in popular consciousness and poetic inspiration. Jayadeva, with his intrancing melody of rhythm and diction and rushing torrent of amatory passion in which the first faint traces of a purer devotion and sublimer philosophy are discernible behind the cataract of music and the tumult of the Rhapsody of love, is apt to take us by surprise, as he seems to come entirely unpresaged and unannounced. His poetry gives us the first clue to the emotion which must have been gathering momentum in the deeper layer of Bengali life beneath its hard outer crust of luxuriant indulgence and sentimental dalliance with tribe love-conceits so indolently crystallised in the court-poetry of Lakshmana Sen. The wonder is not so much with the poet as with the people, if one is to assume some bond of affinity of taste and temperament between the two. A poet may be frequently an unexplained enigma not owing allegiance to the evolutionary concept; but an environment must be the slow creation of ages and of tastes cultivated and developed at leisure. The instantaneous reception given to Jayadeva and his all-India recognition in an incredibly short period testify to the fact that he chimed in with the cultural taste of the age and his audience was fully prepared to receive him. Where do we find evidence of this awakened consciousness in the somnolent atmosphere of the court, in which the King played at capping verses with his court-poets and nursing a somewhat enervating morganatic love and in the wider atmosphere of the country in which people were preoccupied with the customary temple rites and ceremonies and the indulgence of a not-too-tepid religious sentiment? Jayadeva therefore is the first definite indication that Bengal was preparing her soul for the enactment of the colourful drama of the devotion-inspired love of Radha and Krishna and that she had kept the fact a tolerably well-preserved secret from the observers of her outward features and lineaments.

VIDYAPATI

The fountains first began to flow in the somewhat arid waste of life, a century and a half later, in the neighbouring State of Mithila which then constituted a single cultural unit with Bengal, though she wielded a slightly different poetic language. In Vidyapati (1380-1460) the promise held out by the advent of Jayadeva was fully redeemed and the Radhakrishna cult, still retaining its courtly and somewhat conventional origin, became charged with a new passion and potency of appeal which transformed a romantic love into a divine yearning. Breaking away from the close confines of the court, its sophisticated tone and rhetorical tricks of style and its occasional use as an instrument of fulsome praise to patrons, it flooded the hearts of all and sundry with the purest religious exaltation, the

sublimation of an overpowering and irresistible beauty that swept across all barriers and carried its potent spell to the inmost hearts of the people at large. It is to be noted that Mithila was the land of traditional forms of worship and rather conservative in its acceptance of a new and somewhat unconventional faith based more upon the feelings of the heart than on time-honoured observances. Vidyapati himself was a worshipper of Siva and the Kings of Mithila were also Saivites, not Vaishnava devotees by conviction. Vaishnavism was for them rather a thing of poetic grace and beauty than one of innermost acceptance, a regulative principle of life and conduct. Vidyapati also wrote a number of padas testifying to his devotion to Shiva-Durga and other Puranic gods and goddesses; and some of them were outpourings of devotion to the universal, non-denominational God. And yet his poetic soul could not but respond to love and beauty and the purer and deeper strains of Vaishnavism nurtured by those soft influences. The future belonged to the Vaishnava faith, with its poignant human drama, its intense savour of beauty in all its forms, its most thrilling and purifying emotions of self-effacement and self-surrender, the pathos of un-

Jayadeva

merited and patiently borne suffering almost too soul-racking for human sensibility, and above all, its wider vistas of human life and eternity that take us to the very frontiers of mystic understanding and revelation. Vidyapati with the prophetic vision of a true artist, foresaw all these glorious possibilities of the new faith and impelled equally by his artistic worship of beauty and by his ardent and far-seeing spiritual vision, launched upon this supreme adventure of the spirit.

It is difficult to assess precisely the nature of the immediate impact of Vidyapati's *padas* upon the poetic literature of Bengal. Half a century must be allowed for the influence to penetrate deeply into the emotional life of the country, even conceding the intimacy of contact between Mithila and Bengal through the concourse of students migrating to Mithila to be initiated into the mysteries of *Nyaya Shastra*. In fact, Vidyapati was accepted within the inner fold of Vaishnavism only after Sri Chaitanya had set his seal of approval on his orthodoxy through an appreciative taste of his poems. Padavali literature, though anticipated in the Pre-Chaitanya age and undertaken by a handful of Pre-Chaitanya writers, really entered upon the flood tide of its career through the impetus offered by the life and teachings of Sri Chaitanya. Vidyapati really came into his own as a potent influence of Bengali Vaishnava literature in the Post-Chaitanya era, having had quite a host of Bengal imitators, one of whom was known by his sobriquet of the Junior Vidyapati, together with a wide imitation of the Brajabuli dialect and idiom in the Bengali Padavalis. Indeed it is doubtful whether the Brajabuli form in which a large proportion of Vidyapati's poems are found today was really an innovation of Vidyapati or a corrupt version made by his Bengali imitators of the original Maithili actually employed by him. Vidyapati was, however, a conscious linguist, having a mastery of many dialectical forms and fully conscious of the sweetness and flavour of the colloquial *Abahatta* or the rustic speech actually used by the moral people of Mithila. Hence it is quite probable that Brajabuli form was his own invention, though it might have been dabased by the Bengali poets with inapt use and by hoisting it into its corresponding Bengali idiom. At any rate, Vidyapati had an assured and authentic place in the list of Bengali Vaishnava singers and his courtly sentiment and secular eroticism refined by subtler spiritual suggestions exercised an abiding influence upon the form and contents of all subsequent Padavali literature.

Chandidas is also mentioned as a Pre-Chaitanya poet whose songs were tasted with great relish by Sri Chaitanya and had for him a great spiritual appeal which inspired and reinforced his spirit of mystical devotion. The identification of this Chandidas is a matter of baffling uncertainty, as the great Chandidas, the star poet of Vaishnavism, is usually taken to be Post-Chaitanya in his period of flourishing.

The only other Chandidas, Bashu Chandidas, who may be assigned to the Pre-Chaitanya era and whose work, now designated as "Sri Krishna Kirtan" answers to the description of Sanatan Goswami as the originator of *Dan Khanda* and *Naka Khanda* as a part of Krishnalila, is too gross and vulgar in his tastes and too unorthodox in his version of the story to be considered quite acceptable to the refirmed spiritual sensibilities of Sri Chaitanya. At any rate if there was another major Padavali writer of the name of Chandidas, apart from Barhu of the Pre-Chaitanya and Dwija of the Post-Chaitanya period, we know precious little of him and his works must have been inextricably interwoven between the writings of the other two.

SRI CHAITANYA

These are all the traceable antecidents of the interfusion between a romantic love-story of plebeian life and the exalted devotional fervour that provided the groundwork for the emergence of Sri Chaitanya in the last quarter of the 15th century. But the whole scene was transformed by the magic

touch of Sri Chaitanya's personality with his passionate immersion in and complete identification with the thrill of a devotion-centred love as embodied in the divine sport of Radha and Krishna. He transfigured himself into the joint personality of the lovers, now impersonating the one and now the other as the frenzy took possession of him, and transmuting his hallucinatory trances into the purest thrill of God-quest and God-realisation. What had been a courtly convention and an amatory exercise suddenly assumed the urgency of a crucial issue of life, of an inner illumination of the soul, a dedicatory mission that demanded instant fulfilment. A dim legendary memory far removed from the actual conditions of contemporary life became a burning reality, an unquenchable thirst for perfection, finding a living confirmation in the passion-tossed limbs of Sri Chaitanya and his tortured soul ever in the throes of an elusive and tantalising vision. All the different episodes of the Radha Krishna lila, in their various phases of emotional fluxes, were rehearsed and visibly reproduced in the life and doings of Sri Chaitanya, and a lovely myth assumed plush and blood before the enraptured gaze of contemporaries. It was the example of Sri Chaitanya which fixed the subtle and delicate conception of the divine love deep into the inner fibres of the racial consciousness and made it an article of their daily creed of the people, a beaconlight to illumine the harsh unlovely routine of their average earthly existence. For once, the miracle happened, heaven came down to earth, and people adapted themselves to it quite easily and without any sense of incognity.

But it is not so much with Sri Chaitanya that we are concerned as with the people of the age. A genius is always unpredictable, transcending the ordinary processes of historical evolution, and not always hands in glove with his environment. The wonder is not about the emergence of Chaitanya, but about the complete assimilation of his teachings and emotional fervour by the common people of his times. The average Bengalee for two centuries after the Moslem conquest passively responded to the pressure of the age and was painfully preoccupied with forces of political and social disruption which prevented any harmonious integration of his being. Tossed about by the conflicting winds of change, the victim of persecution in all spheres of life which stifled his urge for self-expression, he could hardly attain a state of stable equilibrium, in which true self-knowledge was possible. The one pivot round which his being steadily revolved was the desire for fusion among the heterogenous elements of its social and religious life. This attempt to forge a unity manifested itself in the first tentative efforts to weave a framework of Mangal Kavyas, which were to wait till about the advent of Sri Chaitanya to attain the fulness of their stature and the plentitude of their religious inspiration. In fact the poets and readers of these Mangal Kavyas strike one as narrow and pedestrian in their outlook invoking even the gods for selfish ends, meeting the challenge of life, with negligible exceptions, with a timid avoidance of a spirit of adventure and hugging safety at all costs. The few Vaishnava poems written during this period, including translations of the Bhagbat and the Ramayana testify to the growth of a purer strain of religious emotion, but the current is sluggish and the leaven of inspiration too thinly spread out. We cannot imagine the whole mass of the people as being caught up in the surging and sweeping flood-tide of a great transforming emotion by these thin, intermittent trickles of a sentiment just released in its operation. The picture of the State of Nabadwip just on the eve of Sri Chaitanya's incarnation given in Brindaban Das's *Chaitanya Bhagbat* truthfully sums up our general impression of the Bengalees of the age as steeped in a stolid, self-complacent ritualism in which the desire of self-indulgence masquerades under the thin disguise of an unedifying worship.

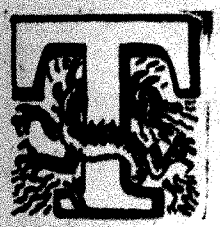
Bengal in the 15th century was on the way of reaching a geographical unity and was some way advanced on the road to racial solidarity, but she had not yet discovered her soul and had no clear

Vidyapati

idea of her destiny in life. The Bengali mind was painfully exploring its way through the debris of a severely shaken social order and speculating on the avenues of a new synthesis. Its literary inspiration was uncertain and its expression clutched at Sanskrit models without achieving its own individuality. Its petty feudal lords frittered their energies in intestinal strife and in tightening the bond of its social and religious observances. Radhunandan was the legislator of its religious life, and Navyanyana indicated the main line of its intellectual efforts. The great Durga Puja festival was just about to be organised and provide a cementing bond and the foundation of the cultural life of the people. Nothing presaged its great receptivity of Chaitanya's religion of love, the wonderful outburst of its religious lyrics inspired by the Radha-Krishna cult as interpreted by Sri Chaitanya, the supreme productivity of its many-sided intellectual life, its efflorescence of creative activity in the art and organisation of living. From being a rather colourless bye-product of the Aryan civilisation in India, it all at once shot forth into unquestioned primacy among the various States and became the great radiating centre of spiritual energy and inspiration. Bengal in the age of Sri Chaitanya is a paradox beyond the reach of all materialistic and historical explanation, an unrecognisable transformation and sublimation of its immediate past.

WOMEN'S role in the PUJA

* by BIJOYA BHATTACHARJEE *



THE Durga Puja is the most important socio-religious festival of the Bengalee Hindus and so it creates the greatest sensation in the Hindu families. Many weeks before the advent of the Puja, people begin to make preparations for it and the whole society feels a new stir.

The present system of Sarvojanin Puja has reduced considerably the importance of women in the festival. Formerly, the Puja was celebrated mainly in individual homes and most of the women of the locality were asked to co-operate with it to make the function a success. For days together the women remained busy in the 'Pujabari'. Now-a-days the Sarvojanin Pujas are organised and managed by the boys of the locality and the girls have only a minor role to play in them. The popularity of the Sarvojanin Puja, it may be pointed out here, has brought about a change in the atmosphere of the festival. Formerly, it was essentially a domestic affair in which the co-operation of others was sought. Now-a-days it is a public affair and so it is conducted with an eye to the public taste. Consequently, we find to-day the universal use of gramophone records through the microphone. Not infrequently we find a spirit of competition among different Puja Committees and like all other departments of life politics has entered into the Sarvojanin Pujas also. Recently, some political leaders very often are invited to inaugurate the Pujas. In many Sarvojanin Pujas money is spent on a lavish scale which is often denounced by the moralists. Sometimes a part of the collection is spent for some humanitarian purpose also. Anyway, due to the Sarvojanin Pujas our boys tend to become a little unruly.

PUJA AND BONUS

With the advent of the Puja the economic side of the festival attracts the attention of many families at the very outset. Of course, there are some families who can afford to ignore this question, but their number is few. The first thing that concerns participants is the contribution to the Sarvojanin Puja Funds. Everyone tries to contribute something, not always willingly but mainly to please or rather not to antagonise the local people. If the husband can earn a Puja bonus from the employer, this economic question is partially answered. I have seen many families talking about bonus just before the Puja. The other day the wife of a young professor expressed her disappointment because there was no chance of her husband getting an extra allowance during the Puja and she regretted that the remuneration for examining the scripts had already been spent. During this time many w ves are found to exclaim how excellent it would have been if their husbands were employed in some commercial firms—which give handsome bonus to the employees. This year the housewives have an additional reason for worry due to the abnormal rise in prices. Anyway, a budget is more or less prepared—in many cases a deficit one.

SHOPPING

In towns, particularly in a city like Calcutta, the women, young and old, married and unmarried, take the initiative in the matter of shopping. Very often, of course, the wife is accompanied by the husband but he plays almost in all cases a secondary part. In many cases, he is given the power simply of sanctioning the money and that power also more often than not is absolutely formal. The women go from shop to shop, see varieties of sarees and blouses but find it difficult to make the final choice. In the days preceding the Puja the important shops are so crowded with women that the menfolk find it difficult to enter them. The women purchase clothes not simply for themselves and their children but also for many relatives, near and dear ones. Most of the women, however, make it a point to show everything they have purchased to their neighbours and discuss their prices, qualities etc.

PUJA EXCURSIONS

The Puja is an occasion for many families to go out on excursions. Before the Puja many people are heard asking one another, "would you go anywhere during the Puja or remain here ?" Fortunate is that family which has any of its members working in the Railway Department because it would enable them to travel with the Railway pass. Now-a-days if the wife works in the Railway, she can take her husband with her. This has enhanced the status of the wife. Families with no one working in the Railway become disappointed. The members of the families—both men and women and particularly the young—discuss the various places where they can go, they consult the Railway time-table very frequently and take information about hotels and *dharamsalas*. The advertisements of hotels attract the attention of the people mostly during this time. Many write letters to different hotels and at last make the final selection. The decision of many families is of course to drop the project after a thorough discussion.

PUJA NUMBERS

Another problem is the purchase of the Puja Number of various journals. Journals containing short stories, novels and cinema news are preferred by most women. In the matter of purchase of the Puja number of journals I have found many women

(Continued on page 27)

AN UNFORGETTABLE CHARACTER

By DILIP KUMAR ROY

CARLYLE has aptly said: "A sincere man is a hero." Anyone who has met Shahid Suhrawardy will agree with this famous dictum. He stood out—first and last and in the middle—as a sincere soul aspiring for two values: truth and beauty. He suffered much but suffering only brought out the more luminously his sincerity and tolerance which made him so lovable throughout his chequered life—chequered at every bend in his life's long journey.

But not chequered only. He was too brilliant a man in every sense of the term. He graduated from Calcutta University with Honours in English in 1910 and then in Oxford in 1914. He went then to Russia and spent four years there when the very ground under his feet shook under the impact of the Bolshevik Revolution. He had to escape as he had disliked the Bolshevik regime and did not mince his words when friends asked him his opinion. In Moscow he had become a producer of the world-famous Moscow Art Theatre. His friends—the far-famed Katchalov and Madame Germanova—also escaped with him into Berlin where the Moscow Kunstler Theatre stirred the hearts of thousands by their marvellous acting. It was there I first met him. He came to me to ask me to compose the music for Rabindranath's *King of the Dark Chamber* which they wanted at the time to put on the stage in Berlin. The project fell through, but Shahid became a real "cynosure of neighbouring eyes" among the German connoisseurs of the histrionic art, a thing not to be wondered at as he was not only a highly gifted "regisseur" as they called him, but also a shining personality who sparkled in any gathering whether artistic or intellectual. He was cultured to his finger-tips and a remarkable linguist. He spoke fluently at least half a dozen continental languages. His command of English and Russian in which he could lecture won the admiration of all who heard him. I can almost recapture to this day the mischievous—but not malicious—smile on his lips when he cracked his jokes or made his repartees. To give an instance or two of his wit:

I had made a number of Russian friends in Berlin among whom were three sisters. One of them was a fine pianist and another a dancer.. On the occasion of the birthday celebration of the eldest, Minna Perlemann, I invited Shahid. He turned up but half an hour late for dinner. Minna pouted her lips and said: "Mais il faut etre ponctuelle, Monsieur!" * Pat came the rejoinder: "Mais je vous demande pardon, Mademoiselle! Ponctualite, c'est le commencement de materialism." ** And he was forgiven in a chorus of laughter. Then he started consolidating his victory. He spoke in French, but I will give it in English.

"You chafed at unpunctuality, *ma cherie*, but had you been a guest of the Nizam you would have learnt to appreciate how happy one could be if one lived in eternity as they assuredly do in Hyderabad. Listen. There was, at the time I was the Nizam's guest, a high English official staying with him in the room next to mine. He had to take the train to Aurangabad: he was to see the Ellora Caves, you know. I told him not to go to the station in time as in Nizam's dominion the trains were always proverbially late. But as he was English to the core, ergo, punctual to a fault, he wouldn't listen. So, in despair, I had to go with him to the station ten minutes before the time. The guard whistled just one minute before the train was to start. So my friend smiled at me: 'So my friend,you see, I was right: the train *has* started in time, to the minute'. I gave him a more devastating smile and riposted: 'But no, my friend. It is yesterday's train'." And how the three sisters giggled!

I could go on retailing his brilliant jokes and wisecracks had space been at my disposal. But I have to be serious now.

Shahid made his mark wherever he went. After his Berlin stay he went to Paris, where I met him once again, as the Secretary to the Artistic Section of the League of Nations. Then he was appointed to the Nizam Professorship of Islamic studies at the Vishwabharati. Thereafter he became the Bageshwari Professor of Comparative Fine Arts at the Calcutta University where he gave brilliant lectures from 1932-43.

It was there I met him once again and we had a lovely time together with Netaji Subhas Bose who also fell under his irresistible spell. And, sometimes, we used to visit Sarat Bose's house whenever Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru visited Calcutta. I was wont to exhibit Shahid in pride to my friends, itching to shine in his light as well as to thrill my friends who knew what was what. And Shahid never failed me for he invariably rose to the occasion to make the party go. People loved to hear him talk or, shall I say, coruscate with his quips and lampoons, anecdotes and reminiscences.

Thereafter he had to leave Calcutta for reasons I need not state. But he was not at all happy in Pakistan even though his brother H. S. Suhrawardy helped him in his hour of need by appointing him Pakistan's Ambassador to Spain in 1955.

I should have mentioned that I met him for the fourth and fifth time in New York and London respectively where I had to sing and Indira dance (in the course of our world-tour, as our cultural tour had been financed by the cultural department of the India Government under Abul Kalam Azad and Pandit Nehru). He came to appreciate warmly the spiritual personality of Indira and implored her to remember him in her prayers. Then, when we had finally settled in Poona I wrote to him and sent him our play on Mirabai entitled, *The Beggar Princess*. He wrote back at once:

---

* You ought to have been punctual, Monsieur!

** I beg your pardon, Mademoiselle! For punctuality is the beginning of materialism.

Pakistan Embassy, Madrid, Spain. San Sebastian August 4, 1956, Spain.

My dear Dilip,

I cannot tell you what a pleasure it was to me to get your letter which Vladiya sent on from Italy. You call me a nomad, but I am only of this earth and not, like you, of the skies. I feel all the time that you are still in the land of the living, but it is a great comfort for me to fix your abode and think of your pervasive personality in a single spot. It is true I am Pakistan's Ambassador since a year and eight months. . . . . Spain is so deeply immersed in its catholicism that it takes no interest in the spiritual experiences of other lands. Nor is it rich enough to indulge in exotic manifestations of the spirit. So I do not think that in your next wandering you will be passing by here, but if I know your dates I could meet you in London, Paris or Rome.

I am extremely happy to get news of Indira Devi. I do hope she has not quite forgotten me. Her spiritual experiences interested me deeply. What can be better than to be endowed with the gift to realise the Lord in this life of ours?

I was delighted to read your drama on Mirabai, entitled *The Beggar Princess*. Mirabai is a splendid and beloved figure and I am so glad you have been writing about her. These days we are apt to forget so many beautiful and miraculous things that have been ..... You have not lost your appreciation of precious words unfolding precious thoughts. I will be thinking of you with love.

With affectionate regards to both of you,

Yours ever,

Shahid

LONG SILENCE

After that I had no news of him for seven long years. I knew of course that he had been recalled after his brother and sponsor, H. S. Suhrawardy, had to abdicate, but did not know where Shahid was till I heard a rumour that he was in Karachi in a derelict condition. I wrote to him at once and he wrote back that he was bed-ridden with heart-trouble. I wrote at once to Panditji about his illness, requesting him to invite him to Delhi for treatment if it was at all possible, and added:

"To talk to him and hear his brilliant discourses about the cultural achievements of different races was a sheer joy apart from being an education in itself. But what had endeared him most to me, Panditji, was his poetical talent which might well have evolved into genius had he only persevered in invoking the Muse to help him give voice to his deepest aspirations in the realm of art and poetry which he loved passionately since his adolescence and studied in divers lands in divers traditions."

I wrote also, in a postcript, how I used to love Shahid's lovely poems, some giving off, as it were the delicate fragrance of violets laden with a nostalgic sadness, or else, breathing the poignancy of disillusionment of a born idealist. I sent him three of his poems in three different moods, two of which I give below as they were praised by Sri Aurobindo himself—poems which I had translated into Bengali and published in my Anami, First Edition (1935).

You will not rue me
When I am dead,
Like a careless flower
Dropped from your head.
But some stormy day,
By some firelight hour,
I'll stir in your soul
Like an opening flower.
You will smile and think
And let fall your book,
And bend o'er the fire
With a far-off look.

The other is an autobiographical poem and one of the most moving poems of its kind, almost Baudelarian in its intensity:

On those that wander in the sands,
Panting in thirst in sweltering heat;
On those that stretch small helpless hands
To fend inexorable fate:
On those that irrevocably late
Bend down to kiss thy nailed feet,
On those who in the pale wastes of the sea
Hearken to her last threnody —
O Lord, rain pity;
On those that in lone nights too deeply steep
Whose hearts are torn with vain despair
On those that in the prison's air
Dream flowering fields and cannot weep,
On those who in hunger cleave their night
And in sorrow keener than thy sword
On those that fall in unequal fight —
On all of them have pity Lord!
But most of all on him who has loved in vain
And thrown away the flower of his youth
For a fresh and fickle mouth
O Lord, shower thy grace
On him who in travail and in pain
Bends low his pale and sorrow-sainted face
On the image of her, with wistful memory
Of the last-drunk bitter bowl
Of her caresses' treachery
O Lord, have mercy on his soul,

I pleaded with Panditji in this (somewhat unconventional) way as I was sure he was incapable of misunderstanding it. And I was not mistaken, for he did sympathise sincerely and replied to me promptly on May 29, 1963:

NEHRU'S REPLY

My dear Dilip Kumar,

I am interested and rather sad to have news of Shahid Suhrawardy. I knew he had gone as Pakistan's Ambassador to Spain. After that I had no news of him.

I would gladly help him or do something for him. But I do not quite know what I can do. If he can come to Delhi, I would welcome and try to help him. I do not think I should write to him directly. My writing to his brother, H. S. Suhrawardy will probably be misunderstood.

If you can, you might write to him and tell him that I have very pleasant memories of him and am sorry to learn of his illness. If he can come to Delhi he would be welcome here.

Yours

Jawaharlal Nehru

I sent a copy of this letter to Shahid who wrote back, moved:

Lakham House,
Karachi-5
18-6-63

My dear Dilip,

I am more than grateful to you for your love and friendship and through you also to Indira Devi for her kind wishes.

Your excerpts from Pandit Nehru's letter to you about me touched me to the quick. I was surprised that he still has thought for a poor person like myself when his mind is occupied with world questions. You will see from what I have written that no special sanitorium is needed by me. I have decided not to write to Pandit Nehru: should my heart, by some miracle, improve and I become normal, I shall go to Delhi myself; it would be better

still, should you get an opportunity somewhere to meet him, if you could talk to him about me, express to him my gratefulness and how his words moved me to tears. I am the same age as he. I certainly believe that friends like you exist for me in spite of differences of regime I think often of you and Indira Devi in my prayers and I beg you to pray for me. My brother also had a heart stroke and is abroad in Lebanon on his way to London. * I have no direct news from him.

I am always your affectionate friend,

Shahid.

I could not alas, persuade Shahid to come to Poona to us for treatment when he declined to go to Delhi. He died in March this year in Karachi where I ought to have gone. But as that is neither here nor there, I would conclude with a brief account of his contact with Subhas.

CONTACT WITH SUBHAS

Everyone who knows Subhas must know what a deep and genuine tenderness he had for men of talent and how he would go out of his way to seek their company. That is why he appreciated my initiative everytime I presented brilliant poets and writers to him on my musical soirees. On one such evening I introduced Shahid to him in 1939 (or was 1940?) as a many-mooded genius who "touched nothing that he did not adorn" as I said with a courtly bow. "But," I took good care to add, "I myself would call him a poet, first and last, who has been appreciated by great personages like Sri Aurobindo and the Poet Laureate Bridges. But should you still refuse to be impressed, my dear Subhas then I would recommend you to his gift of the gab in which he is second to none in this wide world ringing with platform speakers. Indeed his scintillating conversation does remind one of a French critic who said about Anatole France's style: Si le cristal parlait, il parlerait ainsi'—if the crystal spoke it would speak like this. You simply can't have a dull moment in a party where *he* presides!" And so I would have gone on and on had not Shahid chimed in with his notorious mischievous smile: 'But halt! I must cut him short in self-defence as he actually threatens to paint me into a hero like you, sir!" I have embroidered the dialogue, but his comment was typical, I contend. None could break a lance with him and return home with his chin up.

But levity apart, I do claim that my bringing them together was as happy as could be because while, on the one hand, Subhas did fall in love with him at first sight, Shahid, in his turn, was not shade less impressed by "the light on Subhas's face," as he told me afterwards. In the next phase of their friendship, Shahid came actually to vie with me in my admiration of his "stupendous sincerity and power of self-dedication," as he phrased it.

And then, as the days went by, Subhas became more and more impressed by Shahid's luminous personality, and his command of the English language. I then showed him a few of Shahid's letters written to me as early as 1932. "These are truly moving letters, Dilip," he said and I must congratulate you once again on your enviable power of drawing people out—like a born artist.' Subhas was usually chary of praise, but, whenever anyone or anything touched him to the core, he would break out into a veritable halleluja. As Shahid himself remarked once when he extolled his downright nature, Subhas was what he was because he had never been one to believe in half-measures. So I will end with the letters referred to:

HOMAGE TO AUROBINDO

Hyderabad (Deccan)
January 1932.

My dear Dilip,

Our common friend N—handed me your letter as I was leaving for this delightful town of friends and palaces. I wish I had a chance of meeting you before I sailed for Paris, because I want to explain to you how far I have travelled in my conception of what poetry should be from the poems of mine you mention in your letter. The more I live the more I grow convinced in my inner being that words are merely used in order to suggest a deep and great reticence. So that all the foolish adjectives of some of my poems appear to me to be sins that screech to my quietness like parrots. Being in this state of indecision about all art and things more important than art, how can I allow you to publish these poems of mine? . . . . You surprise me by your assumption that I may not relish the criticisms of my poems. . . . I had thought you knew me a little better. You knew at least of my habit of cruel self-analysis. I would love suggestions and corrections from anyone, to say nothing of Sri Aurobindo, who, whatever one's attitude, is to me one of the biggest men of this country. . . . .

Now to your letter: It is not for me to teach you anything I who am all unhemmed, but let me suggest as a friend who feels and has gone through a great deal in life quantitatively if not in quality, that it is probably easier to give up that which one does not much value, rather than that which is one's greatest sin. To the world things are of a different importance than to oneself, who has delved into one's soul. . . . . Please do not misunderstand: I do not hold myself up as a model, knowing myself as I do, and not in the habit of regarding myself in the exaggerated mirror of the eyes of my loving friends like you, whose affection is based on a misunderstanding. But in spite of the broken ways of my life, I somehow feel that I am reaching, after all, to some values. These I would like to suggest to you for consideration, without attaching to them any extraordinary importance, save as the experience of a friend presented to a friend.

First of all, let me tell you how very grateful I am to you for your letter, and how still more envious of your buoyancy of spirit, which, I infer, is the result of your nearness to such a great personality as Sri Aurobindo.

In the second place, let me assure you in all sincerity, that I never wished to criticise in any way the new mode of your life or the ideal which inspired it. It was only to point out to you, rather unnecessarily, the deceit lurking round the corner, which is eternally leading us to cut short the way to the consummation. But, as you rightly say, our temperaments are different and I dare not allow myself to grope in the maze of your psychic experiences, placed as I am in an absolute wilderness about myself. To my rather unemotional, slow and tortured consciousness the road seems so steep and difficult of ascent, that I feel inclined to mistrust all quick realisations in art or life, and the sphere of the latter is larger than the hemmed-in square in which Beauty realises itself. How can I not be-

* H. S. Suhrawardy died subsequently in the continent.

lieve in what Sri Aurobindo describes as the vitality of the psychic life? Is it not precisely because of this that I have turned my back upon Art (with a capital A) as well as, perhaps, upon greater things? Anyway, I want to tell you, what I want you to believe, that whatever I wrote stemmed from one sole desire, and that was to tell you, which my nature does not allow to do often, with what deep tenderness I have been watching, or rather feeling in myself, your progress, which to me, alas, must remain a process but never an end!

And how much I am now convinced that you have misunderstood me. Not that I am vain enough to think of myself as a nature *mal comprise*. Good God, do you really think that when you preach to me the Lord as a touchable, speakable, feelable entity, it is a novelty to me, or that I, of all persons, will revolt at what has been the entire matter of my consciousness ever since it came to grips with experience? And your proud humility of throwing yourself against the 'highly educated' like me! How well I know this cliche, and I picture to myself your naive responding soul already within the folds of reality which, alas, is beyond the reach of our intellectualised warped selves, we, "the educated," who have lost all contact with the full and real things of life! Dilip, you are still very young on the path and thank God for it. But what, if instead of a trusted guide one trudges with the load of one's bitter thoughts? Why should you think I should not understand your taking refuge so joyously at the feet of one whom you look upon as *Divine*? If I could transcend the sense of the God in me and look with dual eyes, would I not have done the same. But how strange that you should have known me so little as to interpret my utter valuelessness in the heart of reality as scepticism! However, I do not blame misunderstandings. In fact I consider them as fecund seeds and leavens of mutual influences. Who knows that the tie which binds us and which prompts me to write things to you I would not to another human being is not a result of this? . . . . And it did me good to know that Sri Aurobindo can be seen by outsiders on certain days of the year. . . . . Many things in life are like a stone thrown into the sea, and the thrower does not know what shores the ripples would touch . . . .

I have read with great interest and good to myself what Sri Aurobindo writes about my poems. If he only knew the tenuous inspiration behind them and its cheap artistry! I who have written them know this so well, for I have to read a few poems, and I can go on "rhyming and rhythming" as others have done. The source of many of them is my literary culture and not any deep spiritual experience; perhaps sometimes . . . . a wistfulness . . . . a half-opened hope . . . . a visual enchantment . . . . . nothing more . . . . **Yet** . . . . often I catch myself writing poems, I do not know why. Why do I write? —I have no particular thought or feeling which must be translated into rhythm . . . . Perhaps because an educated man must, I suppose, be doing something, and not merely looking at the beautiful lake which spreads before him beyond the tree-tops . . . . You see what a *brute matiere* of sensations, experiences, longings and thoughts I am!. . . .

A POEM ON GOD

Sri Aurobindo's poem on God* is very beautiful! I was much moved by it. As little minds can also suddenly think the same thoughts as big minds (by chance, or of a sudden) I too, wanted to speak to you of that humility which is so adequately expressed there. I am glad you have such a Guru to guide you: do whatever he says, unquestioningly. Not only the ancient Vedas, but Hafiz also said in the opening lines of his Divine:—

Colour the prayer mat with wine
If the old man of the tavern tells you this,
Because the Teacher is not unaware
of the Way and the ways of the Goal,
With love,
Yours affectionately.
Shahid Suhrawardy.

* *Thou who pervadest all the worlds below,*
Yet sitst above!
Master of all who work and rule and know,
Servant of love!
Thou who disdainest not the worm to be,
Nor even the clod!
Therefore we know in that humility
That thou art God.
(Sri Aurobindo)

My dear Dilip,

I read and re-read the marvellous letters Sri Aurobindo wrote to you the other day anent Krishnaprem's letters. Your Guru says clearly and beautifully—and how beautifully and adequately—all that is the feeling of the modern mind which, alas, is a jumble of Marx, Freud, Jung and your idealistic Samaritan humanists with large hearts and small brains. No one endowed with spiritual experience in Europe really looks to their half-truths except as *acrobatic intellectuelle*—clever jugglery that raises a scaffolding of illusion in a world of deeper illusions. Possibly the naive spirits of, shall we say, the societies for the Promotion of Indo-European Fraternity and Kultur are for attaching to them an awe-striking importance, which, by the way, is their *metier*, their very raison d'etre: all that is fluid and inchoate and hot on the anvil in Europe must be promulgated by them as finished iron-ware in India!

I was greatly struck by Krishnaprem's clear saying that the love of Krishna and Radha is not the symbol of divine love but the fountainhead of all human love, "The Concrete of concretes." * It is a thing which I have deeply believed in, and which, you may recall, I have often unsatisfactorily and regretfully tried to suggest to you in our talks and correspondence: this Spirituality of Concreteness. I feel no less sick than Krishnaprem of those countrymen of ours who are so afraid of Europe that they insist on explaining away idolatry by making it *symbolical*. It is, pardon me Dilip, the same psychology (of unconscious genuflexion) which impels many of your scholars to discover in the Hindu Epics the existence of aeroplanes and television. . . . How such an undignified Dignity contrasts with

(Continued on page 27)

* Sri Krishnaprem wrote to me on 25.3.32 (Anami, 2nd ed. p. 354): "I liked your poem on Radha immensely . . . . I have only one observation to make. It seems to me that you have universalised too much. You have sung really of the love of the soul for the Divine, taking Radha and Krishna as symbols for that. Now I believe that the truth is really the other way about: The love of the soul for the Divine is, as it were, a symbol or reflection of the love of Radha for Krishna . . . . That is why I cannot bear philosophisings such as that the blue colour of Krishna is the Sunya (ether) and the music of the flute is the **Omkar dhvani** etc. etc. The blue colour of Krishna **is** the blue colour of Krishna and, by God, Dilip, the music of His flute is far greater than the **Omkar dhvani** great and real though the latter certainly is. . . . This is the meaning of what the fools call idolatry. I do not refer to the half-hearted apologetic sort of worship which uses the image as a symbol or focus for meditation and what not, but the real full-blooded **seva** (worship) which sees the **vigraha** (image) as Krishna Himself.

SANSKRIT
THE ONLY NATIONAL LANGUAGE FOR INDIA

By ASHUTOSH LAHIRY

INDIA was the motherland of our race, and Sanskrit, the Mother of European languages. She was the mother of our philosophy; mother, through the Arabs, of much of our mathematics; mother, through the Buddha, of the ideals embodied in Christianity; mother through the village community, of our self-government and democracy. Mother India is, in many ways, the Mother of us all".

Thus wrote, Prof. Will Durant, the distinguished American philosopher and world-historian. It is a unique tribute to the genius of India, from a far-seeing foreign savant.

And yet, how many of us — English-educated Indians—are to-day conscious of India's contributions in the past, its present capability to resume its ancient role, and impart a new and revolutionary direction to the affairs of the world in diverse spheres of life,—quite distinct from the one to which we have been accustomed under foreign rule, and which for the moment, holds the world in its titanic grip. It is this utter absence of a sense of "mission", of active awareness of India's obligation to kindle a new light, and define a new goal for the benefit of humanity, amongst those who preside over the political destiny of the country,—that lies at the root of all current discord, misery and frustration amongst our people. Independent India, divorced from its age-old heritage, and bereft of any working ideal for the nation beyond mere materialistic aspirations, and without the promise of any superior order of things, can never inspire the nation.

"Mother India", said Sri Aurobindo, "is rising not for her own sake, but for the sake of the world. She is rising to shed the eternal light entrusted to her, over the world. India has always existed for humanity and not for herself, and it is for humanity, and not or herself that she must be great". A constant consciousness of this great mission must permeate India's ruling brotherhood and her people, if the liberated India is to be adequately equipped for discharging the obligations of this world mission.

India must generate amongst her people, a burning zeal for fulfilment of this national destiny, and all sections of her people—prince or peasant, educated or illiterate, capitalist or labour, must live in this consciousness of her destiny and seek to solve all her internal problems in the light of this great obligation. A nation,—if it is to grow, if it is not to stagnate—must primarily live for the ideal and learn to live and die for it. In the midst of the acute struggle for existence, people as well as leaders are apt to forget the country's mission and needs to be constantly reminded of this call for higher existence. Linguistic ambition, regional interest, or the basic call for material standard of living cannot be the principal determining factors in the framing of her basic policies. For India, the ideal has been held aloft before the nation by Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo in their memorable utterances and writings. The burden now lies on ourselves to fashion our internal affairs and mould our national being so as to facilitate speedy march to the goal. If Independent India has not so far succeeded in pointing the way to this great task,—which is basically a task of national reconstruction—it is because we have not correctly grasped the ideal, because we have been wasting national energies by worshipping at the altar of false gods, and Indian politics have been straying farther and farther away from the path of her destined mission. Democracy, socialism or higher standards of living can, in themselves, never serve as ideals. They are but means to an end—means that would lead to the fulfilment of a higher destiny for the individual as well as for the nation.

SINGLE LANGUAGE

The vital internal problem before the nation today, is, how to cement the roots of national solidarity which have eroded so alarmingly during the short period of our independent existence. The measure of unity that the foreign rulers left behind has suffered a great setback. It is a universal experience that one common national language is the best unifying force amongst the people. One and one language alone can prevent the rot that has set in. The recognition of fourteen languages as the National language of the country can never be a correct step

towards strengthening of national unity. If the Government has to develop all the languages simultaneously, it will ultimately mean the emergence of 14 different independent states within this sub-continent. If these languages continue to compete amongst themselves for supremacy, for greater and greater hold upon a larger and larger number of Indian population,—as the process has already started—we shall find, at the end of another generation, that we have only created fourteen iron curtains that obstruct the free flow of internal communion and erect rigid barriers that aggravate internal discord and cleavage.

Let us take a look around the world. There is not a single country which presents such a disrupting picture of a veritable forest of so many national languages. Small countries like Canada, Yugoslavia and Switzerland can afford to have two, three, or four national languages, without any serious damage to national unity. Five national languages of Russia, with her eighty per cent Russian-speaking population, and the monolithic discipline of her communist state provide no parallel to India. We have also the lesson of Europe before us. Three hundred years ago, there was only one language—Latin—in Europe, from which have sprung subsequently, the German, the French, the Italian and other languages—each carving out an independent national State for its own. The adoption of one single language, as the national language for the whole of India, with the Central Government's primary responsibility for the promotion of that language, alone, is of paramount importance, if India is not to relapse into 14 Sovereign States. So many powerful languages will only help to balkanise the land as in Pre-British days. We have already, by now, ample evidence of linguistic intolerance, suppression of minority languages, and planned efforts for expansion of linguistic empire.

The framers of the Indian Constitution accepted fourteen languages as the national language, after a virtually unanimous acceptance of Hindi, as the only official language for Inlia. They had the foresight to recognise the imperative need of only one official language for the Nation. Fourteen, as the national languages, had to be agreed to as a compromise formula in response to democratic pressures from the different linguistic States. Now that after eighteen years of freedom, opposition to Hindi has grown to enormous proportions, it is only common sense to acknowledge that Hindi as the single official language is a lost cause—a forlorn hope and any attempt to go back to Hindi as the only official language can never be a feasible proposition under the country's democratic constitution. Nor can any attempt to stick to it in alliance with English—as the two official languages, have any possibility of its survival.

If Hindi has missed the boat, the decision to develop fourteen languages has also to be reopened and a new status has to be determined for these languages, not only because it was anciliary to the principal status assigned to Hindi, but because of its far-reaching implications as a potent force for promotion of disruption and disintegration. The only language which can step into the place vacated by Hindi, is Sanskrit—which is not the language of any particular region of India and which, all can look up to as their own language. It is a language universally recognised as India's language of culture, sanctified by hoary traditions, and held in highest esteem amongst the nations of the world. There need not be any misgiving if the fourteen provincial languages are relegated into a subordinate status, with Sanskrit as the sole National language. Each linguistic state, will take charge of the regional language and will have the primary responsibility for its development, and in any effort to make available to the people of other linguistic states, the benefits of its language, the initiative has to come from the State concerned. Some of these languages have reached such a stage of maturity, that it is absurd to think that these can be reduced to a position of insignificance if they lose their all-India national status. Most of these languages have grown to their present height, while English had been the only official language for over a century.

CASE AGAINST ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Bilingualism — Hindi and English as the two official languages for India is wholly unacceptable in the interest, as much, of national unity, as of the imperative urgency for achieving homogeneity of national culture. It is surprising that people of India have so long failed to realise that Language is the purveyor of a nation's culture and it is through English language that British culture and Western ways of life have taken a strong root amongst the educated people during the last hundred years. Retention of English as the dominant official language in post-independence India has immeasurably accelerated the process; and under the plea of modernisation, we are only grafting on the people the stranglehold of an alien cultural domination, in every sphere of our life. India is being fast de-Indianised and denationalised. Now that political subjection has been physically withdrawn, it is our primary obligation to halt the sweeping march of this cultural subordination. This can never be possible unless English is dislodged from the status of an official language. Opposition to English stems from this fundamental necessity. There can be no compromise on an issue of such vital importance to the future growth of the Nation. The proposed bilingualism, therefore, offers no enduring solution. Though Hindi has lost its place, English seems to be still holding the field under a misconceived notion about its indispensability. If Sanskrit is agreed to as the only national language, English will be reduced to its proper place in the education of our youth.

SANSKRIT, ONLY NATION AL LANGUAGE

It is of course not contended that English be eliminated altogether and all at once. We shall require a period of twenty to twentyfive years, in order to enable Sanskrit, to take its place, as the sole national language, and during the interim period English and Hindi will have to continue as at present. Even after English has ceased to be the official language, its pre-eminent place amongst foreign languages, in India's educational and, to a certain extent, political sphere, will remain. These matters of detail can be satisfactorily settled, once English ceases to be the official language.

There is a large volume of uninformed opinion in the country, that restoration of Sanskrit is impracticable in modern conditions of life. Such a conception is based on ignorance,—a senseless craze for modernisation and an imperfect understanding of the role, the official language is expected to play in development of the nation's cultural as well as economic progress. The official language of India will have three distinct functions — (1) communication between the centre and the States, and, between State and State. (2) Interchange of ideas and thought amongst the intellectuals and scholars and philosophers of the different linguistic units of the nation. (3) Language through which India will speak to the international world, not only in political and diplomatic sphere, but in diverse spheres of art, philosophy and science, just as a Frenchman does through French language or a German, through his

German language. Before the British rule, Sanskrit was the common language of India's saints, thinkers and scientists, while Hindi served as the language of mass communication. During British rule, English replaced Sanskrit as the language of the intellectuals. While, in independent India Hindi will retain its traditional function as spoken language amongst the common man, Sanskrit will resume the role it lost during foreign rule—if it is accepted as the only National Language of India.

A prejudice persists that Sanskrit is a very difficult language. As a matter of fact, Sanskrit is far more easy than English, and if ten per cent of the labour spent in learning English is devoted to the study of Sanskrit, it can be effectively mastered. There is difficult Sanskrit as well as easy Sanskrit, just as there is difficult English as well as easy English, Sanskrit of the "Geeta" and of the "Mahabharat" is very simple and easily understandable. There are many new books now on simplified Sanskrit, through which a new learner can be proficient in the language in months, while he would require years to be tolerably acquainted with English. A language like Hebrew which remained cent per cent dead throughout a period of over 1500 years has now become the national language of Israel, after a preparatory period of 25 years, and the medium of instruction in their only university is Hebrew. Imagine what amount of insurmountable difficulties they had to overcome in order to make this possible. A people impregnated with a burning zeal for their culture could alone have done it. Sanskrit, even today, is a living, vibrant language, though it has ceased to be the spoken tongue for over thousand years. We have now in India twelve Sanskrit universities in which instruction is imparted partially through the medium of Sanskrit. The present opposition to Sanskrit lacks any rational basis, and will melt away, once Sanskrit is accepted as the national language, and the service-seeking and career-conscious section of the educated people find that Sanskrit alone can assure to them the openings for employment in future, for which they are now so keen on English.

All controversy over official language will be silenced as soon as a firm decision about Sanskrit is taken by the Central Government. The immediate step necessary for enabling Sanskrit to resume its function as the only national and official language is to make its study compulsory from the very primary stage, along with the mother-tongue, for all sections of the people, irrespective of caste, creed and race. English, of course, will have to be retained as a compulsory language from higher classes, for a specific period after which its study will be optional, though in university education English may have to partially continue for a longer period.

The entire outlook about the national language has been vitiated by our exclusive emphasis on reaching a solution of the conflicting claims based on linguistic and provincial aspirations, and employment opportunities for the different linguistic units of the population. These are certainly not the only standards which should determine the national language. A nation lives and thrives as much on its food as on its culture. One common language as the vehicle of the nation's culture is the crying need of the hour. The language controversy must be rescued from the mazes of parochial interests and low self-centric claims of the diverse sections of the people and should be resolved in accordance with the enlightened self-interest of the country as a whole—with the exclusive aim to renovate India's life and social order and secure national solidarity on the solid rock of the perennial culture of the people.

WOMEN'S ROLE IN THE PUJA

(Continued from page 20)

applying the principle of co-operation among friends. Different persons purchase different journals and they exchange these journals among themselves. Thus each one reads almost all the journals. Would they not be able to extend this principle in other walks of life as well ?

Going around seeing the images in different parts of the city is another important aspect of the business. Sometimes, they hire a taxi or a horse-carriage and sometimes they use the bus or the tram as usual although they remain unusually crowded. Ladies with a number of babies with them generally prefer a taxi. They go round different localities visiting one image after another, discussing their comparative merits and all other points of interest. The ladies are usually accompanied by their husbands but they, the husbands often remark, are to keep an observing eye more upon their wives and children than upon the images, lest they should get lost in the crowd. The children want to buy various things they come across in the market and to satisfy them is a big problem.

THE VIJOYA DAY

At last comes the concluding day of the great festival, namely vijoya. Friends, neighbours and relatives would come and they are to be entertained. The women prefer to prepare various sweetmeats at home rather than purchase them from the market. They make their plan well ahead of time and remain prepared to meet the guests. When the hurly-burly is over they sit down to write letters conveying their vijoya greetings to all concerned. Gradually, the commotion subsides and after the Puja when two women friends meet very often they say, "oh ! we were so anxious for the Puja but alas, it is now gone." Their only consolation is that it will come again next year.

AN UNFORGETTABLE CHARACTER

(Continued from page 24)

the intense *Behauptungen* (statement of a position) of Sri Aurobindo, so luminous, calm and peace-giving! . . . . . And as for Art, too, the more I live, the more I feel—as Krishnaprem and Sri Aurobindo have written—that it is a by-product of Spiritual experience: it bases itself on movement and sound and can never, as such, take account of the deeper and more significant Silence and Standstillness. . . .

Affectionately,
Shahid

SYMBOLS

Dilip, Suhrawardy's contention is very well written and perfectly correct . . . . The "symbol" explanation is certainly one of the weakest of the many weak concessions that have been made to Western "rationalism" by Indian apologists who try to save their case by giving away nine-tenths of it. In a certain sense the Gods are symbols, I suppose, but in that sense everything and everybody is a symbol, including the surrenderful apologists themselves, which, unfortunately, in their case, does not prevent them from being realities also . . . . . Sri Aurobindo (17.5.32).

Amarnath—The Holy Cave

• BIRESHWAR PROSAD BANERJI •

IT was August 1, 1963. We were camping on the banks of the lovely Liddar at Pahalgam, the picturesque tourist resort of Kashmir. We were bound for our sojourn to the holy cave of Amarnath. There were only a few days left for the *'Yatra'* and we were hectic in our preparations for the ensuing trek of 56 miles for 5 days. What worried us, however, were the clouds sailing and hanging over Pahalgam because in none of the Himalayan journeys is weather such a decisive factor as in the pilgrimage to Amarnath.

We four friends were going to Amarnath. We were keen to visit this most unusual Himalayan shrine,—unusual, because Amarnath is not a temple but a cave and the ruling deity of this temple of nature is neither an image nor a stone-relic but a self-formed structure of ice resembling the lingam of Shiva. We gathered from many accounts that the lingam waxes and wanes along with the moon. According to common belief this self-made ice lingam formed in a cave, perched on a glacial gorge in the deep of the Kashmir Himalayas, is truly a supernatural phenomenon while according to some it is a world marvel as it is supposed to reach its maximum height on only one day in the year—the full-moon day of the month of Sravan—when the holiest event of this holy place takes place.

Though previously estimated in the region of twenty thousand pilgrims and tourists, this year the number had dwindled to about ten thousands owing initially to the long-drawn-out border trouble in Ladakh and eventually to a severe cloudburst in Pahalgam a few days earlier causing immense damage to life and property.

The Director of tourism of the State Government was all help to the tourists and pilgrims. It was through his good offices in Pahalgam—and that of the Tehsildar's at Wavjan later on that we could provide ourselves with pack ponies and mazdoors etc., at the fag-end of the preparatory period. All arrangements were over but it was still raining.

Next morning, August 2, the weather cleared up and we got ready to start in jubilation. Gone were the anxieties of the pilgrims and they initiated the journey in batches with frequent shouts of 'Amarnath Baba Ki Jay'.

One of the most interesting features of this trek is that pilgrims, tourists and others are obliged to walk the whole route of 28 miles from Pahalgam, in a huge congregation because the days of starting and finishing the *yatra* are fixed in halting stages and there are no other rest places on the way. This no-man's land is visited by tourists and pilgrims once in a year only and for the rest of the year only the nomadic 'Gujars', fighting for their flock and existence against nature's inclemencies and the wild animals, visit the high alps of this region.

The *pujaris* of Amarnathji, who hail from the nearby olden town of Martand, had initiated the journey early in the morning before anyone else, with the holy 'Danda' or 'Chhari' of the deity, all others in Pahalgam following them. The crowd was one of the most colourful I have ever come across, with the intermingled presence of Kashmiris in their traditional colourful dress, tourists, pilgrims and sadhus, including naked Nagas, of all cults and orders.

Our route lay towards north-east of Pahalgam and after crossing the wooden bridge of Sheshnag, a feeder of Neel Ganga on the outskirts of Pahalgam, we were going along the Sheshnag stream towards the camping ground of Chandanwari on the way to Sheshnag lake, the source of the stream. One foot-path bifurcated towards north-west to Kolahoi glacier, which we had visited a few years back. This beautiful glacier is about 16 miles from Pahalgam and is the source of Neel Ganga or Liddar. Our way was, presently, wide and level and we were proceeding like a group of young scouts bound for an excursion, making friendship with all we came across on the way not excluding the villagers, ponywallas and dandiwallas. We were trekking on the right bank of Sheshnag stream. After about 2 miles the valley became narrow and the stream went down in a gorge below. The air smelt the peculiar smell of moist leaves and unnamed blooming flowers, familiar only to trekkers in the inner Himalayas.

Our route comprised both gentle ascents and descents. On all sides the wild scenery of the vale

that is Kashmir was visible and the flowers on the roadside presented a riot of colours. We had long passed the villages, still we could see hillmen at work for harvesting and their children begging for small coins from the pilgrims. The natural surroundings appeared in pleasing mood in this heavenly lap of the Himalayas. After a continuous journey for two hours we covered the vast leg of our journey up to Chandanwari, 8 miles from Pahalgam. Here at a height of 9500 ft. we felt the first touch of cold.

It was about noon when we reached Chandanwari to call it a day. Hundreds of tents were pitched on this little alpine meadow surrounded by tall rock peaks flanked by the stream of Sheshnag here rushing through a shallow ravine. The rumblings of the stream were not to forsake us since now. Incidentally, our cook soon got the stove going and chapatties and potato soup—a regular menu from now on were prepared for our meals. The place looked like a village fair. The moon came up sometime after evening and the meadow was lit up with its subdued light. After meals, the whole assemblage quickly retired, as it seemed, consequent to the day's tiresome journey.

Early on the second day we were awakened by announcements in the loudspeakers by the officials about the importance of an early start to do away with the notorious steep ascent upto Pishu Ghati pass lying ahead. After a light refreshment we were again on our trek.

This time our path lay initially on a snow bridge—a tourist attraction for all the year—happening to be the first on the way. We had to cross dozens later. The snow here, lying deep in the bosom of the gorge, never melts. Eventually, after a mile or so, we came face to face with our first hardship of the journey—the crossing of Pishu—and the prospect of an ascent of nearly 1500 feet within a horizontal distance of one mile was not at all encouraging. It seemed that the path zigzagged and looped all through for the torture of the pilgrims! Unlike other notable ascents in the various regions of the Himalayas, it has no preamble and the trekker suddenly faces its existence, sheer and exposed, with his perched throats and exhausted limbs.

Hundreds of tents were pitched.....

The police were all alert to look after the safety of the pilgrims throughout the route. The rock face presented a steep slope whereupon boulders seemed to have been scattered at random. Ponies serve no useful purpose on these steep ascents. They are rather a menace as the stones dislodged on account of their irregular movements may cause havoc to those climbing from below. In the winding path there was no space for rest and the steady momentum of the caravan of ponies and men could not be disturbed, so we were required to tackle this climb almost incessantly. We learnt how years ago Pandit Nehru, on his way to Sheshnag lake, was obliged to go back from below Pishu Ghati disappointed owing to the steepness of the route. Though well taken care of by the ponywallas with their occasional shouts of 'Housh' and 'Shabash' etc., ponies were liable to throw off the loads or the rider whose position was very often precarious. Vicious hollows lurked by this fantastic path which led to the region of eternal snows where towering peaks overlooked the abyss! At every step we were panting for breath and it seemed that the ghastly path would never come to an end when, at about noon and at the very end of our energy, the top of the pass was reached—Pishu Ghati was conquered! We came to understand that a lot of pilgrims had turned their back from the base of the climb itself.

We had to take rest for rather a long time reaching the top of the pass which was, in fact, the saddle of an adjacent high peak. We were as if on a roof and the view all around was superb. After this strenuous climb we enjoyed tea like anything while admiring the beauty of distant snow-clad peaks. After taking some photographs we started on our way. Now the path lay on the ridge of the mountain and what enchanted us was the lush green all around even in this altitude, a characteristic feature of the Kashmir Himalayas, which reminded me of the Bugyal alpine lands of Garhwal. As we had crossed over the coniferous forest belt at a height of nearly 12,000 feet, only Deodar and Birch could be visible here and there. The view of a snow peak in the east made us stop and admire its beauty. It looked framed between its twin satellites and was shining in morning glory. We were heading now towards Yazpal, a meadow some two miles off, where the ridge had ended in a narrow valley. Here was a nice camping ground, the place was full of pilgrims taking rest and tea in improvised miniature cafes. The sun was shining high and we were feeling rather hot even in this altitude but this is quite common in high mountains where the air is thin. This could be particularly unbearable in the glacier regions. We were panting and sweating while covering our last 2 miles of a gently ascending path to the lake of Sheshnag, our immediate objective at a height of over 12,000 feet, which happened to be the source of the stream of that name.

It was midday when we reached Sheshnag, the most beautiful of the lakes in Kashmir. It is also known as Shishram Nag. With the very first appearance, about a mile away, it conquered our hearts. A very big glacial lake of oval size and turquoise green water, its beauty defies description and is regarded as one of the finest spots of mountain beauty in the world. The greenish water, the sandy shore and the blue sky, playing the part of a large canvas, all brought out such a colourful contrast in the scenic beauty that we were simply overwhelmed and drank the nectar of its charm to our hearts' content sitting on its shore. There were small rip-

Vicious hollows lurked by this fantastic path....

ples in the otherwise placid water of the lake caused by a gentle breeze from the east, where stood, like a sentinel the majastic 18000 ft. high 'Kohinoor', the jewel of the mountains. With a towering height of 6000 feet over the lake, its icy spire, glistening in the silvery rays of the sun, stood reflected in the waters of the lake. Some pilgrims in religious sentiments were bathing in the ice-cold water of Sheshnag but we refrained from it and instead let the time simply pass by unhurriedly while feasting upon the heavenly scenery around us. We noticed some moss in the water but no fish. It is stated that ice-bergs, formed through avalanches falling from the hanging glaciers of 'Kohinoor' flow in the lake but we did not see any such phenomenon.

In the afternoon we stopped for the day on a high plateau, on the far side of the lake, called Wavjan or Vayujan. Tents had been pitched in an orderly manner and Tehsildar was looking after the welfare of the pilgrims. We did have a rather sumptuous meal at night due mostly to the efforts of our Kashmiri cook but it was too cold to sleep in the tent at night. The plateau—open on all sides—invited strong cold wind from everywhere and it was a torture to sleep even in sleeping bags, so kindly lent me by the Himalayan Club of Calcutta. The horrible experience of the night, however, rewarded us with a marvellous view of the Himalayans in the early morning when Kohinoor looked like a pinnacle of blood-red ice bathed in the crimson rays of the sun rising in this glorious Himalayan amphitheatre.

The tents were struck at 7 A.M. next morning as we were required to cover a distance of 8 miles and cross a 14,000 ft. high pass on our way, the highest in the route. Tehsildar had advised us to start early to cover the five miles of ascent and arranged for a mule to carry our luggage as one had proved unfit. This time, before reaching the ridge on the west, we had to cross and recross a nullah several times on snow bridges until we gained the shoulder of the ridge and then began the real ascent to the crest of the ridge leading to the pass. Though not so severe as Pishu, it was certainly very long and tiresome. It stretched for almost four miles winding towards the snow pass of Mahagunas at a height of 14000 ft. above the sea level. We had left the zone of vegetation long back but this region near the pass seemed so desolate and barren as I have never seen anywhere. There seemed to be no sign of life. It was about noon when we reached the pass but fortunately the ascent was not, on the whole, very steep. Many pilgrims were, however, seen gasping for breath due to the rarefied air in this altitude. The pass offered no wide view except in the north where Amarnath and Thajwas ranges were visible. We enjoyed some well-earned rest on the pass, took a few photographs and refreshed ourselves with light meals and coffee.

The route on the opposite side of the pass was, nevertheless, a slow descent upto the bank of the river at Panchtarni some four miles away which took us only an hour to reach. In another half an hour we were in Panchtarni, the last camping ground on way to Amarnath. The place looked gay and colourful like a village fair with a large assembly of men, women and children.

Panchtarni is a very wide and flat valley at the confluence of five rivulets coming from various directions. The combined stream rushes down west up to a mile, where Amarganga or Amravati stream meets the same from north, and then proceeds to Sonamarg side in the west destined to meet Thajwas Nullah. The place, surrounded by mighty snow-capped mountains, is very cold. The eastern horizon is dominated by the highest of all, the Bhairav mountains with its satellite peaks and glaciers.

At Panchtarni, I believe, a thousand tents were pitched that evening for one day in the year. The pilgrims were jubilant about the imminent visit to the holy cave. The vast camping ground looked a veritable market where tiny shops were selling articles for daily consumption as well as offerings to the deity. Cold wind was blowing but, to the joy of all, the sky was clear. It was a sight for the gods to see when the moon shone its brightest at night casting its silvery rays on the cream-coloured mountain snows. We heartily enjoyed this magnificent Himalayan night till we retired in the tents.

It was Monday, Aug. 5. The full-moon day of Sravan dawned upon us next morning and what a beautiful morning it was! The sky was so blue and clear and air so crisp and inviting for a mountain lover! The first rays of the sun were bathing the pure snows of the Bhairav mountains to usher in a day which would prove so impressive to us. The priests and veterans said that rarely had they seen such a clear weather in the course of the *yatra*.

(Sheshnag Lake 12,200 ft.)

Beyond Panchtarni the way entered a gorge and passed through several slanting snowfields rendered slippery and dangerous by the morning dew giving it a look of mud of snow. The police helped the old and infirm to cross them safely. After snow fields the path began to ascend for about 200 feet to slope to Amarganga valley. It was a memorable sight to see a stream covered with snow from end to end resembling a giant snowbridge beneath which, as we perceived, the water was obliged to pass. It was apparent that one should be extra careful while crossing these snow bridges as the layers of snow, where thin, may suddenly give way to drown the unmindful wayfarer in the stream rushing below. It was a treacherous journey where soft snow existed. Pilgrims, in thousands, went trudging along this unpleasant route on the snows for hours until they reached a place where the valley widened, the snow bridge disappeared to make the stream conspicuous and a mammoth cave appeared overlooking the valley from some 200 feet above the mountains. Joyous and weary pilgrims shouted, "Har Har Mahadev" and "Jai Amarnath Baba Ki Jai"! A good number rushed in the stream, some quite naked, for a purificatory bath in the ice-cold water, while some in religious frenzy prostrated on the stony path rising to the cave, about three furlongs off. It was rather a gentle ascent now from the river-bed and we reached the holiest of the caves at about 9 a.m. At the end of a strenuous journey we were moved by a scene to remember it for the rest of our life.

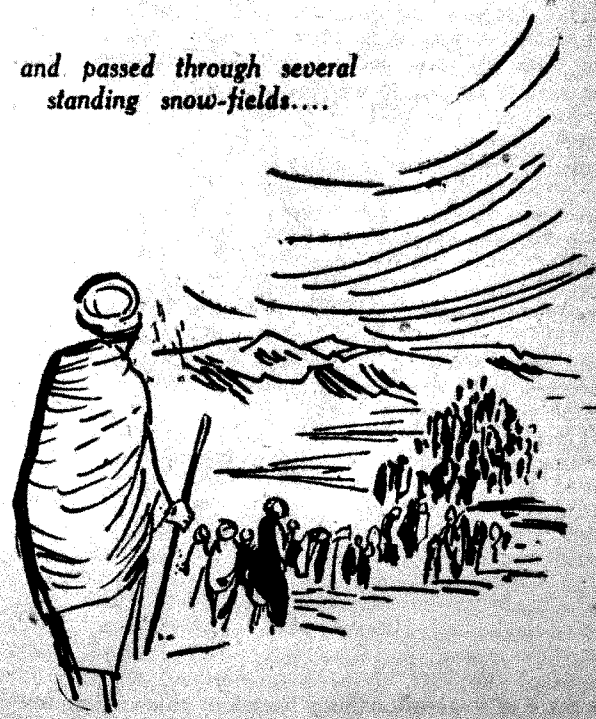
The cave of Amarnath is a giant hollow, some 150 feet cube on all sides, caving into Amarnath mountain (17000 ft.) and forming a natural cavern of extraordinary magnitude. This magnificent cave, facing the Amarganga valley 200 feet below, opened towards south and did not receive adequate sunlight thus accounting for accumulation of snow in the crags. The place seemed surcharged with aesthetic and spiritual sentiments in its loneliness and mountain grandeur. Though often mentioned in some Puranas, the holiness of the place is considered to be of recent origin. The saints regarded it from olden days as a 'Bhairava-Peetha' but its dignity was enhanced essentially by Swami Vivekananda who had visited this place during one of his Himalayan sojourns. He went into 'Samadhi' having the 'Darshan' of the Lingam of ice. The Kashmir rulers eventually accepted Amarnathji as their family deity along with his consort Bhavani at Khir Bhavani, near Srinagar, a 'Sakti Peetha'.

There were two ice formations, resembling Shiva Lingams perched in hollows which appeared to be natural cracks in mountains walls. The bigger one, ascribed to Shiva, was about 5 feet in height and one foot in diameter with a flow of ice resembling 'Gouri Patta'. It looked quite proportionate and worth reverence. Another, related to be Ganesha, was, however, not very imposing. The structures were, nevertheless, of pure ice, bluish and stone-hard. These were formed, presumably, by water trickling down the cracks and frozen according to the size of the hollows. The pilgrims were very jubilant as if to see their dreams come true in the 'Darshan' of the deity. Numerous offerings were showered on the deity. Some were chanting *hymns* and singing devotional songs and some were reciting from the scriptures with incense and lamps burning all around. It was really a sight to see devotees from all parts of India and all walks of life, assembling here in this farthest corner of the country, to offer reverence to their God seated in a temple of nature. It was, as we thought, a life's experience to witness and enjoy the devotion of thousands and for some time I was oblivious, my mind wandering about the places of Shaiva pilgrimage of India from Kedarnath and Varanasi to Rameshwaram in the far-south.

Spending about 3 hours in the cave we started for our return journey to Panchtarni after taking some chalk powder from the cave-wall as 'Bibhuti Prasadam' of the deity and bidding good bye to the pair of pigeons, stated to be the permanent resident devotees of the deity, fluttering about in the caves! It took an hour to reach Panchtarni where we took our light meal, kept ready by the cook in the meantime. As it was only noon we struck our tents and started towards Wavjan. In the joyous mood, on account of the memorable 'Darshan' in fine weather and without any mishap, our speed doubled and in the afternoon we were on the Mahagunas pass to get an opportunity to see the sun going down the pink western horizon.

Wavjan proved a very cold place that night as strong wind was blowing but the moonlit night looked unique in its impression upon the bright silvery pinnacle of the Kohinoor in the east. We retired to bed rather late that night and were enjoying the moonshine on Sheshnag and Kohinoor for a long time.

Next morning saw a sky overcast with grey and hanging nimbus clouds! It was nothing unusual in the nature of mountains to have such phenomena and we started very early down towards Chandanwari. In view of the threatening sky we hurriedly covered the valley of Yazpal. After breakfast we started and were soon over Pisu Ghati. This time we had to be very careful as due to rain the route had become slippery and the stones dislodged from the upper part of the zigzagging tract proved a menace to those negotiating the traverses below. The weather, however, cleared by noon when we reached Chandanwari and there was already a considerable assemblage. It seemed we were never early in the *yatra!* After lunch we resumed our journey to Pahalgam and, in comparison to the hard trek we had covered, it was now all very easy going. We reached Pahalgam just in time to get the evening bus for Srinagar. The night was spent in great comfort in a large house-boat on the Dal Lake after a savoury dinner. Thus we ended our colourful trek to the holy cave where an Ice-Lingam is formed to the reverence of millions.



and passed through several standing snow-fields....

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER

By Dr. SUDHIR NANDI

IT HAS been rightly said that Arthur Schopenhauer continued to be a stimulating and provocative thinker. Where he is wrong, it takes arduous thinking to refute him. And he is seldom altogether wrong. He is known for his pessimism, rather he is the most famous philosophical defender of pessimism. Curiously enough this bold advocate of pessimism sometimes struck an optimistic note about himself; once he asserted that no future philosopher, worth the name, could afford to be ignorant of him and his philosophy. Such paradoxical trends in thinking could be traced to an empirical genesis i.e. to his life-history. His enormous self-confidence was often pitted against a challenging situation and gradually when he lost ground and got vanquished he fell back and withdrew to his pet world of ideas. As a young lecturer in the University of Berlin he so fixed up his lecture—hours so as to make them clash with the hours fixed for Hegel's lectures. Hegel won his way to name and fame but Schopenhauer was a stranger, so to speak. He fought and failed and dispirited as he was fated like Napoleon to eat his heart out. He looked upon the world as a dim vast vale of tears. Except for the last few years of his life, he was little recognised as a philosopher in his life time. For this he was awfully disgruntled.

Surprisingly enough this unbalanced man gave us a well-reasoned philosophical system and his noted books were 'Fourfold Root of the sufficient Reason and the 'world as will and Idea'. The students of philosophy found interest in his version of idealism, including his doctrine of the will and his theory of the sufficient reason, his interpretation of art in connection with the Platonic Ideas and his ethics of sympathy wherein was included his wonderful treatment of justice and benevolence.

HIS PHILOSOPHY

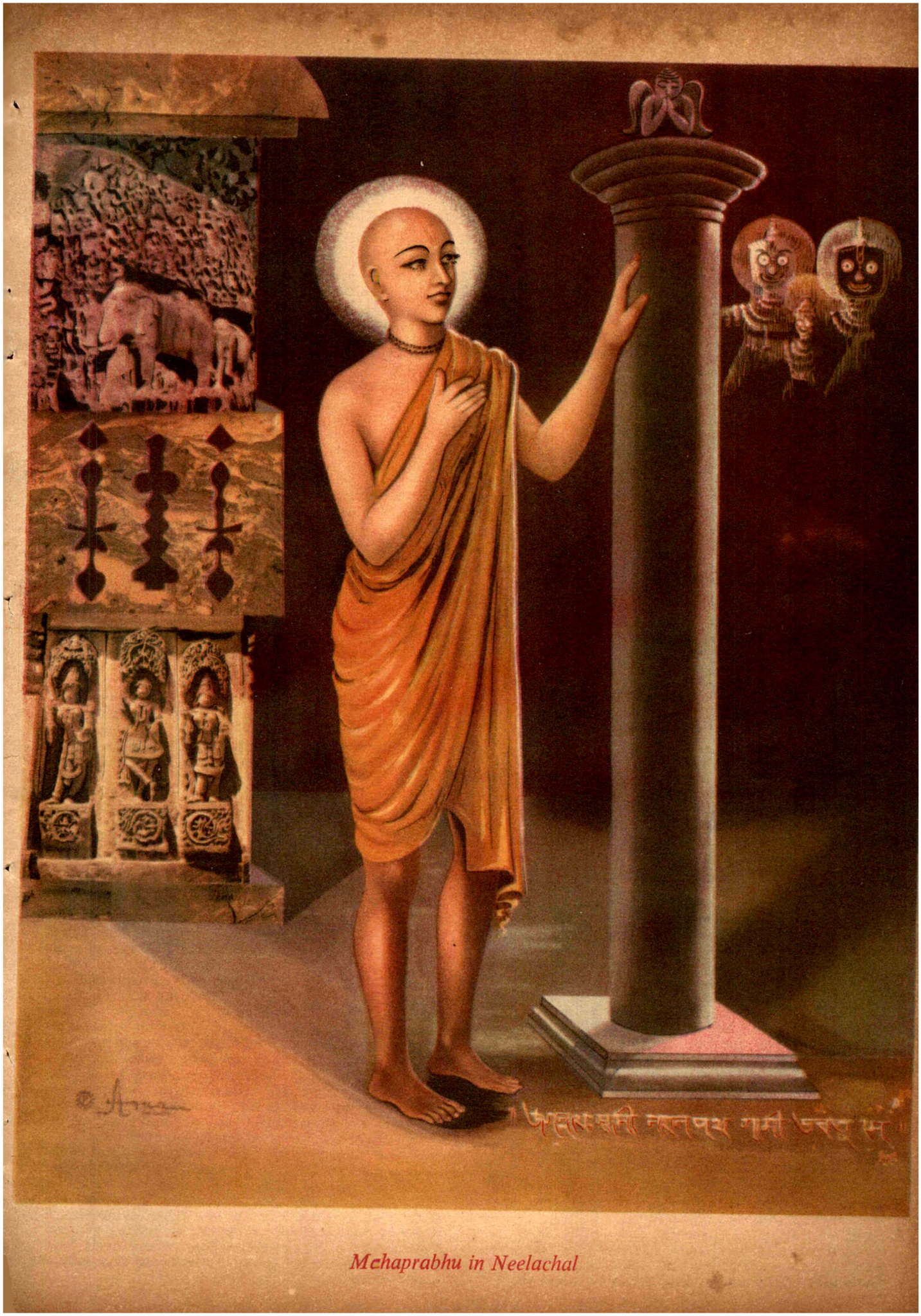
In opposition to Locke he denied that any material substratum or substance served as the support of the ideas which we perceive. Schopenhauer thought that we had no reason to believe that anything existed excepting ideas and the minds that knew them. The world was purely mental in its constitution. There could be no object without a subject. Like Kant, Schopenhauer thought that the organisation of sensations into the objects of perception was due to the a priori forms which the mind imposed upon sensations. Schopenhauer discovered the fundamental principle of these a priori forms, wherefrom they were derived. It was the Principle of sufficient Reason with its fourfold root : viz.,

(1) Cause and effect, (2) ground and consequent, (3) space and time, and (4) Motive and action.

The first root made natural sciences possible, the second warranted drawing of inferences, the third made mathematics possible and the fourth the social sciences. All the objects of experience and all our experiences are subject to the law of a sufficient reason and are determined in accordance with universal and a priori laws. This is how Schopenhauer explains the uniformity of nature and accounts for the laws of science. Like Kant he believed that the world of experience was only the phenomenal world; Kant thought that the noumenal world remained beyond all experience. This thing-in-itself, as they call it, was according to Schopenhauer, knowable through immediate intuition and he knew this to be will and thus will was the ultimate reality. Schopenhauer means by will not only consciously reasoned volition but also all subconscious and unconscious inward impulses and desires, the whole striving and the conative side of nature. Thus we were primarily the creatures of will, in this sense of the term.

According to him, in the order of being, the first was this universal will; the unchanging ideas were the second. Thirdly the universal will individuated itself into the particular ideas (i.e. persons and things) which exemplify the Ideas in accordance with the principle of sufficient reason. So Schopenhauer's idealism could be branded as voluntaristic and this voluntaristic idealism though not inconsistent with pessimism, was not necessarily implying pessimism as such. Schopenhauer's well calculated logic tried to show that life gave us either perpetual boredom born of the satisfaction of desires or the pain of unceasing desires, born of unfulfilment. So human beings were stationed between these two horns. According to him, human misery far outweighed human happiness. Therefore this was the worst of all possible worlds. So he was pessimistic.

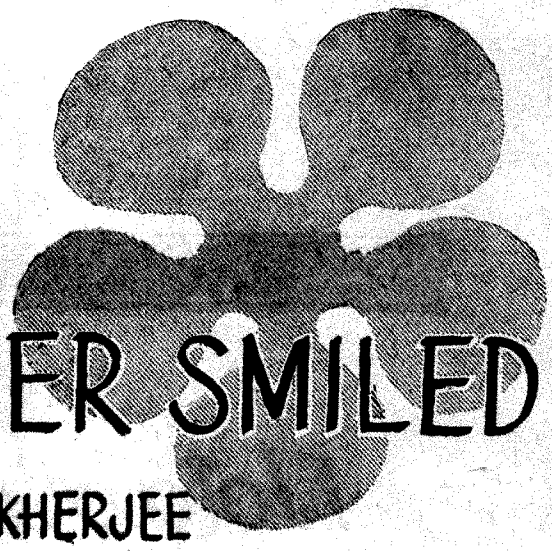
Temporary relief from the constant striving and pain of desire could be found in the contemplation of the beautiful and the sublime in nature and in art. When we have aesthetic experiences we forget our individual selves and our desires and become absorbed in the timeless Platonic Ideas. Function of art, according to Schopenhauer, was the deliverance of Knowledge from servitude to the Will and the elevation of the mind to the will-less contemplation of Truth. This power of the arts to elevate us above the strife of wills is possessed above all by music. This is what Schopenhauer told us categorically. Music was the copy of the will itself; it shows us the eternally moving, strong, wandering will, always at last returning to itself to begin its striving anew. This is why Schopenhauer tells us, the effect of music is more powerful and penetrating than the other arts. All these arts provide a temporary relief from desires and morality, according to Schopenhaur, assures greater relief. He believed that the basis of morality was sympathy. In sympathy we identified ourselves with others and forgot for the time being our selfish desires and lost the painful sense of individuality. It was the mother of Christian charity and Buddhistic love. To-day the world has lost sight of this sympathy and that is why we are in turmoil. Let us rehabilitate this sympathy in every one of us and we would be paying genuine tributes to this great philosopher whose heart bled for the sufferings of mankind and would thus ensure world peace.



Mchaprabhu in Neelachal

Notable PLACES OF WORSHIP in India

PUJA *photo feature*



THE MAN WHO NEVER SMILED

by PRITHWINDRA MUKHERJEE

"WHY do you always laugh so much, Swamiji," Vivekananda was questioned, "being a man of the Spirit ?"

"Precisely because I am a man of the Spirit that I laugh so much," came the sharp rejoinder. "We are not sinners. We are but children of delight and of immortality !"

So spoke Shri Ramakrishna too, whose very speech used to sparkle with an otherworldly humour.

And such too was Sri Aurobindo, the prophet of the Life Divine, whom many consider to have been just a stern philosopher and a grim Yogi. Once when an offer came from a great exponent of Indian philosophy that he would introduce Sri Aurobindo to the West if the latter wrote a philosophical article for the Westerners, Sri Aurobindo not only declined it but also added humorously, "And philosophy ! Let me tell you in confidence that I never, never, never was a philosopher—although I have written philosophy, which is another story again . . . ."

Sense of humour, according to Sri Aurobindo, "is the salt of existence. Without it the world would have got utterly out of balance—it is unbalanced enough already—and rushed to blazes long ago."

"I hope," a disciple once wrote, "that my epistolary frivolity will not disqualify me altogether as ineligible if and when you apply for a passport for me to the conscientious Sentinel of the Kingdom of Heaven ?"

To that Sri Aurobindo wrote back, "Your 'epistolary frivolity' was all right. There is laughter in the Kingdom of Heaven though there may be no marriage there."

And there was laughter in Sri Aurobindo's kingdom too. Books like Dr. Nirodbaran's "Talks with Sri Aurobindo" and A. B. Purani's "Evening Talks with Sri Aurobindo" amply record that. Some of Sri Aurobindo's own writings too bear testimony to this heavenly humour. No one can forget his sonnet 'A Dream of Surreal Science' bantering a well-known theory of modern psychology :

One dreamed and saw a gland write Hamlet, drink
At the Mermaid, capture immortality ;
A committee of hormons on the Aegean's brink
Composed the Iliad and the Odyssey.
A thyroid, meditating almost nude
Under the Bo-tree, saw the eternal Light
And, rising from its mighty solitude,
Spoke of the Wheel and eightfold Path all right.
A brain by a disordered stomach driven
Thundered through Europe, conquered, ruled and fell,
From St. Helena went, perhaps, to Heaven.
Thus wagged on the surreal world, until
A scientist played with atoms and blew out
The universe before God had time to shout.
(*Last Poems*)

Dilip Kumar Roy once sent to Sri Aurobindo a quotation from Anatole France, saying, "Broteaux, one of the unabashed scoffers in Anatole France's *Les Dieux ont Soif*, throws this hearty fling at God in the face of Father Longuemare, the pious priest : 'Either God would prevent evil if he could, but could not, or he could but would not, or he neither could nor would, or he both would and could. If he would but could not, he is impotent, if he could but would not, he is perverse, if he neither could nor would he is at once impotent and perverse ; if he both could and would why on earth hasn't he done it father?' I send this to you as I immensely enjoyed the joke and am sure you would too, hoping you would have something to fend it off with."

ANATOLE FRANCE

Sri Aurobindo wrote back : "Anatole France is always amusing whether he is ironising about God and Christianity or about the rational animal man or Humanity (with a big H) and the follies of his reason and his conduct. But I presume you never heard of God's explanation of his non-interference to Anatole France when they met in some Heaven of Irony, I suppose—it can't have been in the heaven of Karl Marx, in spite of France's conversion before his death. God is reported to have strolled up to him and said : "I say, Anatole, you know that was a good joke of yours ; but there was a good cause too for my non-interference. Reason came along

UTTAR PRADESH.—The magnificent gold-plated tower of the famous Viswanath temple at Banaras which is by far the most venerated place of worship in Northern India. *—Photo by Amiya Banerjee.*

and told me: 'Look here, why do you pretend to exist? You know you don't exist and never existed or, if you do, you have made such a mass of your creation that we can't tolerate you any longer. Once we have got you out of the way all will be right upon earth, tip-top, A-1; my daughter Science and I have arranged that between us. Man will raise his noble brow, the head of creation, dignified, free, equal, fraternal, democratic, depending upon nothing but himself, with nothing greater than himself anywhere in existence. There will be no God, no Gods, no churches, no priestcraft, no religion, no kings, no oppression, no poverty, no war or discord anywhere. Industry will fill the earth with abundance. Commerce will spread her golden reconciling wings everywhere. Universal education will stamp out ignorance and leave no room for folly or unreason in any human brain; man will become cultured, disciplined, rational, scientific, well-informed, arriving always at the right conclusion upon full and sufficient data. The voice of the scientists and the experts will be loud in the land and guide mankind to the earthly paradise. A perfect society; health universalised by a developed medical science and a sound hygiene; everything rationalised; science evolved, infallible, omnipotent, ominscient; the riddle of existence solved; the Parliament of Man, the Federation of the world; evolution, of which man, magnificent man, is the last term, completed in the noble white race; a humanitarian kindness and uplifting for our backward brown, yellow and black brothers; peace, peace, peace, reason, order, unity everywhere'. There was a lot more like that, Anatole, and I was so much impressed by the beauty of the picture and its convenience, for I would have nothing to do or to supervise, that I at once retired from business—for, you know that I was always of a retiring disposition and inclined to keep myself behind the veil or in the background at the best of times. But what is this I hear? It does not seem to me from reports that Reason even with the help of Science has kept her promise. And if not, why not? Is it because she would not, or because she could not? Or is it because she both would not and could not? Or because she both would and could, but somehow did not? And I say, Anatole, these children of theirs, the State, Industrialism, Capitalism, Communism and the rest have a queer look; they seem very much like Titan monsters armed, too, with all the powers of Intellect and all the weapons and organisation of Science! And it does look as if mankind were no freer under them than under the Kings and the Churches!! What has happened?—or is it possible that Reason is not supreme and infallible, even that she has made a greater mess of it than I could have done myself? !!!" Here the report of the conversation ends; I give it for what it is worth, for I am not acquainted with this God and have to take him on trust from Anatole France."

STRANGE EXPERIENCES

In 1924 a gentleman, mentally deranged, wrote from Bengal a letter to Sri Aurobindo, giving various reasons why he should be permitted to come to Pondicherry. One of his arguments was that his complexion was growing darker day by day, but it was "shining black" and, since the Madrasis too have a dark complexion, he should absolutely stay at Pondicherry!

Sri Aurobindo heartily laughed on reading it and said, "Even in his madness he is always original! He never goes along the beaten track."

And a young man from Tinnavelly, knowing Sanskrit, wanted to see Sri Aurobindo. He said he had received inspiration from *Para-Shakti* to go to Sri Aurobindo who is *Bhagwan*. Sri Aurobindo in spite of his unwillingness, could not help seeing him.

A few days later a report came to Sri Aurobindo that the Para-Shakti-man was giving away his clothes one by one every days.

"I hope he won't turn up tomorrow without anything on!" Sri Aurobindo exclaimed in his mock-serious tone.

In one of his aphorisms Sri Aurobindo says, "God's laughter is sometimes very coarse and unfit for polite ears; He is not satisfied with being Moliere; He must need also be Aristophanes and Rabelais." And we could almost hear that laughter bantering the incarnations of Tartuffe, in Sri Aurobindo's sonnet *Self*:

He said, "I am egoless, spiritual, free,"

Then swore because his dinner was not ready.
I asked him why. He said, "It is not me,
But the belly's hungry god who gets unsteady."
I asked him why. He said, "It is his play.
I am unmoved within, desireless, pure.
I care not what may happen day by day."

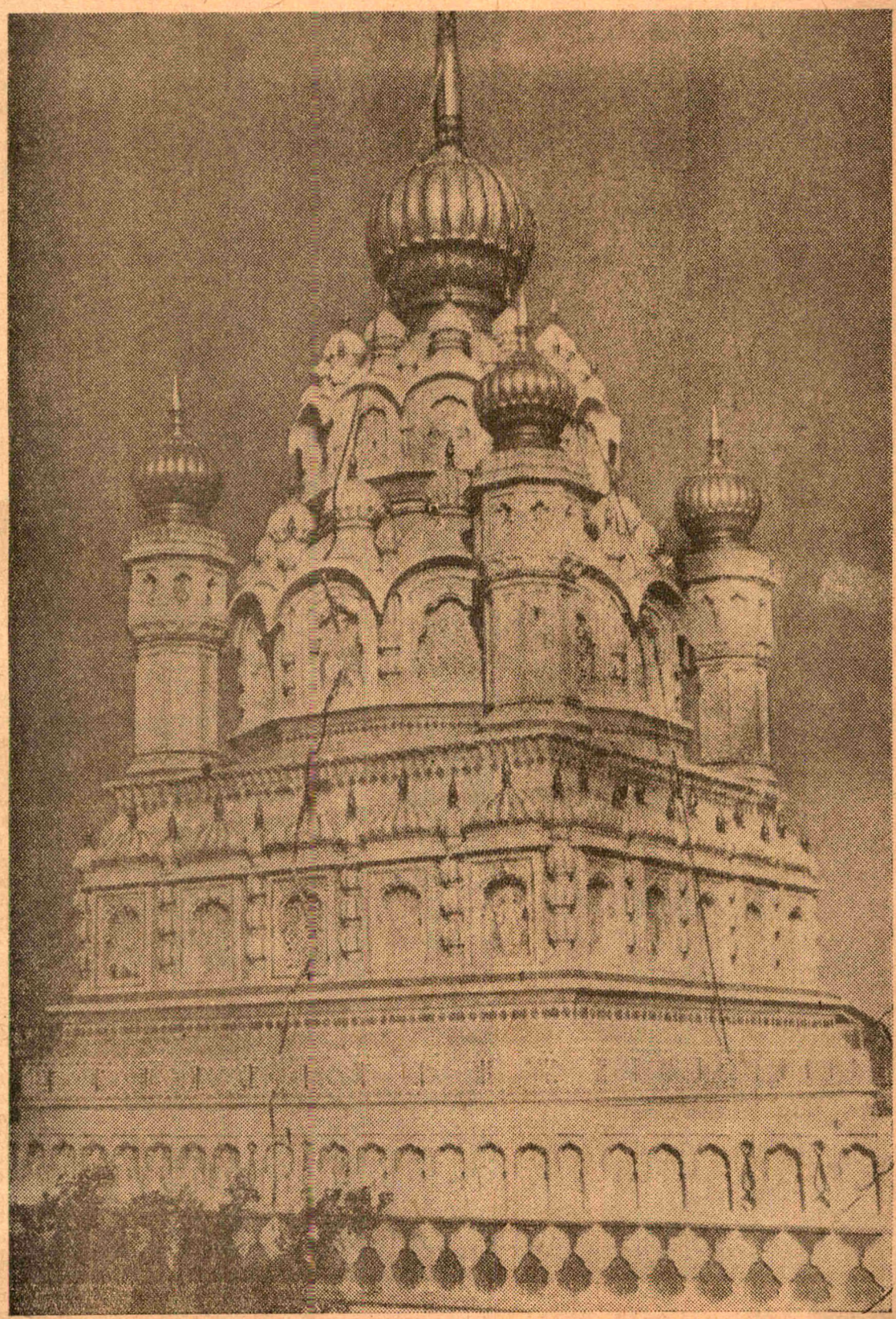
I questioned him, "Are you so very sure?"
He answered, "I can understand your doubt.
But to be free is all. It does not matter
How you may kick and howl and rage and shout,
Making a row over your daily platter.
To be aware of self is liberty,
Self I have got and, having self, am free."

(Last poems)

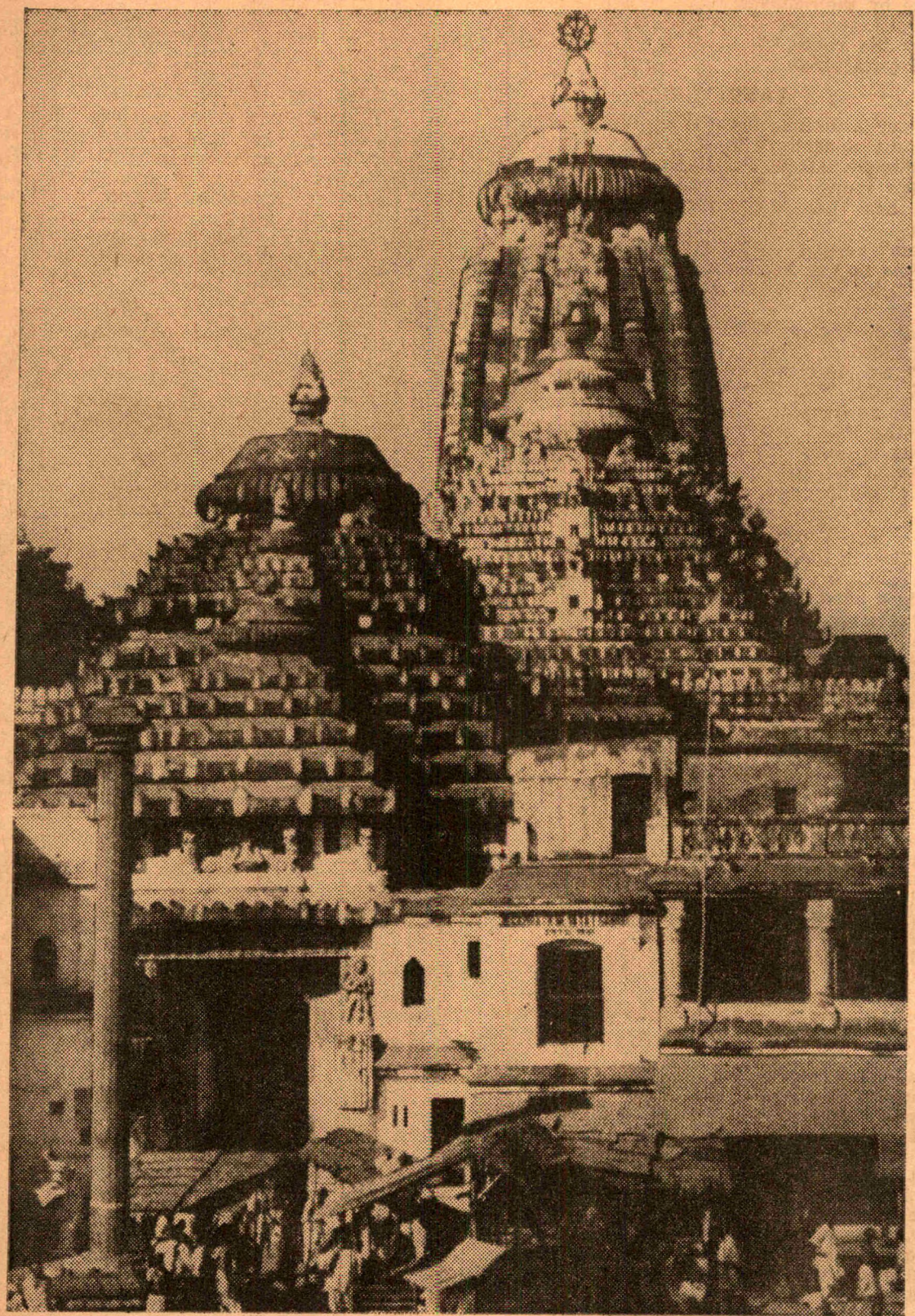
A RUSSELL FAN

Here is a letter from Sri Aurobindo, shedding the solace of his humour on the badly hurt head of a disciple, in 1932; this disciple was, then, a Russell fan: "You struck your head against the upper sill of the door our engineer C fixed in your room?" He wrote. "A pity, no doubt. But remember that C's dealings with the door *qua* door were scientifically impeccable; the only thing he forgot was that people—of various sizes—should pass through it. If you regard the door from the Russellian *objective* point of view as an external thing in which you must take pleasure for its own sake, then this will be brought home to you and you will see that it was quite all right. It is only when you bring in irrelevent *subjective* considerations like people's demands on a door and the pain of a stunned head, that objections can be made. However, in spite of philosophy, the Mother will speak to C in the morning and get him to do what has (practically, not philosophically) to be done. May I suggest, however, if it is any consolation to you, that our Lilliputian engineer perhaps measured things by his own head, forgetting that there were in the Ashram higher heads and broader shoulders? . . As for the Divine rapture, a knock on the head or foot or elsewhere can be received with the physical *ananda* of pain or pain and *ananda* or pure physical *ananda* —for I have often quite involuntarily made the experiment myself and passed with honours. It began, by the way, as far back as in Alipore Jail when I got bitten in my cell by some very red and ferocious-looking warrior ants and found to my surprise that pain and pleasure are conventions of our senses. But I do not expect that unusual reaction from others. And I suppose there are limits, e.g. the case of the picketers in Madras or Dr. Noel Paton. In any case their way of having rapture is better off the list and that dwarfish door-way was not a happy contrivance."

Sri Aurobindo's experiences with the pure *ananda* have been recorded elsewhere also. Once in



MAHARASHTRA. — The spire of the famous Parvati temple on the outskirts of Poona which is one of the most venerated places of worship in Maharashtra. *—Photo by Amiya Banerjee.*



ORISSA.—The towering temple of Jagannath at Puri in Orissa, — one of the tallest in the country — is a great attraction to Hindu devotees all over India.

—Photo by Amiya Banerjee.

1921 he told Shri Bhupen Datta that while holding a lighted cigar in his hand, he had burnt his finger inadvertently and this "sent a thrill of delight" all over his body. In his much read Bengali short story, *A Dream*, too a similar experience has been undergone by the Sannyasi.

The picketers Sri Aurobindo speaks of were beaten by the police, as a result of which many skulls were fractured.

BARIN GHOSH

One day a disciple brought up the question of the conquest of death. In course of conversation, another disciple talked about Barin Ghose's (Sri Aurobindo's young brother) writings on Lele, recounting how Lele had warned Barin against terrorism.

"Doesn't he speak of the ditch ?" Sri Aurobindo asked, "And do you know the story of how he was asked to out his tongue loose from the lower palate ?"

"They do that in Khechri Mudra," one of the disciples added.

"Yes", Sri Aurobindo replied. "He simply refused. They said, 'You Bengali coward!' He replied, 'Bengali or no Bengali, I am not doing it.'"

"But the Mudra is very dangerous unless one's vital being is pure," the disciple commented.

"I am afraid Barin's wasn't quite pure!" Sri Aurobindo replied as the disciples broke into a laughter.

"Once upon a time, Guru, there was a foolish ass who lived in the neighbourhood of a wise Yogi," wrote a disciple to Sri Aurobindo. "One day a sudden flood burst the banks of a river nearby and flooded the countryside. The wise Yogi, being wise, ran up till he reached the safe top of a hill at the foot of which he used to meditate day and night in a cave. But the ass — being foolish, not to say unmeditative — was swept away by the rushing tides. 'Alas!' he brayed, 'the world is being drowned!' 'Don't be an ass,' reprimanded the Yogi in high scorn from the hill-top. 'It's only you who are being drowned — not this great big world.' 'But sir,' argued the idiot, 'if I myself am drowned how can I be sure that the world will survive?' And the Yogi was struck dumb and wondered, for the first time, which was the deeper wisdom — the human or the assinine! And I too have started wondering on my own! So I appeal to you to adjudicate: tell me whose is the more pitiable plight: the Yogi's or the ass's? And incidentally, tell me also if my mind is going off the handle because I find the foolish ass's argument nearly as rational as the wise Yogi's?"

To that, Sri Aurobindo replied, "your wise but not otherwise ass has put a question that cannot be answered in two lines. Let me say, however, in defence of the much-maligned ass that he is a very clever and practical animal and the malignant imputation of stupidity to him shows only human stupidity at its worst. It is because the ass does not do what man wants him to do even under blows, that he is taxed with stupidity.

"But really, the ass behaves like that first because he has a sense of humour and likes to provoke the two-legged beast into irrational antics; and secondly, because he finds that what man wants of him is quite a ridiculous and bothersome nuisance which ought not to be demanded of any self-respecting donkey.

ASS A PHILOSOPHER

Also note that the ass is a philosopher. When he hee-haws, it is out of a supreme contempt for the world in general and for the human imbecile in particular. I have no doubt that in the assinine language man has the same significance as ass in ours. These deep and original considerations are, however, by the way — merely meant to hint to you that your balancing between a wise man and the wise ass is not so alarming a symptom after all."

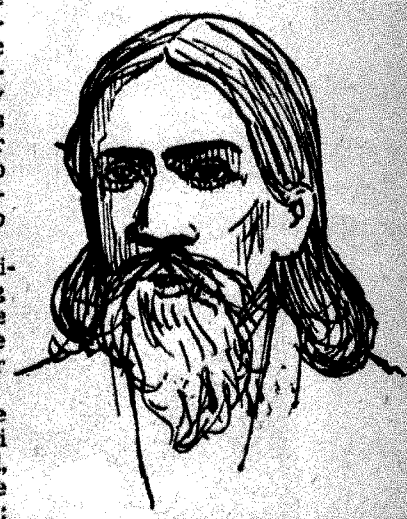
"Would the Ashta Siddhis — the eight supernatural powers — be attained by one who attains the Supramentalisation of the physical?" — enquired a disciple.

"You mean," Sri Aurobindo asked him back, "his hands and feet, etc. can be separated (miraculously)?"

"Invulnerability, for instance?"

"I don't know; wait and see," Sri Aurobindo advised. "The best thing is when you have got the Siddhi to get some one to beat you to find out whether you have become invulnerable or not."

Another disciple, on another occasion, hearing Sri Aurobindo say that when one has got the right poise he can meditate under any condition, asked: "Even when music is going on by the side?"



This disciple learning instrumental music then Sri Aurobindo humorously answered. "This information is for those who have to suffer the noise, — not for those who make it!"

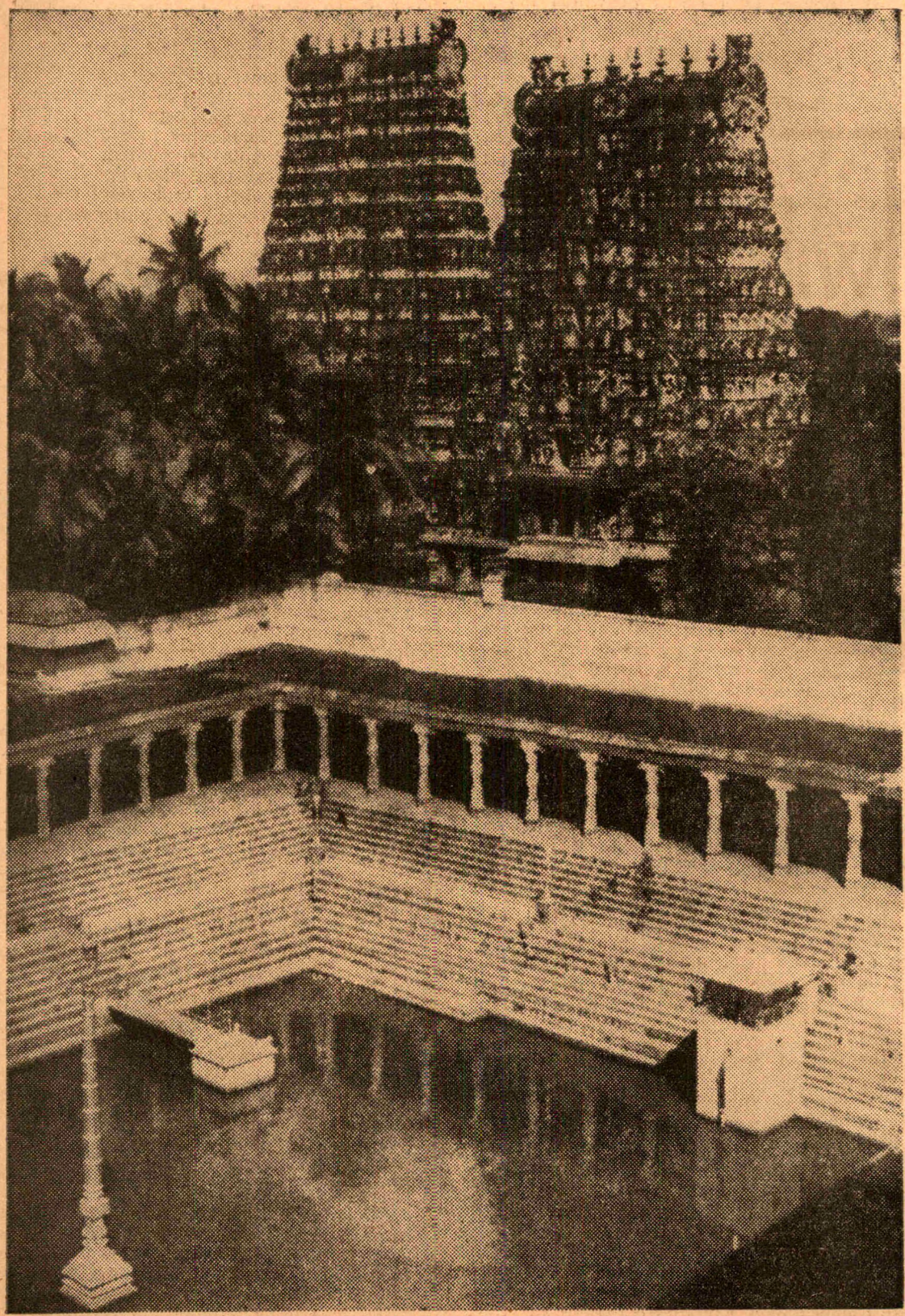
"Can individuals by uniting evolve a collective personality?" once asked him another disciple.

"That is like the question," Sri Aurobindo replied, "which some one put the other day: whether the egg is first or the hen, and I had to say: Both together and the Cock ....."

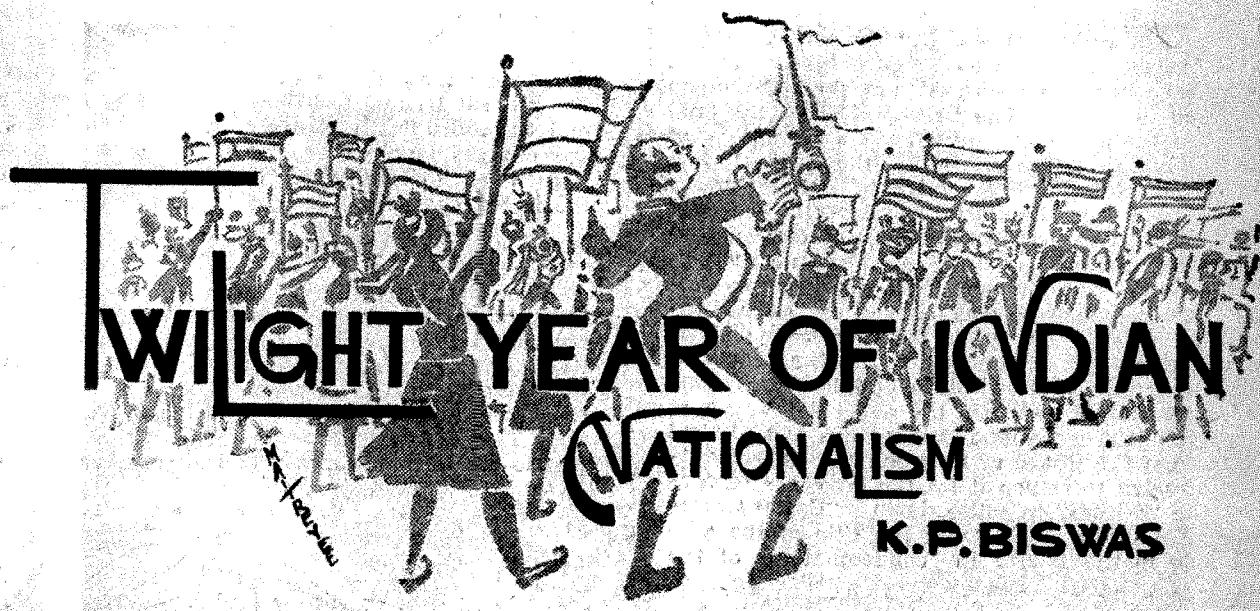
Taking into consideration the span of this article, I must leave the readers to find out more of such humour for themselves. But, before that, I must mention that Henry W. Nevinson, the well-known author, came to India in 1907 as correspondent of the Manchester Guardian and in his book entitled **The New Spirit in India** he wrote, though most impressed with Sri Aurobindo's personality, ".....Grave with intensity, careless of fate or opinion, and one of the most silent men I have known, he was of the stuff that dreamers are made of, but dreamers who will act their dreams, indifferent to the means....."

Much later one of the disciples in his efforts to win a smile from Sri Aurobindo (who was perhaps too busy then with something serious) wrote, "Well Guru,.....do realise, for mercy's sake, that we cannot, even if we grumble away in full chorus and for all our worth, overcome such a difficulty as your smilelessness not to mention any other. And now on top of it all you foist this stupendous Divine of yours on the fragile altars of our hearts.....What hope is there then for the likes of us?"

To that, Sri Aurobindo replied, "The Divine may be difficult, but His difficulties can be overcome if one keeps at Him. Even my smilessness was overcome, which Nevinson had remarked with horror more than twenty years before — 'the most dangerous man in India', Aurobindo Ghosh 'who never smiles'. He ought to have added: 'but who always jokes' — but he did not know that as I was very solemn with him, or perhaps I had not evolved sufficiently on that side then. Anyhow since you have overcome that — my smilelessness — you are bound to overcome all the other difficulties also."



MADRAS.—A bird's-eye view of the celebrated Meenakshi temple at Madurai in Madras which is the most important place of pilgrimage in the southern part of the country. —*Photo by Amiya Banerjee.*



TWILIGHT YEAR OF INDIAN NATIONALISM

K.P. BISWAS

WHICH is the twilight year of Indian nationalism, when no longer content to remain within the shell of constitutionalism, it tended towards aggressiveness and militancy? The generally accepted view is that the transformation took place in 1905-6 when the boycott movement and demonstrations in protest against Bengal Partition were participated in by masses of angry people who thereby radically changed the old pattern of conducting political agitation by passing resolutions in Bar libraries and occasionally holding protest meetings in city and district town halls.

But was 1905-6 something unexpected and sudden or had it been preceded by a march of events which moulded the popular mood to hail its advent or the emergence of the new? A study of different forces then let loose indicate that changes were already in the offing and the peculiar shock treatment often meted out for generating aggressive mood was accelerating its speedy progress. The 1905-6 outburst and later the 1908-9 drama which was the culminating point of that outburst were but a natural outcome of that period of incubation.

The early beginning of this phase should be traced in the year of 1902-3, when constitutional agitation was no longer found as popular as it ever had been in the past. And something new to replace it was in the mass mind although its shape to come was not defined.

That year of 1902-3 is crowded with such events as the arrival in Calcutta of Kakuji Okakura, the Japanese idealist and exponent of the theme, "Asia is one", to invite Swami Vivekananda to pay a visit to Japan; his meeting with Sister Nivedita who later introduced the great Japanese to Rabindra Nath Tagore and Jagadish Chandra Bose; Okakura's travel with the Swami to Bodh Gaya; the inauguration of the Shivaji Celebration for the first time in Calcutta; Swami Vivekananda's death and the publication of his letters; growing bitter criticism of assaults, insults and humiliations of "native" Indians by the ruling Europeans; arrest of Bal Gangadhar Tilak and his removal to jail just as an ordinary criminal, Delhi Durber preparations by Curzon and opposition to it offered by Indian critics from the press and the platform; Bodh Gaya issue and the British suspicion of Japanese-Bengali collaboration in it; the suspected Russian designs on the borders of India and the Younghusband expedition to Tibet; Russo-Japanese war and lastly Curzon's finalisation efforts to partition Bengal.

To keep track of these events of 1902-3 and to interpret them correctly in an article is almost impossible. But the overall impact that they created in that year can, however, be guessed if the background is known and their broad outlines are laid bare.

The year was not "political" as such a year came and went in the post-partition Bengal. Constitutional agitation for which Alfred Hume and his friends set up the platform of the Indian National Congress in 1885 was still the pattern to follow. At the same time the tone of criticism, because of racial discrimination and arrogance made and shown by the ruling class and invariably suffered by the "natives" was palpably becoming sharp and pointed. Constitutionalism no longer afforded relief or the redress. The memory of the Illbert Bill days burnt in the brain of Indians.

The following item reproduced from the then leading daily of the ruling class, the *Pioneer* (Nov. 1902) and criticised by a typically constitutionalist editor, Naren Sen, in the *Indian Mirror* will surely provide a glimpse of the background as it then prevailed. Said the *Pioneer*: "A certain Bengali magazine has recently published an article dealing with the number of assaults on natives by Europeans.... this happy idea of raking up all the cases of this kind that occurred during the last hundred years and putting them together in a volume. As an indictment of the Europeans it cannot be of much force so long as the latter can point to the Mutiny outrages".

Mr. Sen, in reply, agreed with the Pioneer that there should be no raking up of old quarrels but added: "This idea of collecting facts about European assaults on natives originated, we believe, with

Alfred Webb. Such cases were reported from time to time in *India* (mouthpiece of Indian National Congress and published in London) and they have been now issued collectively in a single handy volume for ready reference by the governing classes. It is hateful that this "race hatred" should be kept alive by such a publication. But do not desperate diseases necessitate desperate cures? And these European assaults on "natives" are far from being diminished in number. The British electors, the final arbiters of Indian affairs, need have a knowledge of facts and not of fiction served by the Anglo-Indian Press. As for the "Mutiny outrages" the Pioneer ought to know that the story of "reprisals" is almost as cruel as ever disgraced the annals of very civilised European nations. But we need say no more".

The above reproduction from a paper conducted by a gentleman, who was out and out a constitutionalist, shows the change in the tone taking place. Discrimination and arrogance were the common feature in public administration and life. And none could escape it. Its victim in the particular year was Rabindra Nath Tagore who purchased a plot of land in Puri from the Board of Revenue but subsequently was directed to return it for the area was reserved for the "Whites" to settle down. "Bastard Imperialism" (August, 1902) was the title of the editorial note in the *Mirror* in condemnation of the order.

OKAKURA

This was the prevailing atmosphere in which the celebrated Japanese idealist, Okakura, came to Calcutta (Jan. 1902) to invite the Swami to pay a visit to Japan. What role Okakura actually played in rousing the hatred of the educated few against such discrimination and arrogance is still unassessed. The compliments paid to his activities, during his first short stay in Calcutta in 1902, by Rabindra Nath Tagore, Aurobinda Ghosh, or Dr. Bhupendra Nath Dutt, the first editor of *Yugantor* yet to be published and by Rathindra Nath Tagore, Charu Dutt, or his close association with Sister Nivedita and Jagadish Chandra Bose as also his furtive but abortive negotiations—possibly Swami Vivekananda himself had a hand in it—with the Mahanta of Bodh Gaya to sell a plot of land near the great temple to the Japanese, however, provide a glimpse of the Bengali-Japanese collaboration efforts and voicing Asia's resentment against Western arrogance. It was a voice which Okakura inspired during his stay. The Anglo-Indian press bitterly commented upon the sudden enthusiasm felt by Bengali young boys for going to Japan on study-tours encouraged by Okakura. The pan-Asian religious conference which Okakura-delegation proposed to hold in Japan enthused leading Calcuttans greatly, particularly Rabindra Nath Tagore, who was anxious to attend it.

That Okakura was a bird of ill-omen to the ruling class in 1902-3 is borne out by Curzon's public avowal of "Intrigues in Asia" when he observed that Calcutta had developed into a pivot of Asiatic importance.

Referring to the Bodh Gaya negotiations made on behalf of Japan the *Indian Mirror* wrote: "Our private information is and we give it for whatever may be the worth that the Mahanta was in negotiation with some Japanese gentleman for the sale of land at Bodh Gaya and the Government getting scent of it vetoed the proposal on political ground".

Not only that Pressure was exerted on Okakura by the Political Department and he had to quit Calcutta soon. But his famous work, Ideals of the East, now a rare book, published with an introduction by Sister Nivedita created the first intellectual stir throughout India. Tilak reviewed the book in his *Kesari* and traced the connecting link between India, China and Japan, a point first made by Okakura when he observed that "Asia is one." As many as a dozen articles on the subject were written by Tilak in *Kesari*.

"Is the Metropolitan Bengali disloyal" ?—questioned the *Indian Daily News* of Calcutta noting the general trend. Constitutionalist like Naren Sen and Surendra Nath Banerjea were taken aback at the charges levelled against Calcutta Bengalis and replied as forcefully as they could calling it a fabricated charge.

SIVAJI CELEBRATION

The first Shivaji celebration was inaugurated in Calcutta in June 1902. It had established its past records in Poona when in 1897 Lieut. Ayerest and Rand intimately connected with plague-administration were shot at. Tilak was arrested and was charged before the court for initiating the Shivaji celebration. The Advocate-General held that "the object was to excite in the minds of the people a desire to

imitate what Shivaji had done by pointing out to them that they would be perfectly justified, having regard to what Caeser and Napoleon had done and what was done in the time of the French Revolution, when the opportunity arose, if they were to act in the same way as Shivaji did in regard to Afzal Khan".

TAGORE ON SIVAJI

The case brought Poona and Calcutta together. When the Shivaji celebration came off in Calcutta in 1902 it, at once attracted public attention for its past records in Poona. Speakers at the meeting, held in the Classic Theatre were Surendra Nath Banerjea, Dr. S. K. Mallick, Bepin Chandra Pal and Pandit Sakharam Ganesh Deushkar. Tagore wrote his famous piece on Shivaji on the occasion.

The *Englishman*, the mouthpiece of the Europeans made apt comment on the celebration and it was a straw in the wind. Wrote the *Englishman:*

"For the Bengali residents to assemble in public to do honour to the memory of Shivaji is as reasonable and fitting as it would be for the burghers of Glasgow to raise a statute to the outlaw, Rob Roy, who cheated, robbed and sometimes killed their ancestors." That banter had no effect on those who were out to discover national heroes in Shivaji and later in Pratapaditya.

Swami Vivekananda passed away next month. The tremendous impact that the Swami created was felt by the intellectual circles all over the country. But its intensity and quality differed from province to province and from individual to individual. To Bal Gangadhar Tilak or Mohondas Karamchand Gandhi, when they were in Calcutta for attending the session of the Congress, a trip to Belur Math to meet the great personality was a must. But not so with the reforming brand of leading Calcuttans of the period. And even the role of the Swami to his admirer like Naren Sen, was different. He was less an exponent of national consciousness and more a liberal Hindu revivalist. "He believed in the past of his country; he revered India's ancient teachers; he possessed supreme faith in his national religion and truly great man that he was, he believed implicitly in himself. That was the secret of the Swami's outstanding success", wrote Sen.

SWAMIJI

Swamiji dead was far more potent than Swamiji alive. The objective condition in the country was undergoing a change in appreciating the role of the great Swami from his own writings. And these writings at first were his letters—inspiring, enthralling and inciting. Each of these letters as it was published in the *Udbodhan* (1306 Sal) was translated and those who read them were roused to action. The first of these letters was on "Natives"—we have all been classed under one category, natives". The second, "the present and future of India" — yes it was a good stick to beat his countrymen — with "you the moving dead, your home a museum"

In between this shift in the mental process other changes were taking place, changes which had no precedent in the past. Tagore's school at Shantiniketan and N. N Ghosh's Dawn Society are cases in point.

"Swami Upadhyaya Bramabandhav" who had been in England (April 1903) made no bones about the fact that, "The growing and widespread feeling existing amongst my own people was that the introduction of European civilisation into India cannot but be harmful if it is allowed to proceed without regard to Indian thought, Indian civilisation and Indian philosophy--and it is useless for England to attempt to replace our infinitely older civilisation by her own."

Preparations for Delhi Durber on the one hand and Tilak's prosecution on the other went side by side. How vindictive was that prosecution and the sentence are evident from this quotation from the Pioneer: "The sentence took many by surprise. The prison van was not in attendance and had to be sent for when Tilak was handcuffed by the Armed Police and removed to the Yerveda Jail.

NAREN SEN'S CRITICISM

The Delhi Durber held at about that time was the target of attack and the shafts of criticism hurled at it made Curzon feel ill at ease. That of Naren Sen deserves mention: "We have made no secret of our criticisms that Delhi Durber spells indebtedness if not ruin to not a few "guests" of the Government of India..... Most of the princely guests are deep down in debt owing either to extravagance or plague or famine or to all the causes combined. We see the Indian princes vying with one another as to whose

camp shall be given the palm of magnitude and show. Many of them are accommodated with loans by the Government of India. How much longer can we bear the strain? The longest purse has a bottom. We have had enough *tamasha* under Lord Curzon".

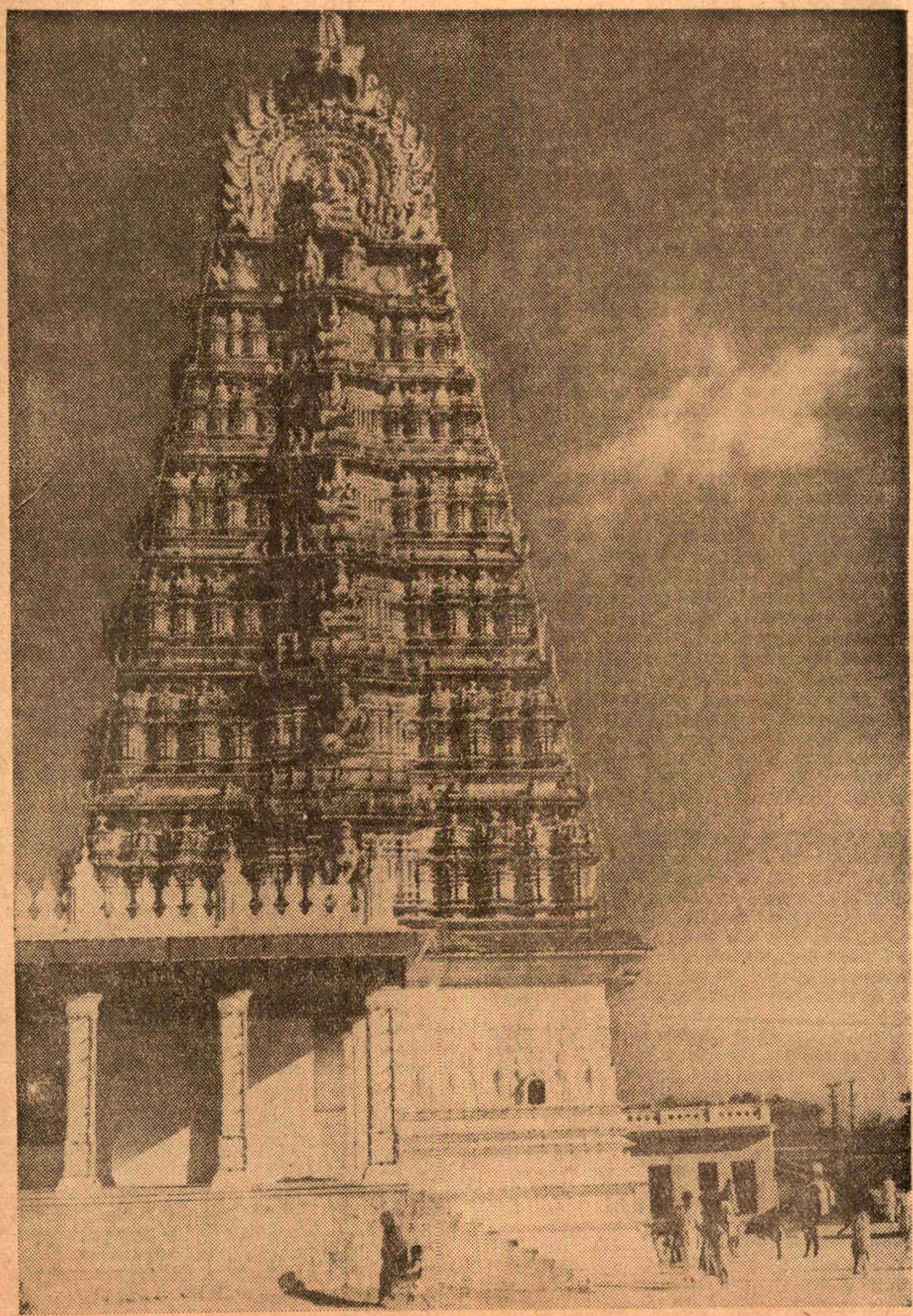
The *Hitabadi* commented when the European Judge gave the benefit of doubt to the European accused of assaulting and killing a Coolie in Assam tea garden that "confidence in the High Court is shaken". Not satisfied with seeing the accused free the Europeans opened a fund for his relief. The same was repeated when a washerman of Jhajha, during the same year, was shot dead by the brother of the European Railway Station Master. He had been done to death because he remonstrated when he got a scolding.

Russo-Japanese War was declared (Feb. 1903) and India from one point of view and the British rulers from another, were happy. Younghusband expedition was about to enter Tibet.

In the meantime, however, Curzon decided to make his fateful trip to East Bengal in order to finalise the partition move. Before his departure Nawab Salimullah of Dacca called a conference of Muslims at Dacca to lend support to the Curzon scheme. The press comments about Curzon visit to Dacca are significant: Curzon "was mild at Chittagong" but "much more militant at Dacca". He tried to "expose" the agitation of Mymensingh Association against the proposed scheme of territorial re-adjustment. When at last he reached Mymensingh he said: "I found the streets of Dacca placards with mottoes expressely sent for the purpose from Calcutta". He further said that "Mymensingh was the home of agitation". This, the correspondent of the *Mirror* commented, "was as much to suggest to Maharaja of Mymensingh and others: 'Be careful, my eyes are upon you'."

Towards the end of the same month at Calcutta Town Hall Sister Nivedita spoke on "Dynamic Religion". Bepin Chandra Pal's comment was that it was a dynamite explosion in effect.

Thus the stage was nicely set for the 1905-6 outburst which, in its turn, led to the 1908—9 enactment of the drama the curtain of which fell for the time being, with the transportation of Bal Gangadhar Tilak to Burma and Aurobinda Ghosh being lodged in Alipur Central Jail.



MYSORE.—On a hill-top flanking Mysore City stands the magnificent Chamundeswari temple which houses the family deity of the Mysore Rajas and is by far the most important Hindu religious centre in the State.

—Photo by Amiya Banerjee.

Classifications of NAYIKAS in Indian Erotics

By Prof. O. C. GANGOOLY

ONE of the most fascinating themes of Rajput Painting—is the Illustrations of the Heroines of the Drama of Love (Sringara). Originally derived from the experiences of Love, displayed and analysed in actual situations of life, illustrated by the Loves of Men and Women, the types evolved were later classified by our old Rhetoricians. The old sanskrit *sringara* and *Rasa-satra*—Erotics, Love-lore and their codified conventions in Rhetorics—were made available in Sanskrit Texts and in their Hindi recensons, not merely as academic formulae but revised and restated and classified in terms of actual experiences.

The women in various situations in Love were codified in fascinating types of the *Asta-Nayikas*,—the Eight Types—described in their characteristics and known and labelled by technical names,—(1) SWADHINA-PATIKA (she whose lord is subject to her will), (2) UTKA or UTKANTHITA (she who expects and yearns for her lover), (3) Vasaka-SAYYA, (she who expects her lord to return from a journey and waits with the bed prepared), (4) ABHISANDHITA or KALAHANTARITA, (she who quarrels with her lover and repulses her lord when he seeks to soften her resentment, and she repents when it is already too late), (5) KHANDITA (she whose lord has spent the night away from home—and when he returns in the morning, she reproaches him bitterly), (6) PROSITA-PATIKA — (one whose lord has gone abroad, appointing a time of return, but has not yet returned) (7) ABHISARIKA (One who goes out to seek her beloved). Seven names have been mentioned here.

Besides these recognized types, other types are illustrated in Poetry as well as in Painting.

Though originally derived from the actual secular experiences of love, the so-called physical passion, 'the love of the Flesh', is invariably sublimated by a mystic religious feeling which interpretes the love of man and woman in terms of the love of man and god. Indeed the whole body of Hindi Poetry belongs to a cycle of Literature which had for its motif the popular Krishna-Cult, a worship of and a passionate devotion to Krishna as a personal god, akin to a woman's attachment to her lover.

And most of these Nayikas, 'heroines of Love-adventure' are illustrated in the personifications of Radha and Krishna—the eternal and spiritual types of lover.

This is best illustrated in the type known as the KALAHANTARITA, one separated by a quarrel.

When Krishna comes to Radha, (after a long time) from one of his love-haunts, Radhika, full of pride and resentment, refuses to greet her beloved. Offended by this rudeness, Krishna rises up and leaves the place, leaving Radhika alone to repent her petulance.

This situation is very skilfully described by a talented Hindi Poet named CHIRANJIVA.

Radha soliloquises as follows :—

"Aye Lala Kahunte grihame,
jinke may umangame man dikhayo,
Etnepar, ruthi-bhai, na une kar
thambhi baithayo. I.
Ka kahun apna motiko,
Chiranjiva-ju prtimako na manayo
Lajke kajj, aru sajani apna
anurag me dag lagayo. II.

TRANSLATION :

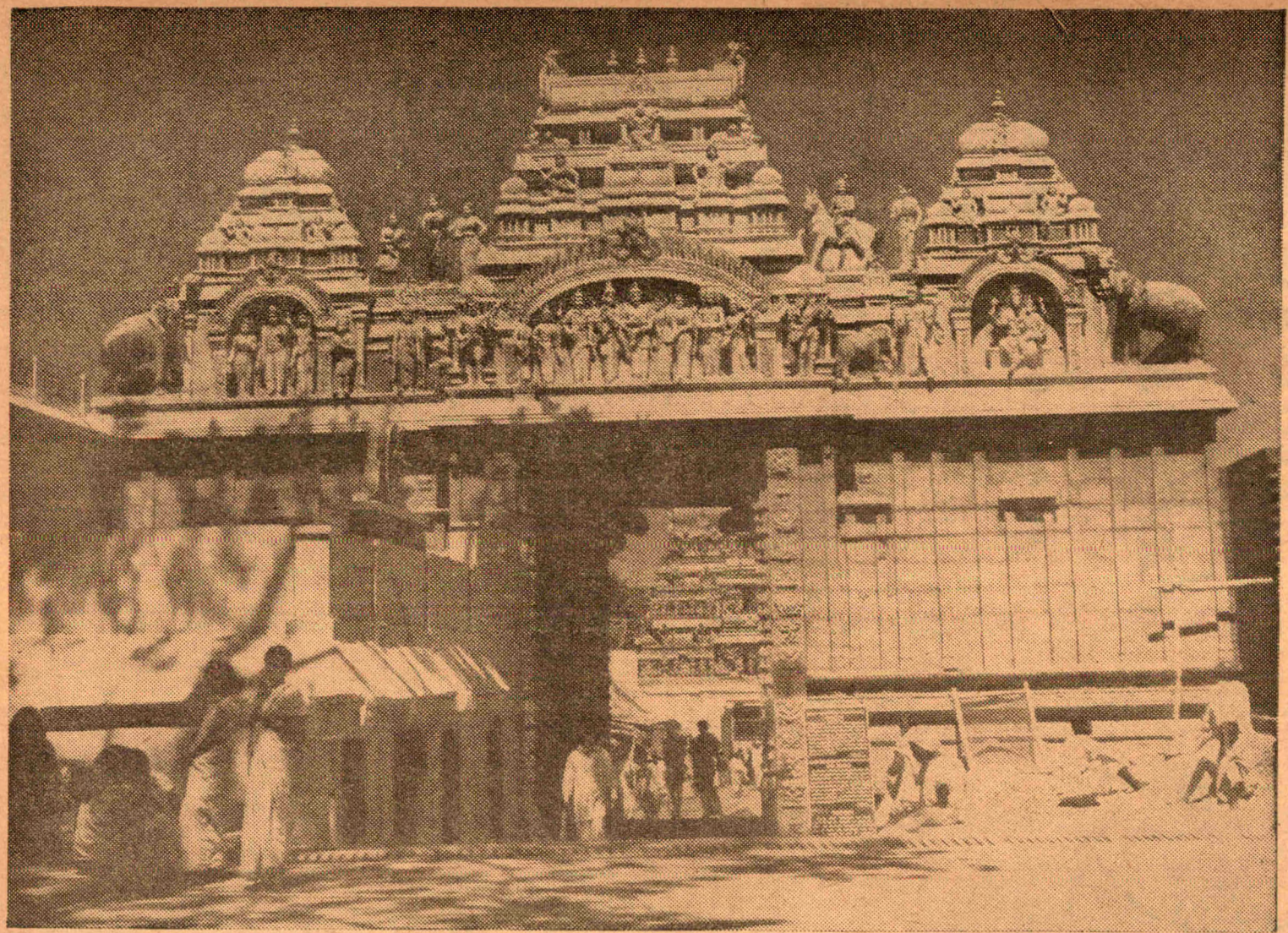
"When Lala (Krishna) came from one of his love-haunts and entered my room I greeted her with dire resentment. By reason of this, He stood up in anger ready to go away. But I did not hold his hand and did not make him sit down. How shall I curse my folly—as I did not assuage my Beloved (Long may he live !). Oh ! comrade, by reason of my pride and resentment (false shame) I have tarnished the purity of my passion".

This is beautifully illustrated in a Kangra masterpiece—here cited from the Lahore Museum (fig. A). Various versions of this picture have come to light but the one here cited is un-rivalled in its simplicity, concentration, and picturesque emphasis.

We come across in Pahari Paintings numerous other types of heroines (Nayikas) beyond the codified *Asta-Nayikas*.

Thus in the *Agamakhat Pakita*, we come across a type of *Virahini-Nayika* who asks of the loquacious crow if her Beloved is going to return soon. The court-yard has been uproarious by the repeated voice of the crow, which appears to have brought a message that her Beloved is coming back to-day after his long adventures. The lady attracted by the voice of the crow has come out of her chamber and stands on the door-sill and promises the crow a feast of rice and curd if its message comes to be true.

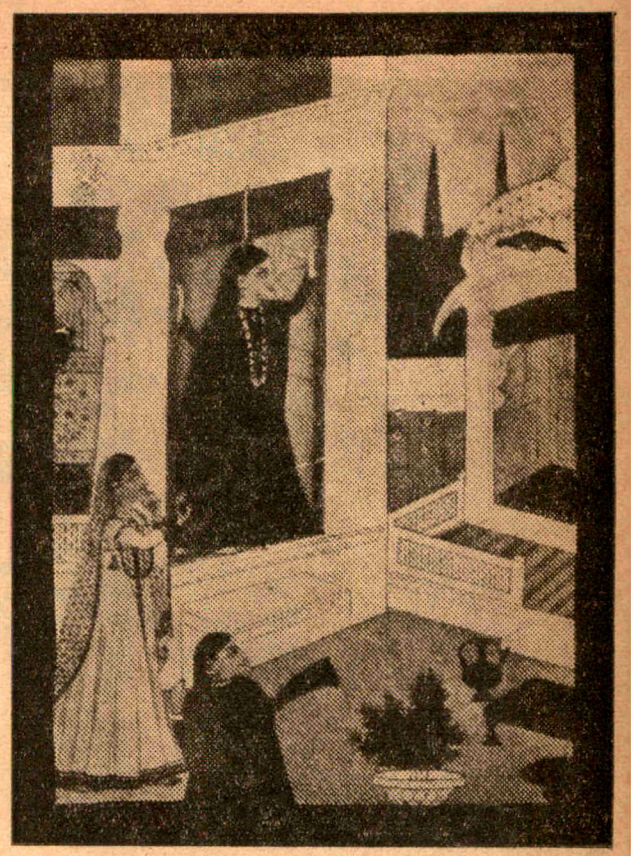
The picture from the brush of a Paharipainter



ANDHRA.—The main gateway of the renowned Tirupati temple on the crest of the Seshachalam hill in Andhra. Tirupati is by far the richest temple in India and one of the most venerated shrines in the South.

—Photo by Amiya Banerjee

Kalahantarita (fig. A)



Agamakhat-Patika (fig. B)

is vibrating with the earnest expectation of a lonely *Nayika* for the return of her Beloved. (Fig B)

It is difficult to say if the last picture is more charged with emotion throbbing in the heart of the expectant damsel or the next picture, depicting the picture of an *Agata-Patika Nayika* (Fig. C) which a Hindi poet has recorded in a group of thrilling verses by Poet Sundara :—

SAVAYYA :

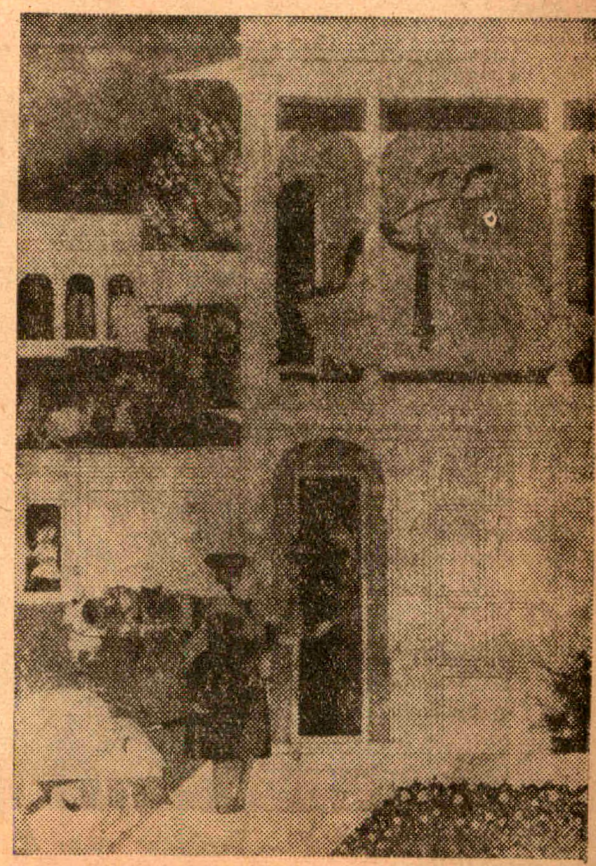
Pardeaste sundara pitama aye
hulasa vilasa vadhei sigare I
Ura Kantha lagayi lalana
gahi gadhe ananda son anka bhare II
Taraki sutani daraki angya
mani mala-natai mahi lala girai I
Janu pike milain tiyake hiyake
angara virahaganike nikare II

(Pitama Milana : "Sundara-Sringara").

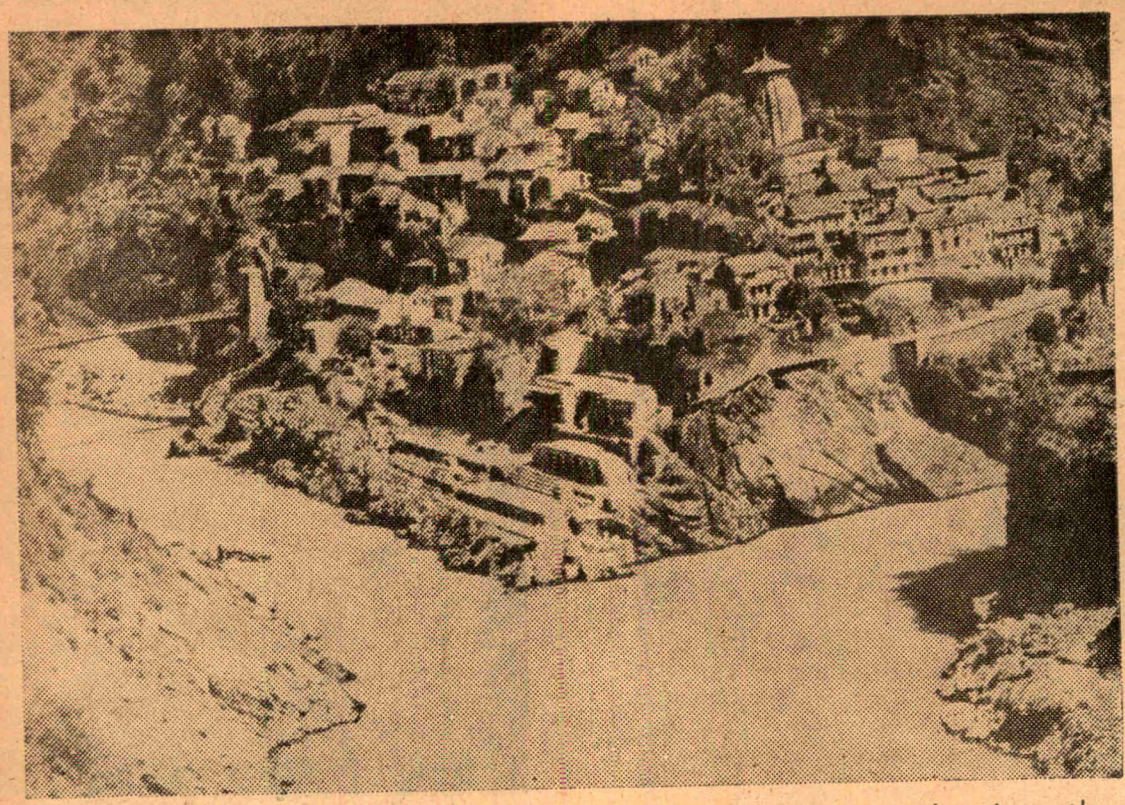
TRANSLATION :

"The lovely lover has come back from far-off land—
the news has brought its rain of smiles.
By her breasts and neck, her deep long embrace
spells her passionate joy,
Her dress-strings loosen and her
bodies is stretched and strained.
The strings of her red rubies drop on the floor,
For, the close-knitting (pressure) of two beloved
hearts.
Squeezes the fire out of the agony of separation.

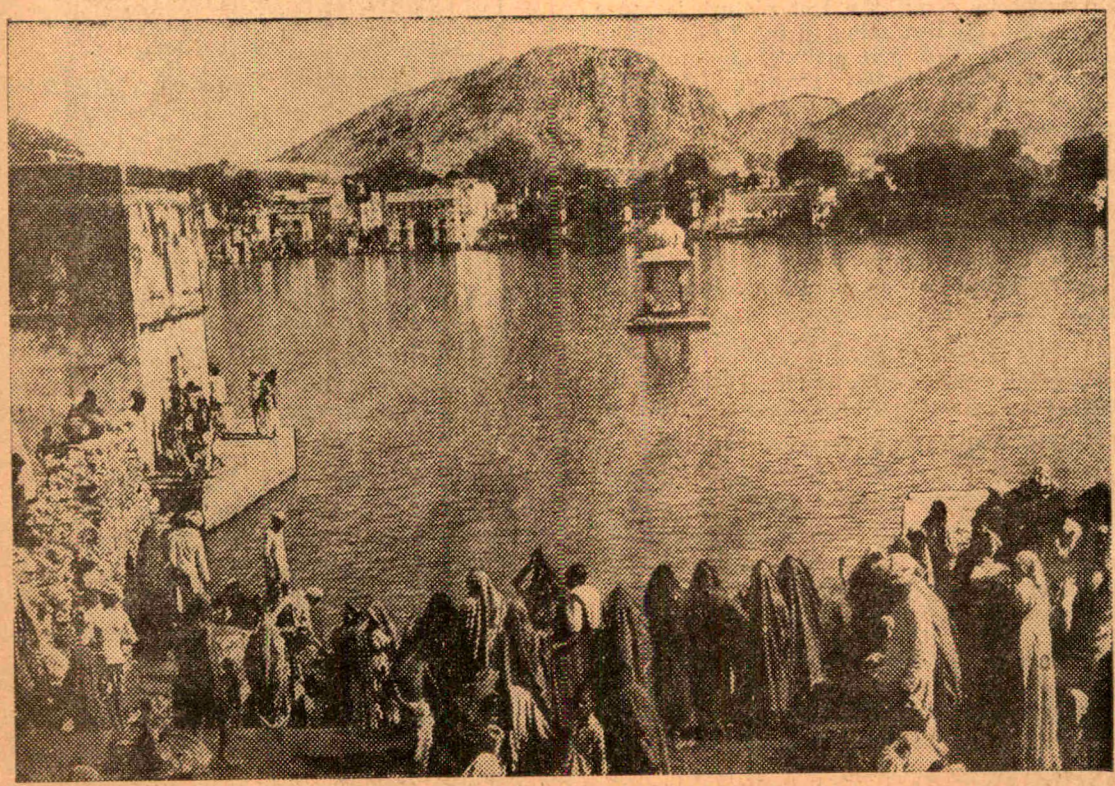
Whether depicted in the spiritual union of Radha and Krishna or in the secular passion of ordinary mortals, these beautiful Paintings of the Pahari School echoing the raptures of Hindi Love-Poems create an atmosphere of divine radiance and thrilling emotions.



Agata-Patika (fig. C)



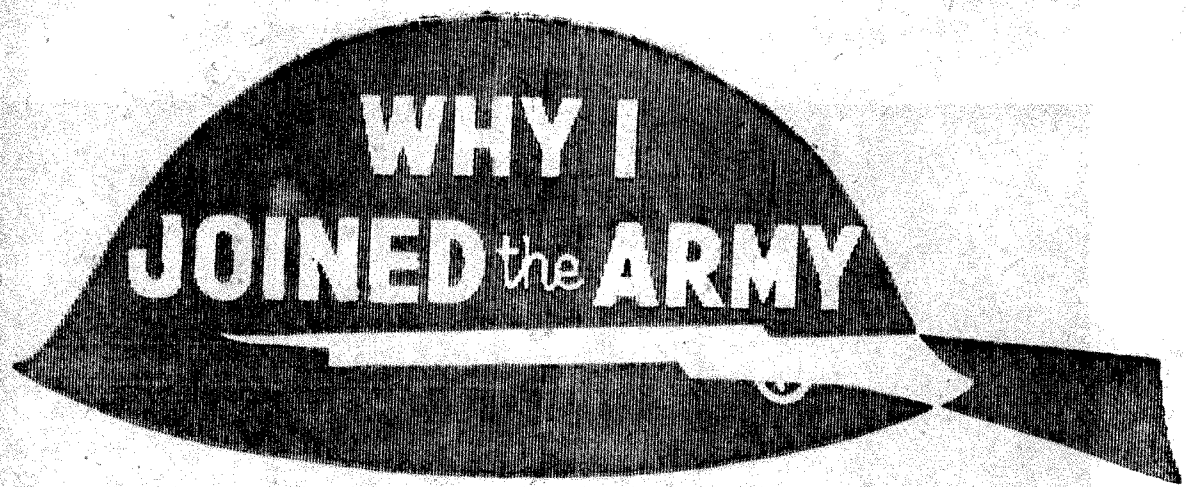
HIMACHAL PRADESH —At Devaprayag in Himachal Pradesh nestles amidst high hills one of the foremost places of Indian pilgrimage at the confluence of the Ganges (left) and the Alakananda (right).
—Photo by Amiya Banerjee.



RAJASTHAN — Pushkar, near Ajmer in Rajasthan, is the holiest lake in India second in sanctity only to the far-famed Manas-Sarowar now under Chinese occupation in western Tibet. *—Photo by Amiya Banerjee.*

KASHMIR.—On the crest of a hill adjacent to Srinagar is perched the very ancient temple founded by the great Indian savant Sankaracharya which, except Amarnath, is the most visited place of Hindu worship in Kashmir.

—Photo by Amiya Banerjee.



A SHORT SURVEY OF EXPERIENCES IN WORLD WAR 1

By P. L. ROY

I always had a desire to join the Army, but the fact that King's Commissioned Rank was not open to Indians, barred the gate.

When the War broke out all my friends joined up at once and those already in the Services, of course, went overseas on active service. I felt it my duty to play once more, so to say, in their team and not lag back because I could not be an officer. I must also confess that I was a bit of a seeker after the adventure of going to war and I decided to bury my pride and go to War in the ranks, and prove myself to myself. Just at this time, I heard that "Mahatma" Gandhi was raising an Indian contingent. So I went to see him and found it was to be a hospital "nursing" unit. This was not my idea of soldiering and I did not volunteer to join up in such a unit.

I made multiple abortive efforts to get into the British Army, in the Ranks, finally, strange to say on my 21st birthday—the 20th December 1914, I was admitted to and joined up in that most select Regiment and the oldest in the British Army, the Honourable Artillery Company, in the 2nd Battalion of Infantry, their reserve battalion. Here, may I explain that the Honourable Artillery Company, comprised both artillery and infantry. My Regimental Number was Private No. 2826. I joined the infantry because, "blood thirsty" idiot, it was likely to see action first.

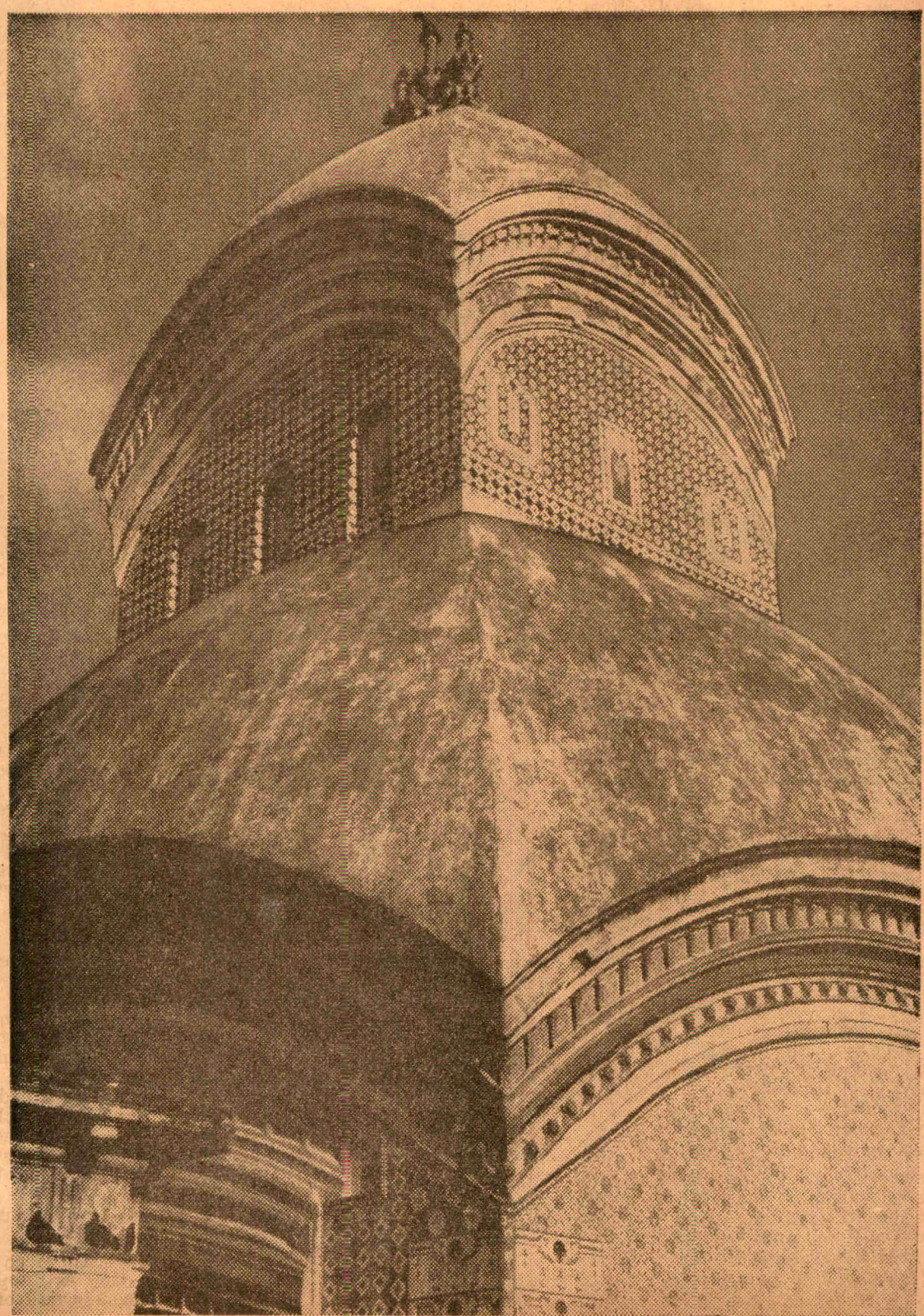
I was the first Indian to join the H.A.C. By March 1915, I was in the trenches in Belgium. My training did not take long owing to "OTC" training at School and my super physical fitness through Boxing and Rugger and the fact that we had to qualify on the Rifle Range at St. Paul's, or know what it meant not to qualify. On arrival in France, we went on to Belgium, after a tough journey in bitter cold, in goods wagons with straw spread on the floor for warmth, we detrained at St. Oner and we were marched on to a place called "Dickiebusch," near the famous town of "Ypres". In those days we carried on our backs, even into the trenches, full packs, haversacks, 250 rounds of ammunition, water bottles, entrenching Tools etc. The weight was about 80 lbs., plus a rifle; after a week of baptism on front line fatigues and the experience of being under rifle and MC fire and of being under shell fire, I went up to join my Company, who were in the P-5 trenches to the right of the "Ypres" salient.

No sooner had I joined my Company than I was "cushily" wounded in the right arm by "shrapnel". The M.O. however spared me from going to hospital, at my own special request, he permitted me to go back bandaged, after an injection, to my Company in the trenches. I received a gold wood stripe, No. I. These were worn longitudinally on the cuff of one's tunic, we also had a red stripe for 1914-1915 and blue stripes for every additional year of service also worn on the cuff.

GAS ATTACK

I was in these P-5 trenches, when the "Huns", as we called the Germans put over their first gas attack. We had no gas masks and were told to 'urinate' on our spare socks and use them as gas masks. (This was in April 1915, if I remember correctly). We tried this, but were coughing and spluttering, all over the place. Luckily we got very little of the gas and then the wind turned and it blew back over the "Huns" and the attack failed in its purpose. This was before the "Gas Shells" came into being. The first attack, so we were told, was delivered through hoses and nozzles. We were to get chlorine by shell and mustard gas as well added to our many experiences of War, plus a near miss from "LIQUID FIRE."

Whilst in the trenches we used to go out on patrols or raids with officers. Our Artillery cutting the barbed wire for us previously, very often we found the wire uncut and we had to beat it back to our own trenches, shown up by German very lights or star shells, most uncomfortable exits. On these raids we used "Ticklers" Jam Tin hand grenades,



WEST BENGAL.—The imposing tower of the Kali temple at Kalighat in Calcutta which is recognised as one of the foremost places of Hindu pilgrimage in Eastern India. *—Photo by Amiya Banerjee.*

range about 30 feet, most ineffective and primitive affairs, knobkerries and bayonets used as daggers or real daggers. We were in fact licensed murderers. Murder or be murdered was the rule. We had no steel helmets, as these were not on issue to British troops till later.

These raids were good fun and a relief from the monotony of sitting on one's "Arse" all day and night with water up to one's knees and body lice playing hell on one's scratchy lousy body. "Fumigation" had not yet come into existence. I was always accepted on the Patrols, for which one volunteered, because of my Boxing reputation and because Capt. Roger Pollard, MM, DCM, MC and Bar, VC, all won in World War I, a gallant soldier if there were one, and me, were great friends. He invariably led these patrols. I shall never forget him lecturing to me on the theory of German Artillery fire, while we were being shelled on a road, on which we were going up to the trenches. I found it rather hard to concentrate on such a subject, under such conditions.

From P-5, trenches we were moved to the left to Zouave wood, a famous "hot spot" we were still in Belgium. We suffered a terrific calamity. The Germans had blown up a huge crater in our front line about 50 yards in circumference. This had been ringed around with sand bags like a redoubt, in this crater, a big so-called shell proof "dug out", with a 40 feet thick sand bag roof, had been set up.

"..... a terrific forward barrage would act as a scheen as we advanced".

This was used by our officers as a mess; about a dozen officers of our own and from other units were in this dug out, they were in conference, when a direct hit from the "Hun" artillery was scored and killed all the officers who were inside. These were of course promptly replaced by "On the Field" promotions of senior NCOs from our own Battalion, which was the accepted practice in the H.A.C. All our officers were promoted from the H.A.C. ranks. No outsider was ever taken on as an officer with the exception of the Adjutant and Regimental Quartermaster Sergeant Majors and who were from the "Guards", all of us paid five guineas a year subscription to the H.A.C. throughout the War, amazing but quite true, believe it or not.

EVERYONE SANG

In spite of the intense cold and dirt and a hundred and one other discomforts and being unshaven and unwashed for weeks at a time, standing knee-deep in slush and mud, shelled incessantly with "miniwerfers" lobbed over to add to our discomforts and "whiz" banged with low trajectory shells all day and rifle grenades coming over to add to our pleasures, we were a happy family in the H.A.C. We had our own geniuses, who produced songs with lurid words, which every one sang with great gusto. We played "Rugger" when out of the trenches and had boxing matches against other units.

We gambled at "poker" for heavy stakes, the winner, however, paid the platoon's expenses, which were pooled so the money stayed in the family and it did not matter who won. He was Banker for all expenses—after all what was money when one might be 'non est' the next day or minute.

When out of the trenches, we lived in "Bivouacs" made of our "Wetter" sheets, just about two feet above the ground level, supported by slender sticks. We slept on half of our blankets and the other half was piled one on top of the other and we slept together like sardines in a tin and kept warm. We had a rude name for this form of sleeping which I cannot put into print. We were then moved to the "Ypres" salient where the allied on German trenches were sometimes only 25 to 30 yards apart. I was in the absolute apex of this salient in the stable of "Hooge Chateaux", which Chateaux was occupied by Germans. We were only 30 yards apart. Here I received my second wound by shell burst and lost the best part of the sight of my right eye. 2 gold strips on my sleeves now, quite a hero! I was once again excused hospital, but was kept under treatment with the unit and rested for 2 days.

So life went on. The day was coming. In June 1915 we were told that we were going to have a nice long rest out of the trenches. We noticed, however, that the rest seemed to be composed of terrific courses of strenuous training, Route marching. Soon rumours began to float about, then came the day. Our Div. Commander, General Plumer came to inspect our Brigade. He singled out our Battalion. He addressed us specially and said that our Battalion was "God's own" choice and that he expected us to lead the way and he was confident etc. etc. Of course, we all felt very proud of this VIP treatment, but nevertheless we all felt very "keyed up" before the fixed date for the show. The rumoured date was already out, no one knew the exact date till we marched out one night.

We were told that our artillery had at last got on a par with the "Huns" and that we would have plenty of support and that a terrific forward barrage would act as a screen for us as we advanced.

KITCHENER EPISODE

The Army leadership had not been combined. First we had the General French Kitchener squabble—over shrapnel -vs- high explosives. Then Kitchener was drowned at sea and General Haig came with his famous "Nibbling" policy, where attacks were made by the British, without reference to the French, so we heard. We were preparing for one of these "nibbles." It was not till the American arrived at the fag end of the War that a properly unified Command under General Pershing came into force.

June, 16th, 1915 was the date fixed. "Zero" hour was to be announced by one Terrific blast of artillery. Then 5 minutes break and after that the barrage would be put down and lifted every 10 minutes and we were to advance and do our job accordingly. We decided to kick footballs over the top, one per Platoon, so over went 16 footballs and we followed them over the top, what happened to the balls, we never knew but that one never saw them again was certain.

Our artillery true to their word put up a terrific show for us, as promised and we got through five lines of trenches right up to the German field Guns, we had done a terrific job.

We went out with fixed bayonets and only haversacks. I stuck two men with bayonets and "clubbed" a few on the head, with a rifle butt. My boxing came in useful, because bayonets fighting is

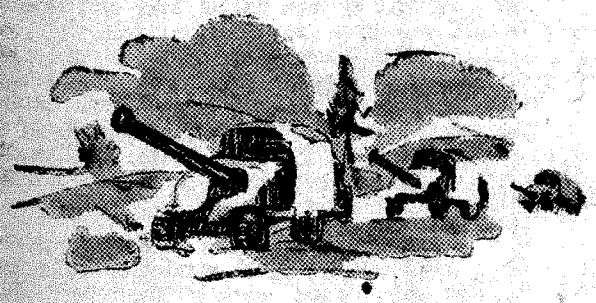
WEST BENGAL.—The Siva shrine at Tarakeswar in Hooghly district in West Bengal is a well-known place of worship that attracts a very large number of pilgrims throughout the year. —*Photo by Amiya Banerjee*

very akin to boxing. In the rear trenches of the Germans, where the attack was halted, we found a plentiful supply of hot coffee in large cylinders, cigars in plenty, cooked sausages in tins and beds in the officers dug outs and contrary to orders, we tucked into their delicacies and had a "Whale" of a good time; we had, of course, had a good many casualties, but felt elated at having routed the "Huns" for once, as we thought.

This was too good to be true and in the evening the "Hun" reply came, in no uncertain manner. A hell of a bombardment started to which, we could give no reply. It happened we heard afterwards, that our gunners had used up everything they had in the attack and nothing was left to help us to stay where we were.

Then the "Huns" attacked and we were driven back to our erstwhile communicating trenches in Zouave wood, where we stuck it out, until relieved by fresh troops, in other words, we finished behind our "S.P." Fresh troops came up and we were taken out for a rest.

After the Roll Call we were only 300 all ranks left intact, out of a total of 800 which went into action. We had a short rest and received a small draft of reinforcements, of about 200 men and went up to some trenches in Zouave wood near "Ypres"; we were in the trenches for about 3 weeks and we noticed that the Germans were building a sort of "T" shaped additions to their parapets, fitted with



the usual steel plate, through which they always fired, not like us by pooping up very slowly and firing over the top of our trenches. This extension we reported to Battalion H.Q. who reported to Brigade, but no action was taken. It was these that had been used to "nozzle" the liquid fire through to our trenches.

We were relieved by the South Lancashires, who arrived an hour late, we cursed them in the midnight hours and cleared out quickly for rest billets. We had not gone two miles to the rear, when we saw a terrific glow like a huge fire in our erstwhile trenches and the Brigade Major dashed up on a charger (no motor vehicles in those days for staff) and ordered us back at once.

LUCK OF WAR

The "Huns" had used liquid fire and the poor old "South Lancs" had been cremated "en masse". Had we remained in those trenches half an hour more, we would have been the victims of this awful form of warfare. Such is the luck of war.

As it was, we had to go back and remove all the bodies of the poor old "South Lancs" which had to be done during "lulls" of shell fire, a most unpleasant job. With Miniwerfers huge things making a noise like a train blowing huge gaps in trenches and whiz bangs flying over at low trajectory the whole time. It was not so nice. No one knew when a "lull" could blaze up again. It was impossible to man these trenches again, as both the "Hun" artillery and our own had the exact range and it was not possible for either of us to occupy the position.

The Germans, however, built up a sort of a circular position, which we named the "Redoubt," which infiltrated our positions. In the evening after the event, our Colonel, "Boyle" by name, and the 2nd in Command, Major Osmond, came round our positions, which was in the old communication trenches and I was picked out and sent with a party of 19 others to take this position from the Germans.

So just after the sun set, we, one by one, slunk over the "Top" and crawled on our bellies about 1000 yards up the old burnt out trench, over the dead bodies of the poor old "South Lancs". We were under shell fire the whole time, it was anything but pleasant.

We attacked this German post and took it, killing most of them with the first supply of real Mills Grenades, we had at last received. We took 5 wounded as prisoners. At midnight we in turn were driven out by a large German force, leaving several men dead. We took the position again the next day at sundown and held it for 10 days against frequent attacks, of course, parties were relieved every day, just after sunset. Every day we lost—men—dead and wounded—for a mere prestige issue, which was quite a common thing, in those days.

The Gordon Highlanders took over from us and we were taken out for a long needed rest, away back—to do guards duties at C.H.Q. and to receive new drafts of men from England and be refitted. Many of our senior members were now being sent to England to be commissioned as officers in other units. G.H.Q. had realised that potential officers were being wasted in the Ranks of the H.A.C. and other similar units. Our Colonel, poor soul, tried his damndest best for me, of course, there was no hope. He had not been to India. I was by now a Corporal and the Colonel could not understand why I should not be treated on par.

Returning to the front, we went into action with "Churchills" Royal Naval Brigade, who wore beards and used nautical terms e.g. "Sick Bay" for MI room. Nevertheless they were a very tough crowd. Aye! Aye!

Into the "battle of Beaumont Hamel" did we go with them. The newly invented British tanks were brought into action and cleared the road at "Hellfire" corner, when we were held up and chased the Germans, who were to say the least of it, routed. After "Beaumont Hamel" we went into action at the Battle of "Gavrelle" near "Arras" and then the 2nd battle of Arras and succeeded in reaching and consolidating all our gains. In the Battle of Gavrelle, two of our officers, Capt. Roger Pollard and Capt. "Bill" Haines were each awarded the VC and Capt. Samuels was awarded the MC 2 VCs and 1 MC surely a record for one unit in one battle.

I. L. ROY KILLED IN ACTION

It was at Arras that I received the news strangely enough from an old boxing opponent, Major Balcombe-Browne, who was my brother's Lt. I. L. Roy's Squadron Commander, that my brother was missing, believed to be killed, which he confirmed 2 days later, as killed in action on July 22nd, 1918. This was a pretty bad knock to bear. My brother had brought down 9 German planes in 13 days and was awarded the 1st Indian D.F.C. posthumously.

I went back to England as a cadet in the R.F.C. that month but was still in training, when end of

the War came. I was, however, commissioned in the R.A.F. and held the Hony. Rank of Lieutenant. I was later demobilised and they called it in those days, very soon after the war ended and my Army career ended. My story must now be cut short because four years of still vivid memories of the happy days in the H.A.C would require a book to describe. I apologise for reaching even then so long an essay and the happy memories of the great and lasting friendships I made in the H.A.C and thank my military mentors for instilling into me—

1. Discipline,
2. Team work,
3. How to grin and bear hardship of all kinds,
4. To take and to give orders.
5. To understand the "under dog", and
6. The great qualities inherent in the common or garden soldier.

Above all the great great "Espirit de corps" found so generally in the Services and among the ORs—the wonderful "comarderie" which develops among war comrades, such as a "Tommy" in a cockney Battalion, who was on our left flank in a trench, adjacent to ours, just before a "zero" hour—he produced some tea and said to me "Ave a cup of Tea", I was blue with funk, but I had the tea.

To other Units we were fondly known as the Gents of the H.A.C. and we often heard the friendly banter of "Ats orf to the Gentlemen." when we passed another unit. I learnt more in the Ranks about human understanding than I learnt at school or college.

The words of one of our H.A.C. songs describe the espirit de corps—good fellowship of the Regiment, so well, that I must quote it.

** *"We are "Fred-Karno's army,*
No god-damned use are we,
We cannot fight, but we can sing
The Noble H.A.C.
But when we get to "BERLIN"
The Kaiser he will say,
Hoch! Hoch! Mien Gott
What a damned fine lot,
Are the men of H.A.C."

In addition to our own musical compositions, there were many other songs, the most famous being "Mademoiselle from Armentieres" "Old Soldiers never die," Bolocky Bill" and that famous song, describing the Quarter Master, the R.S.M. etc. the chorus being sung with gusto "I know where he is," the last verse being about the battalion, the chorus being:

I know where it is
Hanging on the old barbed wire,
I've seen em, I've seen'em
Hanging on the old barbed wire.

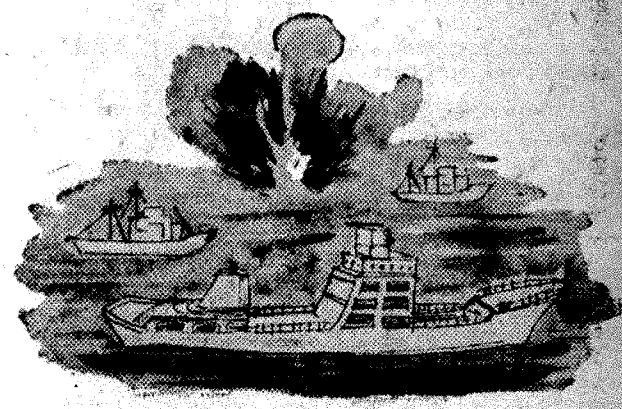
In conclusion, the memories of marching miles and miles in army boots, over cobbled roads in cold and damp rainy winter weather upto the knees in mud and slush, never dry, with wet "soggy" leather jerkins, dripping tin hats which hardly ever fitted one's head, but if one ever lost one's tin hat one felt completely unprotected.

UNPLEASANT JOB

Memories of going out on "lat fatigues" with tins full of urine and excreta to empty them out behind the trenches, of water fatigues to fill cans with water from some noisy pump in a shelled out farmhouse not far behind the front line, well within range of machine gun fire was another unpleasant job.

Again the lonely vigils in listening posts where the trenches were far apart, where in the night hours every war "struck bush" or tree looked like the enemy and it took all one's control to refrain from losing off a round and giving the position away, was a pretty "bloody" job.

The slowly growing terrific fear of the sound in one's ears of the "Jack Johnson" and other kinds of shells, roaring like trains and exploding with terrific noise and causing huge craters and destruction, dodging by bolting to shelter from the "Miniwerfer" canisters, one could actually see these equally horrible contraptions and also the venom we had for our own "Stokes" gun teams, who used



to come up in reply to the Miniwerfers, let off a straffe and buzz off to nice billets, beer and estaminates, behind the lines, leaving us to grin and bear the Hun reply with interest—another item one cannot forget were the huge rats as big as cats, which shared our lives in our trenches and in close billets and lived on human flesh and unlike us, seemed to fear nothing and again the dead bodies of Frenchmen buried in the parapets of the trenches, stinking our lives out.

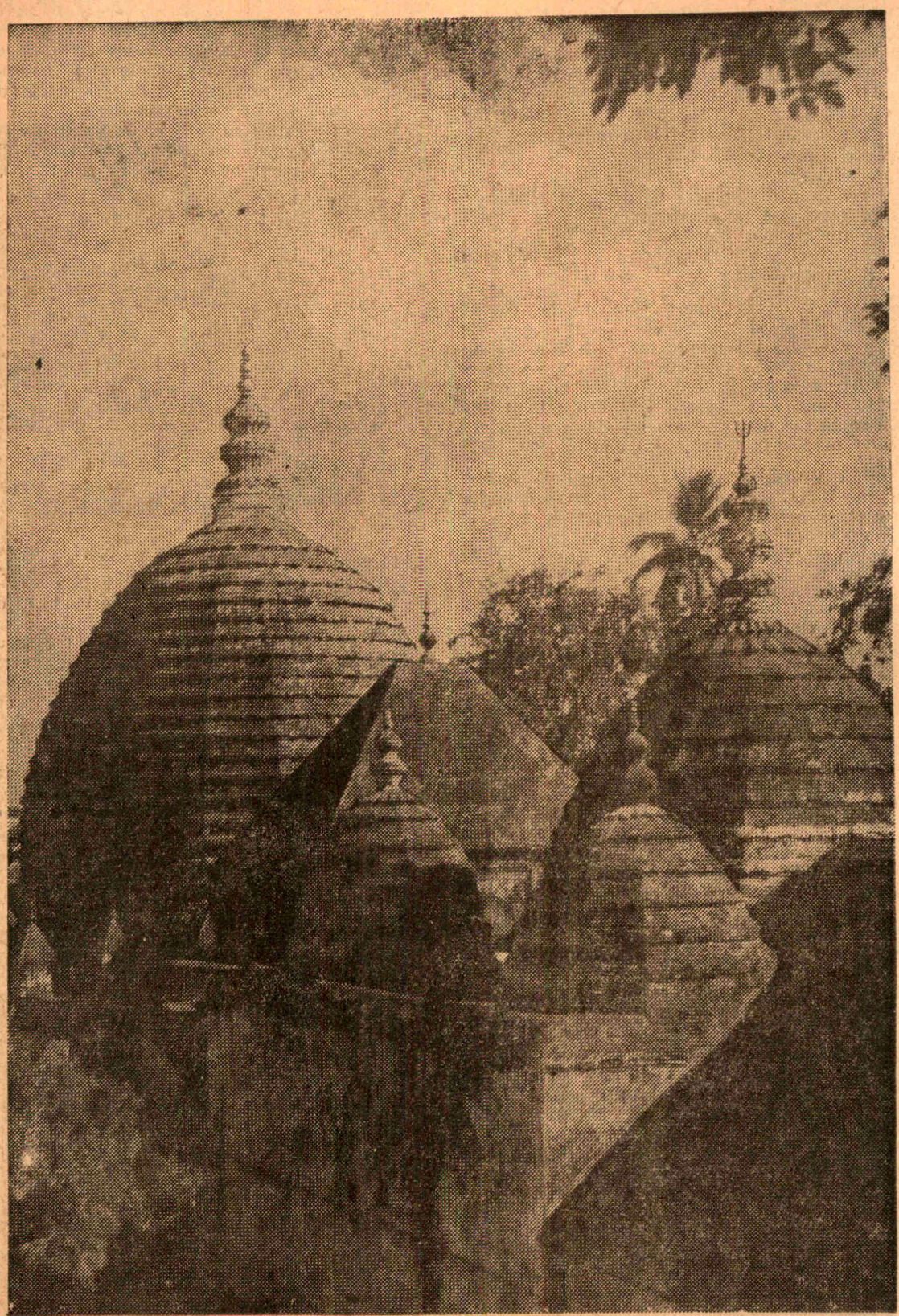
The trenches were really not dug down very deep. They were actually thick sand-bag walls behind and in front, raised over a shallowly dug ditch.

The marching up and down on soggy elephant and duck boarded shell pocked tracks, with Artillery transport, pack animals and of all kinds and stretcher cases flowing both ways, when one step off the edge of the road meant death by drowning in the liquid mud, can never fade from one's memory.

One wonders now we stuck it out and so happily. Now in our old age, it all seems like a dream, this was the fate of that lost generation, when one lost most of one's close friends. Those of us, who were lucky or unlucky enough to get through missed the best period of our twenties even then some of us were foolish enough to go through another World War but this time it seemed far less tough to us from the point of view of personal discomfort, but that again is another long story.

Those of us who survived formed into a close band of friends and when we get together in ever decreasing numbers we seem to remember only the better times we had and relate to each other wonderful stories of the various episodes we passed through, usually a bit embroidered, but that's the old soldier's privilege.

** Fred-Karno was a leading Music Hall artist in the U.K. who had a team of comic acrobats.



ASSAM.—The famous temple of goddess Kamakshya stands on the top of a hill near Gauhati in Assam. One of the oldest religious sites in Eastern India, Kamakshya has been renowned through the ages as a place of tantric worship. —*Photo by Amiya Banerjee.*

PUNJAB.—The Golden Temple at Amritsar, Punjab is not only, the foremost place of pilgrimage of the Sikhs but is also one of the most picturesque religious sites in India. —*Photo by Amiya Banerjee.*

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF MUSIC OF THE ARABS

By SWAMI PRAJNANANANDA

IF we study the Indian music in its true historical perspective, it will be an indispensable part of our study to know atleast the fundamentals of music of the Arabs and the Persians, because many materials of music of those two ancient nations were introduced by the Persian and Muhammedan scholars and poets, during the reigns of the Mughal and Pathan Rulers. So we shall deal briefly with the essential features of the musical system of the Arabs in this present article, to give an idea of its form and nature.

The pursuit of knowledge of music was current in Arabia even before the advent of Hazarat Muhammed, the founder of the divine Islamic faith. The Arabian-flute was held in high esteem in Greece at the time of King Manandara. It is said that many musicians and artistes of instrumental music went to Mecca from Greece and Rome, and devoted themselves to various types of work under the Arabs. (1) Just as in India, the Brahmanas used to recite the *mantras* and sing the *samaganas* in the remote Vedic days, so, in the like manner, the musicians of ancient Arabia used to recite and sing the lays, set to different tunes. Even in ancient times, Baghdad was a great centre of musical culture. Many kinds of dresses were meant to be worn by the musicians and dancers for the recital of dance, song and instrumental music. Harun-al-Rashid himself was a great patron of the Arabian music in 786-809 A.D. Dr. H. G. Farmar has stated that the early Arab musicians or artistes were possibly of the wandering minstrel type like the Calendars, who have been described in the *Arabian Nights*. They were poets and composers as well. In ancient India, Egypt and Rome, wandering minstrels were also found. In India, in the age of the *Ramayana* (400 B.C.), we find that the wandering Bards like Lava and Kusa used to recite or sing the *Ramayana-gana*, with the application of seven pure *jatiragas*, different *murcchanas*, *sthanas* and *rasas* and *bhavas* (aesthetic sentiments and moods), and Valmiki has described it in the fourth canto of the *Ramayana*. There were also other *Sutas* and *Bhats* who sometimes used to compose songs in praise of the Kings, and sing them before the Royal courts.

Mr. Christianowitch has stated that in the early time, the music of the Arabs "was a sort of recitative with light refrain". While speaking about the poetic rhythm of the ancient Arabs, Prof. Salvador-Daniel has said that from the very beginning, the poetic rhythm was evidently applied to music among all the nations of the world, to whom the words 'to say' and 'to sing' meant the same thing. In the chapter of the 'Chromatic Modes of the Arabs', Prof. Daniel has mentioned : "Shall we say like others that we must allow for poetic exaggeration in accounting for these wonders, and that the chief effects of music were due to poetry, to that Greek language, whose accents were so sweet that 'to speak' and 'to sing' were the same thing. The historian Stabo has also admitted that 'to say' and 'to sing' meant the same thing.

In India, in the Vedic times, we also find the references of *patha* (to recite the *mantras* or *rics*) and *gana* (to sing the *mantras* or *rics*) in different Vedic literature. The word *pathya*, that occured in the *Ramayana* and other mythological and classical literature, signifies also both 'reading' and 'singing'. Some of the scholars have again differentiated the recitative *ric*-stanzas from the musical ones, as they say that the former implies mere utterances of the words of the *mantras* or *rics* without tones, whereas the latter connotes the idea of singing with tones. But from the true perspective of the Vedic songs, it can be said that both *patha* and *gana*, of the *mantras* or *ric*-stanzas, are accompanied with the musical tones (number of the tones may vary), and, therefore, they substantially connote the same thing and idea.

According to the historians, the term, *mooseeka* for 'music' was derived from the Greek language. Prof. Hammer-Purgstall maintains a different view, and has said that originally the word, *mooseeka* was derived from the Persian language, and then it was introduced to the Greek one. In fact, Prof. Hammer-Purgstall does not admit the Greek influence on the

(1) Sir S. M. Tagore : *The Universal History of Music* (1896), p. 100.

Persian and Arab music. But Prof. Salvador admits, for many reasons, the Greek influence on the Arab as well as on the Persian music. So in favour of his view, Prof. Salvador has said that under the reign of Caliph Moawiya (661 A.D.) "a large portion of Greece had been annexed by the Arab armies, and Caliph, who was surrounded at his court by poets, litterateurs and scientists, now commended translations of the works of the Greeks, including those of music". But Profs. Lane and Farmar do not accept this view of Mr. Salvador. "It appears", says Prof. Lane, "that they (Arabs) formed the system of music which has prevailed among them for many centuries partly from Greek, and partly from Persian and Indian treatises". Prof. Lane has further said : "But there can be little doubt at this period ('so early a period'), the Arabs were more persuaded for since the Arab conquest of Persia in the seventh century, these had been a gradual absorption of the musical theory and practice of the conquered race". In the eyes and ears of the Arabs, says Dr. Farmar, "vocal was superior to instrumental, and this preference tested until the final scenes depicted in the monumental work of Al-Isfahani (d. 967). After that, Persian, Turko-manian, Mughal, and Turkish tastes brought instrumental music more to the fore". (2)

The forms of musical compositions of the Arabs were various. Their *nashid* was originally a nasal psalming and it was, in the tune of Al-Farabi, unrhythmic, but later it was rhythmic. The *basit* was of a light character, and it was a vocal piece with an instrumental prelude (*tariqa*), although it was set later to more imposing rhythms. The *darb* was a composition, in which two rhythmic modes were to be found in the *Kull-al-durub*, and the *Kull-al-nagham*, which impiled, respectively, the use of all the rhythmic modes and all the melodic in sequence. (3)

The names of the notes or tones of music of the Arabs were like the Indian Vedic ones. The names of the seven (five to seven) notes that were used in the Vedic *samaganas*, were : first, second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh, which mean *prathama, dvitiya, tritiya, chaturtha, poncha-ma, sastha*, and *saptama* (the alternative names of the last two notes were *atisvarya* and *krusta*). The names of the Arabian notes were : Jek (C), Du(D), Si (E), Tschar (F), Peni (G), Schesch (A) and Helf (B-flat). (4) The seven notes of the music of the Arabs were again divided into seventeen semi or micro-tones ; such as,

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
+	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
C			D			E	F			G			A	B-flat		(C)

Again, some similarities are also found in both the systems, Arabian and Indian, in regard to seven notes, their names and their microtones. The Arabian musicians have divided music into two (a) words, according to tune (*talif*), and (b) equidis-tance of sounds in instrumental music (*ikaa*). The modes in the music of the Arabs are also peculiar. They speak of four principal and eight subsidiary modes. Besides, there are six more modes as a result of inter-mixture of the principal and sub-sidiary modes, and, therefore, there exist eighteen modes in the Arabian system of music.

From the history of Arabian music, we come to know that at the time of the othodox Khilafats, six modes (*iqaats*) were first devised, and they were *thaqil, awwal, thaqil-thani, khalif-thaqil, hazaj, ramal* and *ramal-tunburi*. (5) Of these, two came into existence in the days of Umayyad, and the Ibn-Muhriz introduced the *ramal* mode. So we find that mainly two types of mode (*iqaat*) were in practice in music of the Arabs, namely, melodic mode (*asba*) and rhythmic mode (*iqa*). But we do not find the use of harmony in Arabic music, as we find it in the Western music. In the book of *Iqd-al-Farid*, it has been mentioned that at first the music of Arabia was free from any influence of the Persian music, and when, it is said that Alluyah introduced Persian tunes in the Arabian tune, he was reproach-ed, as the experts of the Arabian music considered that by introducing Persian tunes, it was rather poor and weak.

It has been said before that at first the Arabs used 4 principal + 8 subsidiary + 6 additional modes = 18 in total. But when the music system of the Arabs was more systematised and regular, the music science of the Arabs counted 12 principal modes as *mukams*, 24 *shobhas* and 48 *gusvas*. The Arabic *mukams, shobhas* and *gusvas* really corres-pond to *thats* or *melas, ragas* and *anga-ragas* of Indian music. While discussing the *mukams*, or *maqamas* or *maquamats* (modes) of the Arabian music, Dr. Farmar has stated: "By the time of Safi - al - Din 'Abd al - Mu'min (d 1294), these principal modes were called the *maqamat* (sing—*maqama*). There were also six secondary modes, called *awazat* (sing—awaz), which are stated to be of later origin than the principal modes. The branch modes, named *shu'ab* (sing—*su'ba*) as *furu* (sing—*far*), which later became so popular, were practised by the Arabs at this period,

The seven notes or tones of Indian music are also divided into twenty-two subtle tones or microtones (*shutis*), instead of seventeen (as found in the system of Arabian music). The arrange-ment of the microtones in the Indian systems (the current one) is :

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
Sa	—	—	—	Ri	—	—	Ga	—	Ma	—	—	—	Pa	—	—	—	Dha	—	—	Ni	—
C				D			E		F				G				A				B-flat

The differences in number of the semi-tones of the seven tones of both Arabian and Indian systems of music are :

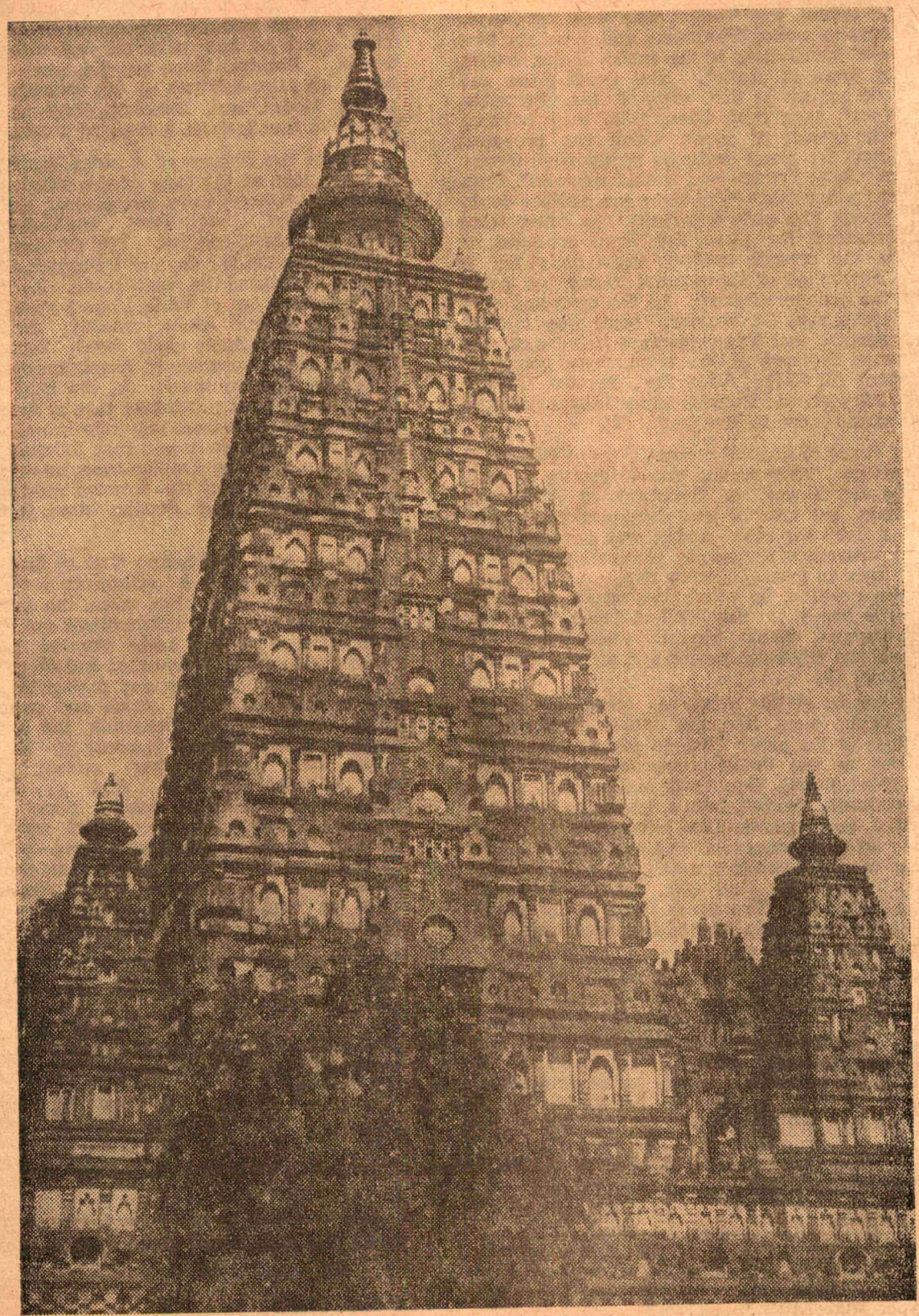
Arabic			*Indian*		
C	— 3 — one	.. ..	C	— 4 — Sa	
D	— 3 — two	.. ..	D	— 3 — Ri	
E	— 1 — three	.. ..	E	— 2 — Ga	
F	— 3 — four	.. ..	F	— 4 — Ma	
G	— 3 — five	.. ..	G	— 4 — Pa	
A	— 1 — six	.. ..	A	— 3 — Dha	
B-flat	3 — seven	.. ..	B-flat	2 — Ni	
	17			22	

(2) Cf. *The New Oxford History of Music*, Vol. 1 (1957), p. 451.

(3) Ibid., p. 452.

(4) Cf. Tagore : *The Universal History of Music* (1896), p. 101.

(5) Cf. Dr. Farmar : *A History of Arabian Music* (1929), p. 71.



BIHAR.—At Bodh Gaya in Bihar stands an imposing shrine — one of the tallest in India — which houses a colossal image of Lord Buddha and is the most celebrated place of Buddhist pilgrimage in the country.

—Photo by Amiya Banerjee.

* * . Here are the names of *maqamat* and *awazat*, according to *Kitab-al-adwar* of Safe-al-Din 'Abd al-Mu'min :

MAWAMAT : 'Ushshaq, Nawa, Abu-Salik, Rast, 'Iraq, Zirafkand, Buzruk, Zankula, Rahawi, Husaini, and Hijazi.

AWAZAT : Kuwasht, Kardaniyya, Nauruz, Salmak, Maya, and Shahnaz. (6)

Speaking further of the Arabic modes, Dr. Farmar says : "In Al-Andalus and North Africa, the modal system appears to have been different from that practised in the East. * * According to the *Ma'rifat al-raghamat al-thaman* treatise, there were four principal modes (*usul*), viz. *Dil, Zaidan, Mazmum* and *Maya*. From these were derived a number of branch modes (*furu*) as following:

DIL : Ramal al-dil, 'Iraq al-arab, Mu'aunab al-dil, Rasd al-dil and Istihlal al-dil.

ZAIDAN : Hijaz al-kabir, Hijaz al-masriqui, 'Ushshaq, His..., Isbahan, Zaurcukand (*sic*).

MAZMUM : Gharib..., al-husain, Mashriqi and Hamdan.

MAYA : Ramal al-maya, Inqilab al-ramal, Husain, and Rasd.

While discussing the diatonic modes of the Arabs. Mr. Salvador-Daniel has mentioned about four principal and four subordinate modes of music of the Arabs. Regarding them, he has said that each note of the scale can serve as a starting note for one of the scales in the music of the Arabs, they will, therefore, have seven different scales or modes. But the musical system of the Arabs contains fourteen, and among them, only twelve modes can truly be enumerated. Mr. Salvador has described at first four principal modes like *Irak, Mezmoum, Edzeil* and *Djorka*. He has said :

(1) The *Irak* mode corresponds to the 'Dorian' mode of the Greeks and the 'First Tone' of the plain-song, having D for its base.

(2) The *Mezmoum* mode corresponds to the 'Lydian' mode of the Greeks, and the 'Third Tone' of plain song, having E for its base.

(3) The *Edzeil* mode corresponds to the 'Phrygian' mode of the Greeks, and the 'Fifth Tone' of plain song, having F for its base.

(4) The *Djorka* mode corresponds to the 'Aeolian' mode of the Greeks (some call it the Grave Lydian), and the 'Seventh Tone' of plain song, having G for its base. This fourth mode is grave and serious.

Again there are four other similar modes which can be said to be the reproduction of the tetrachords, as to the arithmetical division, on which they are based, and they are :

(5) The L'Sani mode, which corresponds to the 'Hyper-Dorian' mode of the Greeks, and the 'Second Tone' of Plain-song having A for its base.

(6) The *Saika* mode, which corresponds to the 'Hyper-Lydian' mode of the Greeks, and the 'Fourth Tone' of plain song, having B for its base.

(7) The *Meia* mode, which corresponds to the 'Hyper-Phrygian' mode of the Greeks and to the 'Sixth Tone' of plain-song, having C for its base.

(8) The *Rasd-Edzeil* mode, which corresponds to the 'Hyper Mixo-Lydian' mode of the Greeks and the 'Eighth Tone' of plain-song having D (octave) for its base.

These modes are saturated with aesthetic sentiments like the Indian *melas* and *ragas*. The Arabic mode, *L'Sain* causes joy and the mode *Edzeil* fury. Again the modes, *Rummel-meia, L'Sain-Seleah* and *Abbein* cause sadness and slumber.

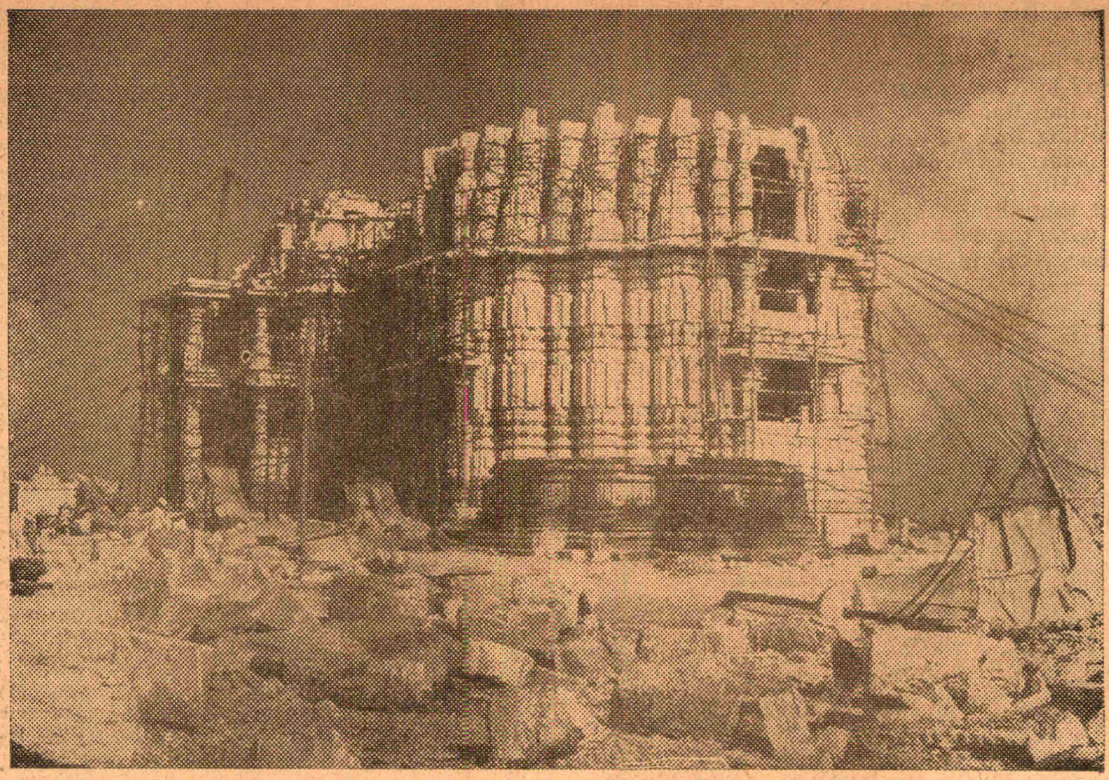
Here it will not be irrelevant to compare these eight modes of the Arabs with the eight rhythmic modes of the Jews, as forwarded by Al-kindi. Dr. Farmar says that there were eight genres (*ajnas*) of rhythm which can be termed as 'modes'. From these genres were derived certain secondary modes, called species or *anwa*, which, although mentioned by Al-kindi, are not described by him. According to the Ikhwan at-Safa', there were also twenty-two different arrangements of these modes. Al-Farabi and other theorists have described and exemplified many of the species, "some of which became more used than the basic genres. These rhythmic modes were a constituent part of all measured music (*al-naghm al-mauzun*) and each mode presented a distinct cycle (*daur*) of beats and rests which was repeated *ad-libitum* throughout the performance of the music". The eight rhythmic modes of the music of the Jew were:

1. First Mode = *Al-Thaqil al-awwal*, which was comprised of three consecutive beats followed by a quiescent beat. According to Al-Farabi and Al-Khwarizhu, this first mode consisted of *adwar* of three consecutive beats, but they have not mentioned about the quiescent beat. The alphabetic signs or notations of the beats and rests were : ta ha ta ha ta ha ha ha, etc., i.e. *ta* = a beat and *ha* = a rest.
2. Second Mode = *Al-Thaqil al-thani*, which comprised three consecutive beats, a quiescent beat and a movement beat.
3. Third Mode = *Al-Makhuri*, comprised two consecutive beats without the time of a beat between them, followed by a solitary beat which was characterised by a rest following or its equivalent.
4. Fourth Mode = *Khafif al-thaqil*, comprised three consecutive, beats, without the time of a beat between them, but with the time of a beat between every three beats.
5. Fifth Mode = *Al-Ramal* comprised a solitary beat, with its characteristic rest following, and two consecutive beats. The notation of the two light beats = *tau* . . . . *tau, tau*, and *tauna tau tau*.
6. Sixth Mode = *khafif al-ramal*, comprised three movement beats, as defined by Al-Kindi and Sa'adyah.
7. Seventh Mode = *Khafif al-khafif*, comprised two consecutive beats, and "between every two beats and two beats of the time of a beat "as mentioned by Al-Kindi. But it is interesting to note that Ibu Khurdadhbih, Al-Farabi and Al-Khwarizmi have not mentioned about this mode.
8. Eight Mode = *Al-Hazal*, fundamentally this eighth mode belonged to a conjunct rhythm i.e. a rhythm, in which the time values of the beats are of equal duration (7)

---

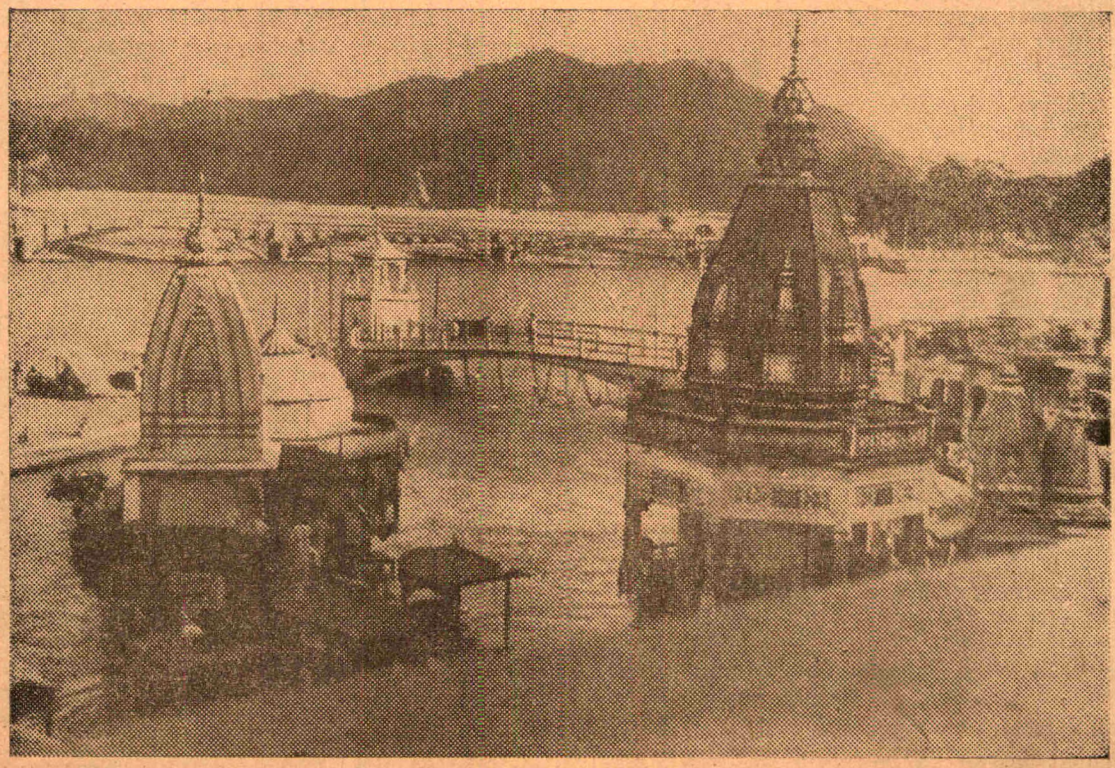
(6) Ibid., pp. 204-5. and also p. 205; and *Ikhwan-al-safa*. vol. I, pp. 92-93.

(7) *Cf.* Dr. Farmar : *Sa'adyah Gaon on the Influence of Music* (London), pp. 78-87.



SAURASHTRA.—On the same spot at Somnath in Saurashtra, where once stood the far-famed Siva temple, a new shrine — sponsored by late Sardar Ballavbhai Patel — is now under construction which already houses the old deity and attracts pilgrims from all over the country.

—Photo by Amiya Banerjee.



UTTAR PRADESH.—A general view of the Har-Ke-Pyaree, Hardwar, one of the most holy places visited by thousands of Hindus every year.

—Photo by Samarendra Chowdhury.

Now, the *maquams* or *muquamats* (modes) of the Arabian music have been extensively discussed in the chapter, *The Greek Heritage in Music in Islam* of the book, "The Rise of Music in the Ancient World" by Curt Sachs. He has identified it with the Indian Ragas. (8) But there is a controversy regarding this view. Curt Sachs is of opinion that a *muquam*, like a Raga of Indian music, is the essential quality of a melody. On the other hand, it is a fact that the Arabs have connected certain *muquams* with the hours of the day and the signs of the zodiac, like the Indians. As for example,

Maqamat	Sign of the Zodiac	Time of the Day
Rast	Ram	Sunrise
Isfahan	Bull	.....
Iraq	Twins	Nine O'clock
Kucck	.....	.....
(Zir-elkend)	Crab	.....
Buzurk	Lion	.....
Hijaz	Virgin	Midnight
Bu-silik	Balance	Afternoon
Ussaq	Scorpion	Sunset
Huseini	Archer	Night-end
Zangula	Copricorn	.....
Nawa	Water-carrier	Before night prayer
Rahawi	Fishes	Morning

It has been said that the Arabs mostly prefer vocal music than the instrumental one, and their musical instruments generally follow their songs. The instruments that accompany their songs, are *Al-ud* (lute) *Tangur* (pandore), *Qunun* (plastery), *Qusaba, Nay* (flute), *Tabal* (drum), *Duff* (tambourine), *Qadib* (wand), etc. The Arabs are more fond of playing light type of music than the serious one. The people of Arabia arrange music for musical performances in the open courtyard at the time of some procession or special occasions. In those days, *Zame* (seed-pipe), *Buq* (horn or clarion), *Nafir* (trumpet), *Tabal* (drum) *Naqqara* (kettle-drum) *Kasa* (cymbal) follow the songs. (9)

Many scholars are of opinion that the music of the Arabs was influenced by the Persian and the Byzantine practice of music, and, in turn, the Persians and the Byzantines also borrowed materials of music from the Arabs. But there is a controversy regarding this view. Now, it is a historical fact that all the civilized countries of the world are indebted to one another. While speaking of the musical instruments in general, Curts Sachs has said: "The Egyptians borrowed from the Mesopotamia and Syria, the Jews from the Phoenicians, the Greeks from Crete and Asia Minor and again Phoenicia, in the harp, the lyre, the double oboe, the hand beaten frame drum were played in Egypt, Palestine, Phoenicia, Syria, Babylonia, Asia Minor, Greece and Italy. The Egyptians called lyres and drums by their semitic names, the harp by a term related to the Sumerian word for bow; the Greeks used the same Sumerian noun to designate the long necked lute and adopted a Phoenician word for the harp; they gave the epithet Lydian, Phrygian, Phoenician to the various types of pipes; indeed, they had not a single Hellenic term for their instruments and repeatedly attributed them to either Crete or Asia." (10)

According to Dr. Farmar, the Western Europe is also indebted to the culture of the Arabs. It has been said that the Spaniards followed in their system of music the Arabian tune and rhythm in the 9th century. In the 10th century, the Jews came under the influence of the Arab culture. The names of the European musical instruments such as, *lute, rebee, guitar, noker*, etc. are probably derived from the names of the Arabic musical instruments like *al-ud, rabab, qitara, naqqara*. (11) It is also said that before coming in contact with Arabia, Europe had only cithara (cithara—*sitar?*) and harp (harp—*veena?*) (12) as its stringed instruments. The Arabs imported lute, pandore, guitar and other musical instruments to Europe. But some historians do not admit it, as they say that those instruments were a gift of Greece to Europe. Again many musical instruments are common in Arabia, Persia, Syria, Turkistan and other countries, though they differ in their names, forms and sizes. Some of them are,

	Arabic	Persian	Turkish
1.	Tabal	Duhul	Dawul
2.	Darbakka or Darbuka	Tunbuk	.....
3.	Naqqarat	....	Quddum
4.	Bug (horn, trumpet)	Karna	Buru & Burgha
5.	Mizmar or Zaur (wood-wind)	Nai	.....
6.	Shabbata (smaller flute)	Pisha	.....
7.	Surnay (conical shawn)	Surna	Surna
8.	Jank or San (upper-chested harp)	Chang	.....
9.	....	Dunay	Qoshnsy

It is most probable that the civilized nations of the remote past had trade and cultural relations among them, and these relations were the medium or means for interchanging their ideas as well as materials of culture and civilization. In the prehistoric times, Mohenjo-daro and Harappan people had trade communication with the peoples of distant countries by land and sea. In the classical period too, there was interchange of ideas and culture between India and other countries. So the Arab and other ancient nations probably borrowed many materials of music and other things from India, and India also took many materials of culture from other countries. In Indian music, it is known to the historians that the Arabian and Persian elements are not absent in Indian music, rather Indian music is enriched with the treasure of many foreign elements. The historians of all countries of all ages are also of opinion that interchange of ideas, or rather the fusion of culture brings unto a nation or a country the blessings of new life, new vigour and new development.

(8) Dr. Kailash Nath Brihaspati of Kanpur has also shown a similarity of the Indian *ragas* with muquams of the Arabian music. He says that (a) the Rast Maquam is just like the first *shuddha murcchana* of the middle cleft; (b) the Hijaz is similar to *shuddha murcchana* of the middle cleft; (c) the Huseni is like the fourth murcchana of the first cleft; (d) the Kucck is like the *sa-kakali-murcchana* of the middle cleft, etc. But this should be examined critically.

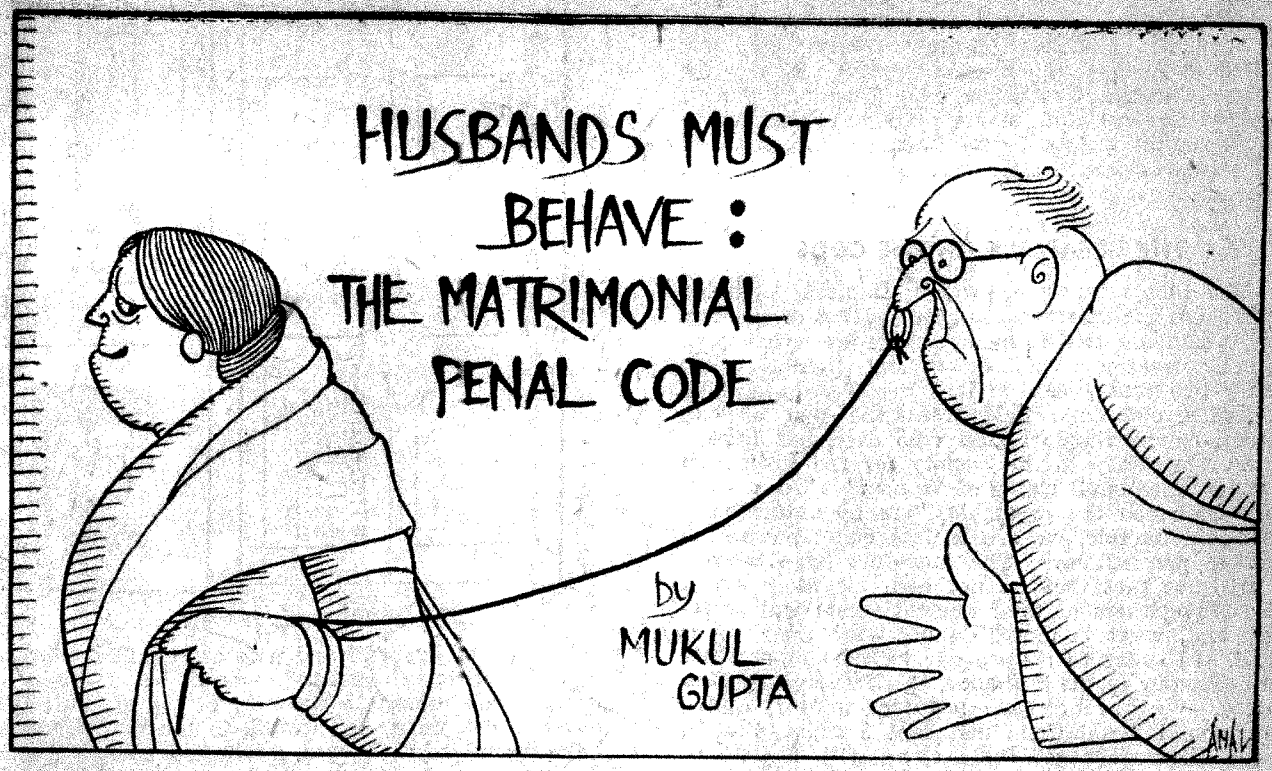
(9) Cf. *The Legacy of Islam* (1931), p. 359.

(10) Cf. *The Rise of Music in the ancient World, East and West* (1944), p. 83.

(11) Cf. *The Legacy of Islam*, p. 373.

(12) The Western harp is not the Indian *veena*. But the harp-shaped *veenas* are seen in different sculptures of Ajanta, Amaravati, Bharut and other rock-cut cave-temples of pre-Christian and Christian eras.

KASHMIR.—Trekking way to Amarnath : Inset : Tushar Lingam, snow-covered.
—*Photo by Golok Sen.*



NO matter how often non-aggression pacts are concluded in the loftiest summit conferences, cease-fire agreements signed in round-table meets or gentlemen-and-gentlewomen understanding reached in conciliatory deliberations, border skirmishes are bound to be sporadic occurrences in conjugal life, leaving in perpetual indecision as to who, the husband or the wife, is the aggressor. Each tried to fasten the blame on the other though, more often than not, the husband yields relying on the age-long fundamental principle of "peace at home at any cost". If inscrutable are the ways of destiny, equally, if not more, unpredicatable are the whims of the feminine species which seems to be adhesively wedded to a feeling of injured innocence and unshakably convinced that it is the husband who is the devil of the show. It may proverbially take two to make a quarrel but matrimonially it is the husband who, according to the wife, takes a more equal role than she in sponsoring it! Husbands, who are "April when they woo, and December when they wed," have no alternative to swallowing silently, submissively and defencelessly the volley of charges brought against them, for, they know that wedlock is a lane where there is no turning and that no navigator has yet been able to trace the lines of latitude and longitude on the conjugal sea.

WHO IS THE AGGRESSOR ?

As in war, so in conjugal strifes and skirmishes, the point as to who is the real aggressor will ever remain a moot point. Even if on oath, none of the contending parties will ever tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. It would put the arbiter in a most embarrassing position and his verdict may at most try to draw a line of least resistance in the welter of the greatest measure of disagreement, unless he, a human being that he is, is influenced by the inescapable appeals of the fairer sex. His position may be compared to that of the Police Inspector who was called upon to decide, in a case of street accident, as to which of the two drivers of the colliding vehicles was to blame. He made a most careful on-the-spot examination but uttered no verdict for quite a long time. The impatient drivers asked for his judgment when he solemnly declared that the fundamental point was yet to be decided: "Which of the two vehicles had struck the other first?"

CRUSADE AGAINST HUSBANDS

There are no records in history, recent or ancient, to show if the wives—the self-styled eternal sufferers — have ever organised regular crusade against the so-called tyranny of husbands. But it would perhaps be wrong to ignore that such a feeling had long been dormant in the inner recesses of their mental complex. And they cannot be blamed either for holding with such a complex, call it a complex if you will. For, did not the husband solemnly declare her as the "bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh," and promised that "with this ring I thee wed, with my body I thee worship, and with all my worldly goods I thee endow"? Little perhaps did the husband and the wife realise, when they stood smilingly before the altar on their wedding day, that "they supplied the fire themselves in which their fat was fried."

The husband-wife embroilment has been the delicious subject for countless witty writings and humorous sketches in competent literary hands. The theme is as old as the institution of marriage itself but the human interest in it is abiding and has not lost a dot of its edge in spite of its having been repeated times without number. This is because both men and women love to laugh at their own discomfitures and however strained the relations between the husband and the wife may be, they are not tainted with any deep-seated malice and the cloud of misunderstanding is dispelled no sooner than it develops. For, after all, the husband and the wife are like the blades of a pair of scissors

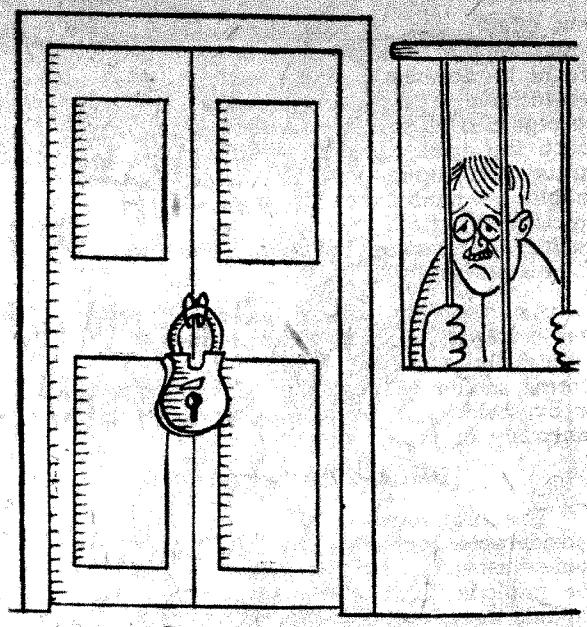
which, however much they squeak and cut upon each other, can never separate themselves. Of all the humorous sketches on matrimonial episodes, written in Bengali, the most delightful was one by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee who, pseudonymously, prepared the draft of a *Matrimonial Penal Code* embodying the imaginary sentiments and feelings of the wives against their erring or recalcitrant husbands.

THE PREAMBLE OF THE CODE

The *Banga Darshan*, which Bankim Chandra edited, was the most widely read journal of the day and its contents used to be as rich in their variety as in their treatment in serious and lighter veins. Ninety-two years back, in its issue of Ashara, 1280 B.S., came out an article from the pen of one Srimati Anrita Sundari Dasi who described herself as the "Secretary to the Society for the Protection of the Fundamental rights of Women.' "As we the women," began the preamble, "are by nature very meek and humble, we are of late being put to increasing persecution. The men-folk have become so arrogant that they do not care for their wives, are robbing them of their ancient rights and privileges and, what is more, do not obey their wives at all. In order to restore our rights and regulate the behaviour of the husbands, this Society has been started. We have already prepared a draft of the Matrimonial Penal Code and sent a representation to the Government of India along with a copy of the Code. When every section of the people is anxious to safeguard its rights and privileges, there is no reason why ours should not also be protected? As the draft is soon expected to be passed into law, we are seeking the hospitality of the columns of the *Banga Darshan* in order to administer a timely warning to the husband fraternity."

The Code consisted of twenty-seven clauses each of which revealed the sparkling humour of the draftsman who was none else than Bankim Chandra himself. Take, for instance, the introduction of the Code which read: "Whereas it is expedient to provide a Special Penal Code for the coercion of refractory husbands and others who disobey the supreme authority of Woman, it is hereby enacted . ." The

Each tries to fasten the blame.....



Capital punishment !

definitions of husband and wife are equally interesting. Whereas a husband would be a piece of moving and moveable property at the absolute disposal of a woman, and would, in the married state, have no will of their own, a wife would be a woman having the right of property in a husband, the right of property including the right of flagellation. And what is 'the married state'? The married state would be the state of penance into which men voluntarily enter for sins committed in a previous life!

PUNISHMENTS

Punishments for any violation of the code could be imprisonment, transportation, matrimonial servitude and forfeiture of pocket money. For not so serious offences, the imprisonment might be simple but rigorous imprisonments would imply imprisonment accompanied by hard words. Simple imprisonment would be confinement within the four walls of a bed-room or within the four walls of a house. Punishments prescribed for minor offences of the husband would be contemptuous silence on the part of the wife, angry frowns, tears and lamentations and unrestrained scolding and abuse by the wife. There was provision also for 'Capital Punishment' which would mean that "the wife shall run away to her paternal roof, or to some other friendly house, with the intention of not returning in a hurry."

NO TOLERATION OF ABETMENT

It was quite likely that some husbands were docile by nature and reconciled themselves to the misery of the married life to which, intentionally or no, they had been consigned. But even such desirable husbands might be susceptible to the influences of agent provocateurs who should also be liable to penal measures in the interests of the wives. But the definition of abetment must be precise. "A person abets the doing of a matrimonial offence who, first, instigates, persuades, induces, or encourages a husband to commit that offence, and, second, joins him in the commission of that offence, or keeps him company during its commission." The abettor would be liable to the same punishment as the principal. But all abettors might not be in the married state and, in such cases, are liable to be punished only with scolding, abuse, frowns, tears and lamentations.

Drinking must be discouraged in order to preserve the domestic peace. Hence, a provision to

that effect was incorporated in the Code. Any liquid kept in a bottle and taken in a glass vessel would be deemed as wine and spirits and whoever would have in his possession wine and spirits would be regarded as drunk, even though he might never touch the drink himself. Whoever would be found guilty of drinking in terms of the above definition, should be punished with imprisonment of either description within the four walls of a bed-room during the evening hours and shall also be liable to be scolding.

As to rioting, whoever would speak in an ungentle voice to his wife would be guilty of domestic rioting and whoever would be guilty of domestic rioting should be punished by contemptuous silence or by scolding or by tears and lamentations simultaneously or separately.

UNLAWFUL ASSEMBLY

The draftsman of the Code was a person of considerable foresight. It could as well be that some husbands might form a combine to frustrate the implementation of the Code. Such combines should, therefore, be disallowed. It was, therefore, provided that "an assembly of two or more husbands is designated an unlawful assembly if the common object of such husbands is, first, to drink or to gamble or to commit any other matrimonial offence; secondly, to overawe by show of authority their wives from the exercise of the lawful authority of such wives; and, thirdly, to resist the execution of a wife's order." Members of unlawful assemblies were liable to be punished by imprisonment with hard words and also to contemptuous silence and scolding.

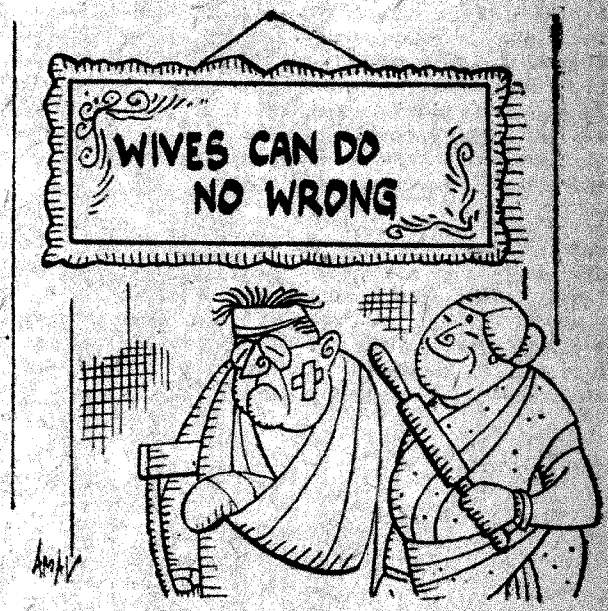
The Matrimonial Penal Code, as drafted by the Secretary to Society for the Protection of the Fundamental Rights of Women, was meant for the wives and, therefore, it was but logical and sensible too that the fullest possible immunity from the mischief of any of the codes should be ensured for them. If the King could do no wrong, so the wives also could do none. Based on this time-honoured political principle, the Code provided that: (a) Nothing was an offence which was done by a wife, (b) Nothing was an offence which was done by a husband in obedience to the commands of a wife, (c) Wives should be entitled to imagine offences under the Code and no husband should be entitled to be acquitted on the ground that he had not committed the offence imagined by the wife, and (d) The simple accusation should always be held to be the conclusive proof of the offence.

Ever since Eve counted the ribs of Adam in the Garden of Eden every evening when he returned home, wives have been suspicious of husbands and the Matrimonial Code bore evidence that the suspicion had not edged off in the least. There was a section in the Code which provided for the punishment for incontinent husbands. To show the slightest kindness to a young woman who was not the wife was to render such young woman allegiance, and whoever would render allegiance to any woman other than his wife would be guilty of incontinence. There was, however, a saving clause. The right of imagining offences under this section should be held to belong in general to old wives and to woman with old and ugly husbands. A young wife should not, however, be entitled to assume the right unless she could prove that she had a particularly cross temper, or was brought up as a spoilt child or was herself supremely ugly. Whoever would be found guilty of incontinence would be liable to all the punishments mentioned in this Code and also to other punishments not mentioned in the Code.

Waging war against the State is the gravest political offence and calls for the most serious punishment. Under the Matrimonial Code, the State was defined as the Married State only in which the reigning deity was the wife. To wage war against her would amount to waging war against the State. Any husband who should be found attempting to wage such war or abetting the waging of such war against the wife should be capitally punished within the meaning of the appropriate section of the Code. Again, whichever husband would induce friends or try to gain over children to side with him or otherwise prepare to wage war with the intention of waging war against the wife should be punished.

COMPETENT COURT OF LAW

To administer the provisions of the Matrimonial Code there must be a competent court of law. Too much care could not be taken to determine the constitution of the Court, lest the presiding judge should take a lenient view of the accused husbands and let them off without adequate punishment, even though the offences might be imaginary. The judge, therefore, must be one who was fully oriented in the spirit which formed the very basic stratum of the Code, and must not acquit as not guilty any husband once he was brought to the dock. Such an insurance against any acquittal could be offered



only if the judge and the prosecuting party were one and the same person. The Matrimonial Code, therefore, laid down: "A competent court means the wife having right of property in the offending husband." The only clause that escaped the impartial eyes of the authors of the Code was: It would not be legally permissible for the husband not to plead not guilty whatever the charges might be brought against him and there would be no appeal from the judgment of the lower court.

The Matrimonial Penal Code was composed by Bankim Chandra nearly a century ago. It is a delightfully witty document, obliquely flattering the vanity of the women-folk and pin-pointing their irrepressible ambition to have the last word in all domestic affairs. As there was no motive nor any malice behind the Code, it provided as much innocent pleasure to the contemporary readers of the *Banga Darshan* as it does today, a century later, to all who love to browse upon the writings of one of the most versatile Bengali litterateur.

THE

MAKBUL brought the letter from the post office. He had been to the Choudhury's residence to deliver milk in his tiny skiff. The village post office occupied a part of the building. The Postmaster handed it to him and he brought it to Rajmohan Ray.

Rajmohan was hanging wet jute fibre on horizontal bamboo poles in his courtyard. A servant and a maid were helping him. The sight of the letter enraged him and he cursed. "Look at what you have done, you son of a swine!"

"Why, what's wrong, master?" Makbul was surprised. Rajmohan flared up again. "What's wrong? You want to know what's wrong? Here have a look at this letter. It's had a good dip in the canal, hasn't it? Must you add water to whatever you bring, as you dilute your milk, you rascal?" Makbul looked grave. "Don't say that, master, I never add water to milk. My boat needs a plank, master, that's why the letter got wet. What can I do. You refused to give me a new plank. I kept the letter near the bow, yet it got wet anyhow." Rajmohan mimicked him sarcastically, "It got wet. Do you think you'll get a plank out of me that way? You have the brain of a devil, Makbul, I've never seen another one like you. Oh, come now. You're not going already, are you? Take a little rest. Have a smoke before you go."

A tobacco box and an earthen bowl with live-coals lay on the north verandah. A water pipe for the use of Moslems stood against a pillar. Grumbling to himself Makbul went up there to make some tobacco.

Rajmohan finished hanging out the jute fibre and looked at the letter. He had recently under-

FOUR-POSTER

By NARENDRA NATH MITRA

gone an operation and the cataract was removed. Without his glasses he could not read. "Kalu, bring my specs.", he called to his servant, "They're over there next to almanac on the table. Bring them to me."

He wiped the thick lenses of the nickel framed spectacles with care and put them on cautiously. As he looked at the envelope he broke into a smile. "It's my daughter-in-law's hand-writing. She's written the address. The babu has no time to write. She can write better than he does anyway. Who'd guess this was written by a woman? Look at the letters, Kalu, they're wonderful, just like a man's. Look, Kalu, look for yourself."

Kalu, the fourteen year old servant, was illiterate. Still he peered at the English letters on the envelope and murmured with appreciation "Right you are, master", he said. "The lady writes real nice. She looks dainty as she writes dainty, and she talks just as daintily. When she came last time she gave me two rupees. Of course I wouldn't take them but would she listen? This is how a respectable lady of your caste behaves, master, so different from us."

Kalu, certainly was tactful for his age. His comments seemed to please Rajmohan. Beaming, he said, "Caste isn't all there is to it, you silly boy. Think of the ancestral heritage, the family. Don't you see? The grand daughter of the famous Ambika Bose of Chandipur. What a man he was —in learning and wisdom he was without an equal around here. A daughter from that family—I didnt' just pick anybody for my daughter-in-law."

He tore open the envelope and started reading the letter aloud. "You saw the handwriting Kalu, now mark the language. Do you think a lawyer could write better than this?"

He called Makbul too. "Come here, Makbul, listen to this".

Curious, the pipe and stand in hand Makbul drew close.

Rajmohan began,

"Respected father,

It has been a long time since we heard from you. It worries us when we don't hear from you. When we think of you living there all alone with just a few servants our hearts grow heavy with sadness. We are not near to look after you in your old age—the thought simply makes me miserable. But it can't be helped. You did not listen to us. You refused to leave Pakistan. All the neighbours have long ago sold their house and property and moved here. The Banerjees, the Mukherjees, the the Rahas, the Sahas, the Kundus, the Nandis—all of them have migrated to this part of the world. The village is practically deserted. Still, you preferred to stay alone. Neither did you think of the future. But your friends and neighbours have made some money while the going was good. They are men of means, here. And you did nothing."

It has come to our knowledge that you boast that you are not going to sell an inch of land or even a stick from what belongs to you. You would rather see the moslems grab your property, loot your belongings than sell them. Well, the property is yours, we have no right to say anything. You are perfectly entitled to do what you please.

I am writing this letter today so that you may do me a favour. You know how damp and unhealthy our flat in Beleghata is. The children have to sleep on the floor. Your beloved Kanu, Tenu, Rina, Meena are laid up with fever. Medical bill is going up every month. When I ask your son to buy cots he says he is short of money. That is why

I have this request to make. Please sell our four-poster bed, the wedding gift from my grand father. If you send that money we can try to get decent cots and beds for the children. They are on the rocks and I cannot bear to see their suffering.

You cannot possibly object to this. It doesn't belong to you, really. It was part of my dowry. If you sell that it won't hurt your prestige. You can tell others that I'm selling it. This is the jute season, the right time. The Moslems have got plenty of money. Besides there is none to sleep in the bed. So is there any sense in keeping it? It is better to sell it than have it eaten by worms. The money will be of good use to the children. Your son agrees with me.

We are all well. Your son is very busy. He shall write when he finds time. Please arrange to sell the bed immediately. Do write to us. With deepest regards.

Your loving
Ashima."

Suren, his son added a line to endorse what Asima wrote "I think you don't object to what Asima has asked for."

"No, no, no objection, no objection. Let them do what they wish."

Rajmohan threw the letter away as he called his servant, "You there, Kalu. Go get that four-poster bed from the east room. I'll see to it that this piece of furniture removes from room and goes to rack and ruin. She isn't pleased with taking away whatever belonged to her, now she must have the four-poster. I'm not going to keep it any more. And look at that hen-pecked husband I mean the son of mine, "I don't think you should have any objection". Why should I? I am not going to rest in peace till I throw that confounded bed out of my sight. Go, move that bed out, Kalu." Kalu tried to stop him. "Listen to me master". "No, no, I'm not going to listen to anyone Kalu. My word is final. That bed is as good as an urinal to me No, Kalu that bed must be removed. The sight of it sets my whole body burning."

Rajmohan threw open the door leading to the east room and came in. Suren and Ashima used this room whenever they came home on holidays. Their last visit was a year ago. Placed close to the two southern windows the bed was carefully covered with dust sheets. Rajmohan would come in every day to see if it was safe from worms. He would dust it himself with the towel he carried on his shoulder. A picture of the couple hung from the wall on the east. Bunches of dry jute and paddy lay heaped on the floor.

Makbul had followed him to the door. Rajmohan said, "Come in Makbul, take that stuff away."

"Are you serious about selling it? Do you really want to sell it, master?" asked Makbul. Rajmohan was positive. "Yes I would. If I find ready cash. I would sell it and send a money order to Calcutta right away."

The room had no image or gods or pitchers of drinking water—nothing in fact to stop the low caste labourers from entering the room now. So Makbul got through the doors to the rooms.

He looked greedily at the beautiful teak four-poster bedstead, with tigers paws for its legs. Elegantly elaborated designs flanked the sides with a row of tiny elephants in between.

"Would you sell this, master?" Makbul asked again, "But of course you should, after this insulting letter from the daughter-in-law, a self-respecting man like you should never keep it. I'll tell you something. Why don't you give it to me?"

Rajmohan stared at him. "To you?" he said.

"Why not master", Makbul continued. "Of course I wouldn't take it free. I'll pay for it, as much as I can. You just wanted to throw it away. The dump and my house would be the same thing to you. Please let me have it master."

Still smouldering inside, Rajmohan thought it over. Makbul was right, he concluded. Mean as his daughter-in-law was, this would serve her right. This is the proper place for it, the home of a common labourers. He accepted the offer.

Looking at Makbul he enquired, "If you have the cash ready then take it—clear my room of this dirt at once."

"All right master, please have it dismantled till I go home and get the money." Makbul strode towards his house in hot haste.

To the south of the Ray home an abandoned building lay in ruins. There was a narrow ditch beyond which was filled up during rains but was dried up in summer. Over this ditch Makbul ran balancing on the single bamboo pole which served as a bridge. There was another pole higher up to be used as a railing and hand-rest. This bamboo stretched from a mango tree on the deserted ground to the trunk of a tamarind tree on the other side. Under this tamarind tree was a hut with a rusty corrugated iron roof. This was Makbul's home. The walls were woven with twigs of bamboo, some were made of jute strips. Puddles of water formed near the walls, a few earth-worms dug their shelter through them. The small yard in front was wet and slushy. The water from the canal almost touched the foundations. A handsome young woman of twenty-two wearing a blue sari sat cutting watercress. Two thin and famished children played around with water weeds. A string round the waist from which dangled a single coin was all each had on. Along the east side of the yard jute fibres were hung up to dry, to be served as fuel later, as well as building material. Partly hidden from sight was a rickety cow munching hay and occasionally flapping its tail.

Breathless from running, Makbul approached his wife, "Get up, Fati, get up. Get some money, quick".

Fatima stared at her husband, her big eyes wide with amazement. Picking up the end of her sari on her head she said, "Say, whom are you talking to? Where do I get money from?"

Makbul smiled mysteriously, "You'll see." Then he told her about the secret store, where in a hollowed bamboo branch he had saved a few notes, procured bit by bit, selling jute and milk, occasionally a couple of trees.

But Fatima was reluctant to part with it. "Didn't you promise to buy a cow, don't you know the house needs repair, besides, what about my jewellery you said you'd buy with that money? Kill me first, before you take that money from me."

Her outburst amused Makbul. But he said with affection, "It's more than a piece of jewelry Fati, you haven't seen the like of it, neither have I".

Then he went into all the details about what a bargain it was, that they should not let this chance of a lifetime slip through their hands. Once the master was reconciled, the offer would be gone. So they must act quickly, before somebody else gets it. When the Hindus left their furniture their utensils were practically sold for a song. But Makbul never had any money, he could never touch anything. Now when chance has brought a valuable bed to his door let him have it. At least he should have one object worth having.

"But where would you keep that princely possession in this shabby hut?" Fatima was sceptical.

Makbul lifted her chin towards him "If my hut is good for the light of my heart, it will be good enough for the bed." He said.

He took fifty rupees out of their bamboo box and then rushed back. Around the decripit old house Yakub the watchman was searching for creepers for making fishing rods. He saw Makbul hurrying by. "What's the haste for, man?" He shouted after him. "Who is it? Oh, Yakub! Would you come with me for a minute. Come on quick. I'll make you a fishing rod later, hurry now."

Makbul held his hand and resumed running.

When he arrived at Rajmohan's house the old man had brought the bed out in the yard. Makbul put the money near his feet. "Here you are, master", he said. "Here's your money."

It was quite a bargain brother, this bed would have fetched at least two hundred rupees, I tell you

"What do I want money for? Take the bed and throw it into the river. I have got nothing to do with it". Said Rajmohan. Makbul said, "If it had been your own I would have asked for it. Since this belongs to the mistress being a gift from her parents I must pay for it. Please take the money on her behalf and send it to her, master."

His words struck the old man like an arrow. True it wasn't his property. Ashima had made that quite clear in her letter, every line of which stung him like a poisonous snake.

"All right, all right", he shouted, "that daughter of a bitch is after money, she'll have it, You take this out of my sight Makbul. It is not a bed, it's my funeral pyre. Take it away."

With assistance from Yakub Makbul crossed the canal on a boat, taking the bedstead with them.

Yakub said, "It was quite a bargain brother. This bed would have fetched at least two hundred, I tell you."

Makbul evaded the question of price. He said "That old miser! So many of the Hindus left, but would he budge a step from here. He stays keeping guard on all he has—the wicked old miser. We can't touch a single fruit of his orchard. Who would live in that house when he dies—but us? I'll be darned if Suren came back.

"You are right there", admitted Yakub, "he has gone for good. Won't dare come to Pakistan."

Makbul went on, "Let him close his eyes then I'll make that home of his a true piece of Pakistan. My family would walk on those cement floors. You say, I had a bargain but I tell you what. This was a dead loss. I would gave got this for nothing—it was just a matter of waiting."

But as he thought over the blissful prospect he seemed to change his mind. "No brother, I didn't mean that really. It's much better to pay for something rather than snatch it. People won't talk then. Isn't that right?"

"Right, brother", said Yakub.

News soon spread through the village. People of means crowded to Rajmohan to verify if he had really sold that beautiful piece of furniture for a mere fifty rupees. It was unbelievable. Rajmohan had never sold as much as a bunch of hay before.

Said Sarat, "Are you gone off your head, master? I would have given you a hundred and fifty—easy".

Gedu Munshi went a step ahead. "What is all this nonsense. I would have paid two hundred and fifty; why didn't you ask me sir?"

Rajmohan was suddenly angry. "Get out, all of you. I didn't sell it, I threw it away. Now go away."

Before they went, one of them stayed back to make a final request. He was Chandan Mridha, a wealthy and respectable Moslem farmer. "If you ever decide to sell chairs, tables, trunks or anything —please let me know first. I'll pay the right price, I wouldn't cheat you, master."

Rajmohan chased him out of the house. "Will you be off' Mridha. Take whatever I have when I die. I haven't sold anything yet and I am not going to sell a single as long as I am alive."

They slunk away, intimidated. The old master has gone off his head, they whispered among themselves. Imagine living in this deserted house without children and grandchildren, no wonder he has come to this end.

When they went away, Rajmohan realised his foolishness. He has been cheated, there was no mistake about that. His own ill temper was responsible. He had eaten off the floor out of vengeance for the thief who took away his plates. What an utterly silly thing to do.

Finally he made up his mind. "Kalu", he called the servant, "Get the boat ready. I'm going to Kumarpur."

Rajmohan used to write out documents in the office of Registration there. Kumarpur was about a mile and a half from Sonapur. Though now his services were no longer wanted by customers, Rajmohan insisted on spending some time in the office premises, in the hope of procuring work.

When people asked him why he was troubling himself at this age Rajmohan would say, "I have to lose my night's sleep otherwise."

Kalu took out the small boat, "Wouldn't you have some lunch master?" He enquired.

"That won't be necessary, Kalu, you have had your meal, haven't you? That'll do." Then suddenly he grasped his servant by the hands and broke down,

"Oh, Kalu, what did I do, I ate mud with my own hands—Kalu".

Didn't I tell you master", Kalu stopped in some confusion. As he stared at the helpless old man he did not know how to comfort him. Then he spoke quietly, "Come on, master".

In his prime the master was as handsome as a prince. He was undoubtedly the most handsome man in the village. The fair master they called him. Now at the ripe old age of sixty five his massive shoulders drooped, his skin was creased, his complexion had lost much of its glow. But in a way he was still the fair master.

From his hair down to his moustache and the hair on his chest he was white as ripe jute through and through.

"Get in master", said Kalu.

"Coming, coming—"Worn out, with slippers in hand, Rajmohan got into the boat. His shirt was not too clean, his umbrella was patched. With sadness weighing heavy on him Rajmohan proceeded through the river.

When he came back at night the first thing he did was to enter the now empty east room where the bed had once stood. In the dim glow of the lantern the sight shocked him. He hurried out, but the vision of emptiness kept haunting him. He felt as though with that bed he had given away his all.

Even at his night prayer the east room and the empty space come crowding into his head, making him forget his ritual.

He felt utterly alone and remembered the face of his wife who died long ago. Though he had everybody yet nobody cared him. He was alone in this big world.

Next morning he sent Kalu to fetch Makbul, but he did not come. He said he was busy now, he would see the master as soon as he found time.

I begged him to take away my wife instead, Makbul gave her a sly smile.

Rajmohan gnashed his few remaining teeth in anger. "The son of a bitch! I called him and his lordship is busy. I'll see how busy can be."

Kalu said sympathetically, "What can you do, master. This is their day, their government. The saplings are more stubborn than bamboos." Rajmohan only said "Hmm".

After a while he limped towards Makbul's cottage, across the canal, past the wild bushes.

"Makbul, are you busy—he called.

Makbul was just back after delivering milk. He was helping his wife making twine. Fatima went inside the house as she heard Rajmohan. Makbul showed him in.

But his diffidence was only too apparent. Still he offered him his own wooden seat and said, "I would have gone to you master, why did you trouble yourself ?"

Rajmohan said, "Oh, just to visit you. To see how you were doing. Your new room has been built well I see, big enough for your family. But why did you put old iron sheets on the roof, put them down and put new ones."

Makbul said, "I wish I could do it master, but where is the money? I have been wanting to buy another cow and a new boat—but money is the problem."

Keeping his voice low, Rajmohan said, "I've brought you money".

Makbul stared at him, "What did you say?

"I have things to talk over with you. Come with me", Rajmohan walked down to the courtyard.

But Makbul did not move. He said, "There is hardly a soul here. You can talk". Rajmohan did not listen to him. He almost dragged him out of the house.

The whole area was overgrown with wild shrubs. Canals surrounded it on three sides and the river on the other. Houses belonging to a few other Moslems stood like islands isolated by water. Rajmohan walked up to a bamboo bush in the south east corner.

"What's the matter, master ?" asked Makbul.

From the belt of his cloth Rajmohan took out the notes Makbul had given him the day before, and he had a new five rupee notes. "Here, count these", he said. 'There's fifty five in all, and five rupees for buying sweets for the family—that's extra".

Makbul had understood his intention from the start. He kept his blood-shot eyes straight at Rajmohan. Tall, square and black as a tree this young man with long bushy hair somehow looked ominous. The beard he wore made him look like an animal. Rajmohan felt uneasy. He moved back a few steps.

"Don't be scared master", Makbul gave a short laugh. "I'm not going to hurt you. After all you are an old man and a respectable person. I couldn't insult you, could I? But take your money back. My kids don't eat sweets, they get worms if they do. You go home, master, I'm not going to return that ted."

Rajmohan felt the tip of his hairy ears burning in shame and humiliation. He tucked the money back into his belt and said, "All right, all right. But remember Makbul Seikh, winter is not over in a year, it will come back next December. You may have got your Pakistan, but that doesn't make all of you Governors."

When he was gone Fatima came out. "Why did the master shout so? She was afraid.

"Oh, hum!" Makbul answered, "He wants back the bed he sold me. Tried to tempt me with money."

"Good, gracious", exclaimed his wife, "What did you tell him ?" **"I begged him to take away my wife instead", Makbul gave her a sly smile.**

We still till his land, visit his house, come to him in need You must return what belongs to him

Fatima was surprised. She said bashfully, "You said that to the old man ? Do you have no shame ?" Makbul did not answer. He was enjoying his own joke.

Now Fatima realised that this was not the nature of the argument Makbul had with the master, that he was only teasing her.

"Well, if your wife means so much to you then why are you gone crazy over this bed of his? Why don't you give it back to whom it belongs ? He isn't a straightforward person. Who's going to stop him if he wants to do mischief ? When I think of the children I tremble with fear inside my heart," said Fatima.

Makbul looked at his wife's well-formed body and said, "Trembling heart! Let your heart tremble, that's when you look best, honey." Fatima quickly covered her bosom with the end of her sari. "Is that a decent way to talk ?" She said shyly. "You have the eyes of—" she could not find an apt comparison.

Makbul laughed and said "They are the eyes of a young man, Fati, that's the way they are, they look at injustice and glow in anger, they glance at young and beautiful things and admire."

A couple of days later Makbul was called again at Rajmohan's house. In the spacious north verendah two carpets were spread with smoking paraphernalia on the floor and two separate water pipes for Hindus and Muslems.

All the caste Hindus having left the village those who remained were low born and dark—most of them were obliged to Rajmohan. In some way or other—he had helped them in adversity. Among the Hindus were Sarat Sheel, Murari Mondal, and Fatik Karmakar, Nibaran Raiak. The Muslims present were Chadan Mridha, Badan Sikdar and Gedu Munshi.

No sooner had Makbul arrived on the scene Gedu Munshi began with an air of self-imposed superiority. "That wasn't quite fair, son of the Shekh. All the Hindu gentlemen have left but only the old master could not tear our ties. He still loves us more than anything else. We still till his land, visit his house, come to him in need. You must return what belongs to him."

"Munshi Saheb, please don't make such unjust requests. The master himself has sold the bed to me. He took money for it. Ask Yakub, the watchman, he was an witness. How can he ask it back now ?"

Rajmohan sat glumly on a wooden seat. He screwed up the wick of the lantern and raised his voice at the same time, "I took money ? How can you say that ? Do you think fifty rupees is any price for that bed ?

"That's what you asked then", said Makbul. "Besides that was all I could pay. I could not possibly pay more. The price depends on one's power to pay—doesn't it ?"

Sharat Sheel remarked, "That would hardly hold water Makbul. You don't have the power to pay but somebody else has. So either hand him over another hundred or give back his stuff."

The Hindus nodded assent but the Moslems kept quiet. They smoked by turn and the problem did not near any solution.

"If that is what you call justice I don't go by it", declared Makbul. "You may go to the law court, I don't care." "Shut up, you have got a big mouth, you mean fellow", said Gedu Munshi.

When Makbul left the Moslems tried to pacify Rajmohan. "Don't you mind him master", they said, "He is as stubborn as mule, who doesn't know it ? He doesn't listen to agruments. We'll see what we can do, master. What would he do with that bed ? But you too have not acted very wisely. You've really left nothing for us to say."

They left one by one. Then Sarat said, "These Moslems are all one, master. They have their secret support, or how could Makbul have the cheek to defy us ? You have to swallow it master, there is no other way. The times are not good. You have lost a single bed. So many have given away their houses and lands practically for nothing. What does it matter, really ? They got their lives to live. You are not going to die for the loss of that bed master. You can stack your room with five such beds if you wish, who doesn't know that ? Now go to bed master, it is late already."

Sarat smoked for a while, then he took his leave from him.

The lamp hurt his eyes. Rajmohan put the light out and sat in darkness. Kalu was already asleep on his matting. Not a sound stirred outside. Rajmohan once again measured the extent of his loneliness. He felt helpless against this ouslaught of humiliation. Only if his son was here now, by his side, he would have felt so much stronger. But he wouldn't. Neither

would Rajmohan ask him. Let him live happily where he is.

The father and son separated not because they had a quarrel. They simply did not understand each other. He did not care for the things his father valued more than everything—the ancestral home, the land, the paddy and jute fields, the village. He did not understand the country and her people. Books and books that was all he was ever interested in. He left home long before Pakistan came into being. Now the father and son were citizens of two different nations. They belonged to two different era.

Wind stirred the leaves of the deodar tree—it had grown so tall. Rajmohan had planted it himself, it was of the same age as Suren, his son. At least the deodar did not desert him like Suren.

It seemed to Rajmohan that in his friendless world the deodar was all he had. It did not care for Hindusthan or Pakistan, it did not change with a few years of education. It stood firm on the ancestral soil.

He has had offers for this tree also, even to the extent of twenty one. But Rajmohan had always been adamant as far as selling his property went. "I buy, I don't sell"—he would say with pride.

Never in his life did he agree to sell anything except now. Why did he do it? His heart ached. What madness had seized him? Would he ever be able to get it back? He had fought far and got back the property of so many and now when it came to something of his own would he give up? No, he must get it back, by hook or by crook.

It was easier thought than done. Makbul was not his direct employee, nor did he borrow money. He could not very well bring false charges Even if he tried, it would be difficult to fabricate evidence against a Moslem, now that it was Pakistan. It would serve no purpose except infuriate the big guns of the Moslem community.

As he could not devise ways to punish him, so Rajmohan tried meaner tactics He used to buy half a seer of milk from Makbul, now he stopped that. Insulted he asked Wahed for his daily supply. He even went to the length of asking other labourers to work for him boycotting Makbul as far as it was in his power to do.

Makbul was not a farmer in the proper sense, but worked as a hired hand for others occasionally. During the jute season he would wash jute fibre, in the paddy harvest he would join other labourers. When harvest season was over he would cut fire wood, cleaned forest and did all sorts of small jobs. Rajmohan used to employ him for various errands but now he boycotted him completely. Ever since the Hindus left, Makbul fell on evil days. Most of the Moslem landlords would do the manual job themselves Makbul was in a real fix.

Through Kalu all the news reached Rajmohan. While rowing to Kumarpur Kalu said, "The son of the Sheikh has been served right. Now he'll starve to death. He thought he could outwit you—what hopes! He doesn't have the sense worth one of your teeth."

Rajmohan's hollow cheeks spread in self-contented smile. "If I had all my teeth though."

"What you've got is enough, master." Kalu assured him. "Your gums are strong enough to ruin him."

Makbul was really on the verge of ruin. He swore to his wife viciously, "I'll wait for a couple of days more. Then I'm going to rob him in front of his very eyes, and then I'm going to cut his throat" Fatima got frightened. "Don't I won't have you think of such things."

"Why not?" retorted her husband. "So I'll be hanged? All right, both of us would be dead."

"But what about us", wailed his wife. "We'll be left here, what would happen to us? Don't you lose your temper. You have a family now. You must not be headstrong. Feed your children, that's how you prove your worth. That'll mean that you are a real man." Makbul gave a grunt.

"What do you mean by that?" Fatima went on. "It's very easy to show off and threaten. What temper! Can you take care of your children like a father should? That shows a man! Have you ever cared to look at my little darlings, my Sabdul and Manju, to see that they are reduced to bones?" She drew her two rickety children near her and caressed them as if love was any substitute for nourishment.

Casting angry eyes full upon his wife Makbul shouted, "Don't drive me crazy, don't you drive me to murder, woman."

Fatima held him by the hand. "Please, listen to me. Give the master's bed back to him. What do we need such luxuries for. If we can have rice twice every day then our simple matting would be good enough, we'll sleep in peace."

Makbul broke loose from his wife's grasp and said being infuriated, "Shut up, Fati, I'll break your big jaw if you keep on saying the master's bed, the master's bed—it doesn't belong to him, understand? Did I steal the bed? I paid good money to buy it. It's mine, mine. So keep your bloody mouth shut."

Makbul went inside the room and grabbed his proud possession by one of the posts as though it was going to be taken away from him.

A little later he sharpened his axe and went out in search of work. But most of the villagers couldn't afford hired help. Makbul got no work. He went about with vengeance in mind, but did not have the guts to murder Rajmohan. Instead he satisfied himself by stealing fruits from his garden. He took a couple of green cocoanuts, and a bunch of nuts.

In due time it came to Rajmohan's knowledge. He cursed and threatened to call the police, then employed a local lad to watch over his garden.

But nuts and coconuts do not appease hunger. His hunt for food made him take leave of his senses. Usually rainy season is a bad time for all labourers. Price of rice and cereals go up, jobs grow scarce. But this was the worst year of all. The jute season was over, the paddy season hasn't started. Houses were water-logged, nobody had a handful of rice.

Now that his small savings were gone in purchasing the four-poster, Makbul was absolutely broke. At home his wife constantly quarrelled, the children went wild. Fatima sometimes boiled bits of rice with wild roots or caught shrimps using her sari as a net.

One day Kalu came to visit. "Hello Makbul, how are you all?"

This made Makbul pucker his brow. "I'm all right, how are you, rich servant of the rich gentleman?"

Kalu lost no time in disclosing the purpose of his visit. "The master is now willing to pay you ten more, so why don't you come round, mister?"

Makbul almost sprang on him. "Get out, get out of my house. If I see you around again uttering such filthy words I'll break your legs, I warn you."

Kalu left but was soon followed by others. Chadan Mridha and Gedu Munshi came secretly offering more money. The master wouldn't know, and why should Makbul care even if he heard?

The price went up to seventy five. But Makbul was still not willing. He bought it for use, and he must use it.

Both the customers went away flinging swear words at him. "Take your bed with you to the grave."

Even Fatima lost her temper. "What kind of man are you. If this had been a cow, a tree or a bigha of land I would have understood, but what's the sense of keeping this dead junk which would neither yield crops nor bear fruit".

Makbul looked fondly at her then said, "That's not for a woman like you to understand, Fatima. It's not a piece of dead wood, Fati, it means my price. The self-respect of a man."

"Self-respect", Fati pooh-poohed the notion, "If you are so self-respecting why don't you go out and seek some work. I hear this is Pakistan now, the Government of the Moslems. Why must we starve then?"

Makbul tried all resources, but there was no job for a poor, illiterate man like him.

At his wife's remark he smiled sadly. "The poor like us have no Pakistan or Hindusthan, Fati—the grave is the only place we have any right to claim."

Then he sold the cow. It had gone dry from want of fodder. Next he sold the skiff. With the money he brought an old ferry boat, the rest he gave to Fatima. For days he rowed his boat up to Kumarpur. If luck favoured he earned a rupee or so, but there were gloomy days when no passenger turned up. Sometimes he sailed away to far off villages, on those days he didn't return home but slept in the boat tied to the landing place.

It was one of those days when he had gone out, Fatima sat lighting her stove and getting ready to cook. Rajmohan appeared. "Makbul, are you at home?"

Fatima hastily hid behind the hedges, she sent her son to tell the master that father was out and what was that he wanted?

The son was shy and stupid for his five years. So Fatima had to speak. She spoke through the hedge. Rajmohan told her, "I have got a bad cough, I heard you have a vasaka tree, the juice is good for cough. May I pluck a few leaves?"

Fatima smiled, "Why, of course master, let me get them for you." "No, no, don't bother. I will get them." Rajmohan slowly ascended into the verandah. As he cast a look inside the room something in him snapped. Oh, his four-poster, his four-poster. He couldn't bear to look at the state it was in. Lime and grease stains ruined the beautiful carved legs. The rag of a matress and a couple of oily pillows and quilts lay on it! What a shame. These people are not worthy of the four-poster. What do they know about taking care of such treasure!

Rajmohan talked for a while, then said "If you don't mind, daughter, I'll tell you something. Talk some sense into your husband, I'll give him whatever price he wants, but he must give my bed back."

From the other side of the hedge Fatima answered politely, "No master, I can't do that. You take your Vasak leaves, and please don't go into this again." She went inside.

After this slapping insult Rajmohan lost all desire to pluck the leaves. He still sat as long as he could, staring at his four-poster through the hedge. Then he plucked some leaves before he departed, the pretension had to be kept up.

Rajmohan went home, took his bath, and thus cleanesed, entered the shrine and sat before the images of Radha-Govinda. Looking at the smiling Govinda he prayed, "O My dear God, please help me get rid of all earthly passions. Take me to your

No master, I can't do that. You take your Vasak leaves and please don't go into this again.

Vrindaban of eternal happiness, let the red dust of its alleys hide all my shame."

For a time he felt purged, but the next day he once again felt an urgent need to visit Makbul for the Vasak leaves. To convince Kalu he had to feign a cough.

Fatima heard him coming. She was afraid least the master should harp on the same subject and so she did not come before him. Rajmohan understood, still he went through the pretension of plucking vasaka leaves, then sat on the verandah and chatted with Makbul's son Sabdul, since nobody else was around. He peered through the wall at the bed. As days went by Makbul's vasak tree grew leafless but Rajmohan's cough showed no sign of improvement.

Makbul was sceptical about those visits. One night when he came back from work he said to his wife, "What is this about the master coming over every day? I hear he sits on the verandah?" "Oh yes", said Fatima, 'He comes to get some leaves of the vasaka tree".

"Nonsense", Makbul smiled indulgently, "The old man has taken a fancy to you."

Fatima said angrily, "Of course not".

Makbul said, "Then come to the point."

"Point? Don't you know it?"

"Yes I do. But careful, if you are tempted by money to sell it back then I'm going to kill you, Fati."

"Are you mad?" said Fatima. "I avoid him precisely for that reason. But the old man keeps licking the bed with his eyes. I don't like it a bit. His curse might poison our whole family, I am so scared."

Makbul assured her, "Oh come on. He is a snake who has lost his venom. It won't do us harm. Don't you worry. I'll tell him tomorrow that if he steps into my house again I'm going to break his legs in two."

But before the threat could be conveyed to him Rajmohan was down with high fever and blood-dysentery. The village doctor said that his son should be informed. "It doesn't look good to me, sir", he said, "After all, you have your age to consider."

But Rajmohan shook his head as he rejected the notion. "No, doctor, not now. If the time comes I myself will let him know. I hear a promotion is due at his office. I don't want him to lose it by coming away."

He had sent two hundred rupees to his daughter-in-law. She might not believe that the bed was sold for fifty. In the mean time Rajmohan's health grew worse. The doctor came everyday.

Misfortune piled on Makbul. His boat was stolen in Naopara. He knew perfectly well who the culprits were. The village was notorious for thieves, and Gedu Munshi was friendly with those characters. Makbul managed to catch a boat home. But with his cow and the boat was gone his lot and it was worse than ever. Now only the house and the bed were left for him to sell.

Rajmohan heard it all. Sarat Sheel remarked, "This serves him right. This is the result of daring to disobey you". A couple of days later Kalu brought another news.

"Have you heard, master?"

Rajmohan answered slowly. "Heard what?"

"That Makbul is going to sell the bed to Atajaddi of village Talkanda. Atajaddi will furnish his new home with it."

"Let him", Rajmohan was disinterested.

"He has offered one hundred and fifty."

"I see."

"Atajaddi is coming over with money this evening."

"I see", Rajmohan said and turned sides.

Kalu went to see a play in the neighbouring village that afternoon. He left early, to get good seats. The maid brought a bowl of soup. Rajmohan did not touch it. He stirred restlessly in the bed as night grew dark and quiet outside.

Suddenly he got up, and in the darkness he groped for his walking stick. He could not walk very well, still he came out locking the room as he came.

There was a drizzle outside, but he took neither a lantern nor an umbrella. Groping and tottering he made way towards Makbul's house.

Fifteen minutes later he was standing in Makbul's yard. "Makbul, you son of a bitch, come out", he called in a voice faint with weakness.

Makbul came out, "Who is it? Is it the master?" Rajmohan's answer did not rise beyond a whisper. "Yes, it's me. So you sold the bed, you rascal! And you did not even tell me".

Makbul stood speechless in the dark. Then he said quietly, "Who told you?"

"Things like these can't be hidden."

"But how did you come in this darkness and rain, how did you cross the ditch?"

"I walked on the mud bank".

"Good Good! Come in master".

"I'm not going to enter your house now, you have done the worst".

"No master, I haven't, yet". Makbul said. "Come and see for yourself".

He took the sick old man gently into the room, his bare body burning with fever. He was even without his spectacles.

Makbul woke his wife, "Light a lamp, quick".

Fatima was lying almost unconscious on the bed. She woke with a start, then got down from the bed.

She tried to cover her face with her torn end of the sari as she lifted the kerosene lamp with other hand. The two children lay like two corpses on the bed.

Rajmohan said, "So it is still there. It hasn't been sold".

"It is here, master".

"Didn't Atajaddi come?"

"He came, he offered ten more. I asked for time. We haven't had any food for the last two days. Still I refused him, master. The wife kept crying, hunger was hurting so. Master, do you know what I told her? I told her give me one night's time, woman, just this night.

Hold your stomach tight and let me keep my pride just for this night, just for tonight."

Rajmohan said, "Makbul".

Makbul replied, "Master".

They did not utter a word. Fatima held the lamp before them. In that pale smoky light the two men faced each other across the barriers of age, race and faith with the same passion for beauty in their heart.

After a while Makbul told his wife "Fati, get the kids down. I'll dismantle the bed".

"Makbul, what did you say?" Rajmohan asked.

"Yes master, take it back. I've kept it till today. Who knows about tomorrow?"

Makbul was going to wake his children, but Rajmohan stopped him. "Don't, he said. "Makbul", he said almost to himself, "I used to come to look at the bed. But what I saw was just an empty pedestal. Today I have seen my Radha and Govinda on it. My God has returned. Makbul, reach me home".

Taking the lamp from his wife Makbul said, "Come along, master."

(Translated from Bengali by Enakshi Chatterjee)

PARULDI

By KAMAKSHIPRASAD CHATTOPADHYAYA

I had a lurking fear that I would have to sit through the whole night. I could not get a berth reserved even till the last moment. From Calcutta to Nagpur the distance was not inconsiderable and the train would reach the destination tomorrow at 3 P.M. I should imagine that no one would ever look upon the prospect of sitting through such long journey as pleasant and enjoyable. As for me, it was the least pleasant thing I could conceive. I vouchsafe I have no partiality for personal ease and comfort, but I could not overcome the desire of stretching myself on a milk-white bed and enjoying a good night's sleep—at least for seven hours. My heart went pit-a-pat as I peeped into a second class compartment of the B.N.R. Bombay Mail, but when I discovered that there was only one passenger in the whole compartment I felt that I would be ready to believe in all sorts of entities right from God to spirits.

I made my bed on an unoccupied lower berth as neatly as I could and then perching myself on it quite comfortably I lighted a cigarette. I felt so elated at my unexpected good luck that I did not even so much as look at my fellow traveller. Now, with the cigarette between my lips I looked closely inside the compartment and outside. Outside the railway carriage the wonderful autumn of Bengal was manifest in its full panoply. White patches of cloud bore marks of spontaneous joy. There was in the sky that flawless blue which can be seen only in Bengal at this time of the year. In a season such as this one feels like renewing one's love with one's own country, but, at the same time, feels ill at ease within the confines of home. Something keeps tugging at one's heart and one is seized with the irresistible desire of stirring out of home. Possibly for this reason Rabindranath wrote that in ancient time kings went out to conquer new territories in this season. Oh, the days of yore! Oh, the kings! We have only inherited their instinct for autumnal conquest and nothing more.

Well, to be candid, I am only a life insurance agent and am proceeding to Nagpur at the instance of my firm. I shall have to be there for a few days. A client of our firm took an insurance policy of two lacs of rupees and died just two months after the risk had been covered. I am going there to ascertain the exact cause of his death. My sole purpose is to enquire from neighbours whether the death of the policy holder was natural. I am therefore going to Nagpur solely in the interest of service—there is nothing thrilling in it like world conquest.

I now turned my gaze from the floating patches of cloud and sunshine and directed my attention to my fellow traveller. I must confess that even at first sight I could not but feel somewhat disappointed. It was not difficult for me to guess that he was a man of strong build once upon a time. But his hair was turning grey and his temples were already white. He was, by all tokens, not less than fifty-five or fifty-six. I am ready to admit that even at this age a man may marry for the second or, if you please, for the third time. He may even fall in love with a blooming young girl, but he would not take an insurance policy. That was all the reason why I felt so sorely disappointed even at first sight. I felt no urge at all to talk to him. Well, we must get to know each other as we happened to be the sole occupants of the compartment. There was no way

out of that. Why should I then be so unseemly enthusiastic? Besides, if it be evident right at the beginning that familiarity will not pay it would be wiser to spend the time rather over a detective novel than over such a man. So I took a few books out of my small hand bag and put them on my bed.

No doubt, you will be somewhat surprised if I tell you what the books are about. Besides one or two detective novels my library consisted of the railway time-table, the prospectus of the company I represented and a booklet containing its yearly accounts. There was yet another book in my collection. I am sure you will not be able to guess its contents and I won't let you waste time in fruitless speculation over it. It is, I tell you, a book of poems just published. I took the book to some friends of mine having a flair for poetry that I might have an idea about the value of the book. I have always found to my amazement that there is little or no agreement among critics concerning poetic values. If some one admires a poem another will invariably call it bogus. But, surprisingly enough, critics did not differ in their opinion about this new book of poem, 'Jonaki'. They declared with one voice that such trash never appeared in print in recent years.

You may feel somewhat astonished to know that I opened this very book of poems and began to read it with closest attention. But when you know my purpose you will not be astonished at all. The author of 'Jonaki' is Amiyanshu Sen Gupta. He lives at Nagpur. He is very young and has, of late, come into money after the death of his father. I have just had news from a friend of mine who also lives at Nagpur that we might sell a life policy of sizeable sum to this young man if we could properly represent our case and duly influence him. It is commonly known that the best way to influence a poet is to start a discussion on poetry with him and to admire his poems in a subtle manner. Those who fail to appreciate this truism may be fit for this and that vocation, but will never be a good insurance agent. I am not aware of any woman who will not feel pleased if a compliment is paid to her loveliness and charming appearance. Nor do I know of any author who cannot be shaken out of his impassiveness if his writing is spoken of very highly. It is needless to say that the question of real loveliness of a woman or the intrinsic merit of a piece of writing is absolutely irrelevant in such cases.

"What book are you reading, sir? Is that a a book of poems?"

Is not a familiar address such as this from an unfamiliar person somewhat surprising? Of course, it is. The person so addressed may cut up rough. Naturally, I was taken aback and said drily, "Yes, if you please."

My indifference did not put out my fellow passenger. Rather, he felt elated and asked again, "What kind of poems are these? Love poems?"

"Have you any objection if they are, "I asked."

Apparently he felt tickled and laughed aloud. "I see you are annoyed. Do you write? Are you a poet yourself," he said.

No doubt, I felt repelled at first, but the manner of his address at once soothed me. He was getting on in years but his mind had not lost the sensitiveness of youthful age. Anxious to make amends for my rudeness, at once I laughed and said, "No, sir, not at all. I am not annoyed as you think, but I shall have no other way than to be so if you now take me for a poet."

His face beaming with smile the gentleman said, "You may not be a poet, but there is no doubt about your keen sense of humour. I know it from the way you string your words, but what I meant to say....." He stood up as he said this and took from the upper berth a pot-bellied flask of a curious shape and then continued, "I wanted to tell you that it is an old habit of mine, but I drink in moderation. I formed the habit of drinking while I was away from my country. Well—if you have no objection—I should be obliged if you would join me. It is no ordinary drink. There is in the container 'White Horse' duly punched with ice and soda water."

I declined his offer with thanks. He was a little mortified. When he felt sure that I would not join him he poured whisky in a glass tumbler and began to drink all alone by himself. I began to read 'Jonaki' again.

I could not finish the last few pages of 'Jonaki'. Light had already begun to fail and the types had become blurred. I shut the book and looked at my fellow passenger. It did not take me long to realise that he had almost emptied the flask. In the light of the evening his face looked almost ghostly.

It seemed he was waiting patiently for me. As soon as I raised my head he asked, "Have you finished the book?"

The gentleman's voice had by now completely changed. His eyes and face wore a different look altogether. Wine had perhaps put a new life in him. I began to feel ill at ease. I gave no reply and got up to switch on the light, but he immediately stopped me. "Well," he said, "You had better not switch on the light. Today is the first day of the new moon and the moon will be out in the sky in no time."

I sat down again. If my fellow passenger had not been under the influence of wine I would prefer not to turn on the switch and look on silently from the dark carriage and enjoy the scene outside.

but what I meant to say.....

The gentleman took out a costly cigarette from a golden cigarette case and lighted it. He then put up the case to me and I too lighted a cigarette. He then began without any introduction:

"I came back to Calcutta this time after twenty-six years, but did not live in the city even for twenty-six days. In fact, I came only the day before yesterday and am off today.' He stopped and did not speak for some time and then began again as suddenly as he had stopped.

"During these two days happened the most amazing thing in my life. I shan't have any peace of mind till I can take the load off my heart. Don't take it as mere jabbering of a drunken man. Believe me, I am narrating just as it happened. Not a syllable of it is exaggerated. I know it is hard to believe. That is why I offered the flask to you. A few sips would have surely increased your capacity for belief."

I thought he would smile at his own witticism, but he looked as grave as before. I thought his face darkened all the more at his own remark.

I am narrating here the amazing incident exactly as the gentleman related. It is beyond my capacity to recapture his way of narration, but still, I shall spare no effort to give an accurate account of what he said.

"My name is Bijoy Ratan Majumdar. I was born in a village named Beletore. We were very poor and had no possession worth the name. My father died when I was a boy of twelve years. My mother had died much earlier in my infancy. The richest man of our village lived in Calcutta. He had a great affection for me. The year in which I lost my father he came to his village home during the Pujas. He was very sorry when he heard of my mishap. When he returned to Calcutta he was very kind to take me with him. From then on I lived in his Calcutta house till I was twenty-one.

"He had a very small family. He and his son were the sole members of the family. The gentleman was a widower, his wife having died long ago. His son was older than me by about five years. I can still recall that Nirenda—for Niren was the name of his son—passed the Matriculation Examination in the very year I came to live with them.

"Nirenda's father soon sent me to school. Everyone in the house was fond of me, but Nirenda could not stand me at all—I do not know why. He never expressed his displeasure in my presence, but it was not difficult for me to understand his attitude from his conduct. They had a big three-storied house inside a wide compound. I lived in a small room beside the garage. Nirenda lived in the best room on the second floor. When Nirenda was at home I avoided him scrupulously. When he went out I heaved a sigh of relief and moved about the house quite freely.

"Nirenda's father's name was Shibnath Babu. He speculated in stocks and shares. They said that he was so lucky that his very touch would turn a handful of dust into a handful of gold. In those days only very rich people could afford to keep a motor car. Shibnath Babu had two motor cars—one for himself and another for his son. Nirenda passed the B.A. Examination in the same year in which I passed the Matriculation Examination. He joined his father's business as his junior. Shibnath Babu used to say very often that his house, imposing though it was, had no charm and colour without a housewife to look after it. So, soon after Nirenda had passed the B.A. examination, Shibnath Babu arranged for his marriage. Never in my life did I witness such imposing wedding.

"I called Nirenda's wife Paruldi as her name was Parul. She was younger than me by a year only. When as a newly-wed Paruldi came to that house she was just fifteen years old and I was only sixteen. I had left the school and got into a college.

"Paruldi was a paragon of beauty the like of which I have never seen in my life. Her complexion was ivory white and her figure slim. The colour of her palms resembled the colour of roses and I could not avoid feeling with some apprehension that the skin would break at any moment and blood would gush out. When she laughed her deep dark eyes would look bigger and beam with smile and her cheeks would dimple. Her hair was most wonderful. It was not black but had a slightly reddish tint. She did not like to use hair oil. She would very often shampoo her hair and spread it on her back to dry like a tuft of silk. I madly admired everything in her—right from the vermilion mark on her forehead to her graceful toes. I was in love with everything about her. I vividly remember the day when, all on a sudden, she came to my small dark room, bathing it, as it were, in a flood of light. I was assailed by a strange feeling of joy and fear and could not even so much as raise my eyes to meet hers. Nirenda hated me from the core of his heart but Paruldi had a deep fondness for me. Her affection was as strong as Nirenda's dislike for me. It became clear to Paruldi in a few days that Nirenda strongly disliked her intimacy with me. That was why Paruldi usually sent for me after Shibnath Babu and Nirenda had left for office. I lose count of the days I was away from my class and of the hours I spent in talking to and gossiping with her.

"She was the wife of Shibnath Babu's only son. So, it can be easily imagined how fondly and tenderly she was treated. Herself the daughter of a rich father, she got married into a rich family. She never felt the want for anything and got whatever she desired at will. Paruldi was as beautiful as she was always well-dressed. Many times did she change her sari and ornaments in course of the day, but I shall leave aside that account.

"She was an ease-loving sort. She never got up before nine. Her maid would bring in steaming tea only to take the cold cup away from the table after some time. This went on for many times till she was up. Maids were not allowed to wake her up for tea, but when she did wake she would feel extreme discomfort if tea was not served in bed. It was for this reason that this arrangement came to stay.

"I could hardly feel how the long period of five years slipped by after Nirenda's marriage. Even now when I happen to recollect those years they seem so near and so palpable!

"Those five years I passed in a trance. I was in a state of hypnosis and roamed, as it were, in a dreamland.

"The spell broke after five years with an unexpected suddenness. One day, as I was preparing to go out to my class Paruldi sent for me. When I entered her room I was terribly shocked at what I saw. I could never imagine that a human face could become so pale and wane in a day. Her eyes had lost their lustre and the benign smile was missing from her face. I stood there stupefied unable to speak. Before I could open my lips Paruldi said, 'Will you like to see something funny, Biju?' She

did not wait for my reply but at once uncovered her back and showed it to me. To my horror I saw that she had been beaten black and blue and that on her ivory-white back there were cuts and bruises caused by liberal use of rod. She then put a good face on it and said in an easy and natural voice, 'your Nirenda came home dead drunk last night and beat me as hard as he could. Do you know why? My relation with you is.....'. She could say no more and at once buried her face in her bed and sobbed.

"I was then an M.A. student. I was to take the final examination the following year. I could hardly realise what was happening around me. I felt that the earth beneath my feet was shivering and the sky above went wheeling round. I did not go back to my room. My books and clothes remained where they were. I left the accursed house and came straight to Howrah station. That was twenty-six years ago.

"During the first five or six years I was on the hunt for a job. Sometimes I could eat my meals a day, sometimes I starved. Then, in course of time, I started business in timber in the Central Provinces. My business is in flourishing condition now. I married there and have my wife and children. Well, I have now everything that a man desires and enjoy an even tenor of life. But, no, I shan't digress.

"A few years after I had left Calcutta I saw the news of Shibnath Babu's death in a newspaper.

Do you know why? My relation with you is.....

He died suddenly of thrombosis. Since then I had no news of Nirenda and Paruldi.

"It was Paruldi's letter that brought me to Calcutta after long twenty-six years. The letter was as unexpected as it was curt. Paruldi wrote, 'Biju dear, I wish to see you for once before I die. Do, please, come'.

"You may easily understand how puzzled I got when her letter turned up. I felt all the more perplexed when I noticed her address. They lived in Rawdon Street, but the letter came from Ramesh Mitter Road.

"I started almost immediately and reached Calcutta only day before yesterday. That very day I went to Ramesh Mitter Road towards the evening and began to look for her house. I went up and down the road several times but could not find the number of the house. I noticed that a maid-servant was sitting on a pavement before a house on the opposite footpath. I crossed over to the other side and was about to enquire when she looked up. She was wearing a soiled dhoti and her hair was close cropped. Most of her hair had grown grey. Her hands and feet were sore from hard work. She was wearing no blouse. Only there was something in Paruldi's eyes which had not changed at all.

"Darkness was slowly thickening. A few yards away the gas lamp had been lighted. I stood there transfixed before her and looked on not knowing what to say or do. Could she be my Paruldi? Was I awake or dreaming?

"I sat down beside her on that unclean pavement. Paruldi wept and tears flowed down her cheeks. 'So you have come after all, Biju, she said. 'I have lost everything—my husband, my house, my car. My only son also went to war and never returned. I do not know what has happened to him. I am a maid-servant there in that house. I get two meals a day and only seven rupees as wages."

"It seemed that I had lost my power of speech. Something kept gnawing at my heart strings and I could not freely breathe. To what a state she had been reduced—my Paruldi! How could I believe that she was the same old Paruldi?

"Paruldi could not be with me for long. She feared that the mistress of the house might take her to task if she came in late. Before I left I told her that I would come again and that she must be ready with her bag and baggage. She must come to live with me.

"Yesterday, I went to Ramesh Mitter Road again. I found no one in the place where Paruldi was to wait for me. I knocked at the door of the house where she worked. The master of the house came out and I asked him if any one of the name of Parul worked in his house.

"The man looked agape at me for a few seconds and then said, 'It would be wrong to say that she still works in my household. She was run over by a lorry about five days back. We took her to a hospital where she died. We never knew that she had a relation. Are you her.....".

Bijoy Babu cut short his narrative here. Then he went back to his own berth and emptied the flask of whisky into his throat. Outside the railway carriage snow-white moonlight was sparkling like molten silver and I felt undecided whether to switch on the light or not.

Translated by Birendramohan Das Gupta

A DREAM LOST IN SOUL

By SWARAJ BANDOPADHAYA

HER eyes seemed to deceive Amita: Sunand came at last. He stole into the room of Amita at dead of night when the whole village was fast sleep.

It was a cold and dark night. Amita tossed in her bed and she did not get a wink of sleep. She could see through the window panes a square blue sky with patches of white cloud floating. The doors of the room were simply closed but were not bolted.

Sunand pushed the doors and slowly moved inside.

Amita was frightened and sprang up on her bed.

'Was it the devil of a dream!' thought Amita, No. She clearly saw his most familiar smiling face.

Amita rubbed her eyes to make quite sure, but the smiling face was still therein: She could even spot a few drops of tears glistening at the corner of his eyes. Sunand's slow voice broke the stony silence of the room. 'I accept defeat Amita. I have come to confess,' he said.

He continued after a pause, 'I am leaving this place—my refuge—tomorrow morning. Would you like to accompany me?'

Without waiting for a reply he added, 'your wishes will be fulfilled as I surrender".

Amita looked Sunand full in the face. She saw him anew.

'Why?' was her short reply.

Smile disappeared from Sunand's face and he said calmly, 'I have searched my soul and I have found out the truth. I have made up my mind to surrender.'

'Your penance?'—asked Amita in surprise, 'Your life's aim and attainments?'

—'They will not go in vain. Your love has signalled a new life for me and will lead me ahead." Sunand said.

Amita's eyes were fixed on Sunand. Her body shivered. She won over Sunand. She could do whatever she liked with him.

Still Amita could not find a reply for Sunand.

She remained silent for a while and then whispered, 'But, Monimoy?'

Her vision stretched out.

Sunand smiled again, 'You paddled him a canoe to come over to me. Isn't it?'

—He made no mistake in reading the mind of Amita. Sunand repeated.—'Would you accompany me?'

Amita searched in vain for a reply. She tried to hide herself in cold silence and turned her eyes to the window. Torn clouds were invading the sky. Could they touch the heart of the sky? It is all embracing but is still beyond anybody's reach.

How could Sunand disbelieve his own mind which never gave him any false indication. A few wrinkles appeared on his broad forehead. His eyebrows twisted. Why did Amita remain silent? He followed Amita's vision through the window.

A green peaceful small village. Sunshine beat upon the long cocoanut leaves. Unknown flowers could be seen along the narrow winding path which one day bore the footprints of Sunand—and that for the first time a few months ago.

This village specially attracted Sunand as it had been the seat of his preceptor who initiated him. He stayed in the deserted and depleted house of his

preceptor. Sunand was after the highest realisation of the Soul and the atmosphere of the peaceful village was in his estimation most conducive for the purpose. Deep concentration and steadiness of the mind was essential for him and his way of approach towards it was through renunciation. He learnt to have very few wants and desires. It sounds strange for a young man of thirty which Sunand was. Self-reliance was stamped on his face. His eyes half closed with heavy eyelids were always fixed towards the ground as if looking within his own self.

The village was never niggardly in extending hospitability to a visitor—specially to a devotee of Sunand's category. Amita's elder brother, Joyanta took charge of serving him on the first day of his arrival. Joyanta and Amita cleaned the house and tried their best to make it comfortable for Sunand.

Amita brought with her rice and green vegetables milk, butter and other materials required for preparing a fine dish. Sunand was then deeply absorbed in the Gita—the Sacred book. He appeared not to feel the existence of anybody else near him. Amita waited. She stole a look at Sunand. Once, twice—time and again her eyes turned on this man as if she saw a full man so calm and so pure, for the first time in her life.

She stole a look at Sunand

Should Amita move out? The situation was saved by Sunand as he closed the book. He smiled and greeted Amita with folded palms. Sunand felt embarrassed to see what Amita had brought for him. He smiled and said,—'I do not need so much.' The smile of Sunand was so sweet and calm. It filled the mind of Amita with a sense of peaceful pleasure—a feeling which was quite new to her.

Since her parents' death Amita was a burden to the family of his brother Joyanta—a poor school teacher. Her sister-in-law could not tolerate her. Joyanta took advantage of her shortcomings and made her life all the more unhappy. She could find solace from nothing except her tears.

Amita could feel that she had discovered a shelter in the big and calm eyes of Sunand.

It is a virtue of the worldly people to serve those who have renounced the world. Under instructions from her brother, Amita used to call on Sunand every alternate day to look after him. Joyanta also went to Sunand's place along with other villagers—usually in the evening—whenever he could find time. From that day Amita used to come to Sunand's refuge very frequently, specially on the day, when she felt depressed.

It was after a fortnight. With a very heavy mind Amita silently entered the room. The harsh treatment of her sister-in-law depressed her that day. She stood before Sunand.

Sunand greeted her with a smile. What magic was there in his smile?

The ripples from Sunand's smile with soft strokes drove away the depression from her mind.

—'Take your seat. Why so untimely?' said Sunand in his usual low voice. Instead of giving any reply Amita asked, 'What will you take today?'

—'Rice and boiled vegetables'—came the short reply.

—'Would you mind if I cook for you?'

Sunand—'I don't allow anyone to cook my food.'

Amita blushed but persisted, 'Why? Am I a sinner?'

—'I did not mean it.' Replied Sunand, 'I have taken a vow to cook my food myself.'

Amita suddenly stood up with a gloomy face and went out hurriedly.

Sunand was a little surprised, but did not care much for the exit of Amita in such a manner.

Sunand devoted most of his time in deep meditation. His mind was in search of eternal bliss which is attained by the realisation of one's own self. He cannot allow his mind to waver.

The cottage, Sunand lived in, was surrounded by mangoe and cocoanut groves. A small garden with blooming "Bel" and "Rajanigandha" was at the entrance of the premises. A sense of purity and cleanliness was in the air of the hermitage.

Often Sunand was found seated under the cool shadow of the cocoanut groves in deep meditation almost devoid of all external senses. Sometime he came out in the garden for a stroll.

Monimoy, a neighbour of Joyanta, accompanied him to the place of Sunand one evening. The peaceful and calm atmosphere of the hermitage did not allow them to talk. They sat for sometime before Sunand. The silence seemed to whisper them some

new doctrine of life which filled their mind with unexplicit joy.

After a while Joyanta requested Monimoy to sing for Sunand. Sunand also smiled and requested Monimoy to sing.

Monimoy started in a deep low voice. The melody of his tune seemed to intensify the silence. This continued till midnight, after which they broke up.

Amita came the next day in the afternoon. She found Sunand sitting calmly as if in deep meditation.

—"What an awful silence," said Amita in unusual loud voice—"Get up—break your meditation."

Sunand felt teased. Still he smiled.

Amita started to clean the floor.

Monimoy, the friend of their family, her brother and other villagers also came to the hermitage that evening. Joyanta had ordered Amita to arrange for their accommodation.

—'Have you got anything to wash?'—asked Amita.

—'Nothing' replied Sunand.

Amita looked around.—'How dirty is your bedsheet is,' She exclaimed.

Without waiting for Sunand's permission she collected the bedsheet. Sunand did not raise any objection though the bedsheet was sufficiently clean. Amita came close to Sunand and sat down by his side.

—'Why do you maintain a dull silence around you all the time? Have you taken a second vow not to talk with me?' Amita asked.

Sunand raised his eyes and only smiled.

—'Well, where are your parents?' — asked Amita.—'Are they living?'

'Yes'—the short reply came from Sunand.

—'Don't you feel for your mother?'

Sunand remained silent.

'I feel much for my mother. She died when I was only twelve,'—said Amita again. 'Do you still feel for your mother?'—asked Sunand.

Amita was not prepared for such a question from Sunand. She tried to find an answer in the big eyes of Sunand. After a while Amita replied slowly.—'No—I feel much less since you have come here. Can you tell me why it happened like that.' She asked.

Sunand laughed, 'How can I know?'

Amita could not speak any more. She remained silent for a while and slowly moved out.

Monimoy came to the hermitage alone in one evening after sometime. This short young man called on Sunand several times during the last few days. He often tore out pages from the book of his personal life and placed them before Sunand.

Sunand offered him a seat and invited him to sing. The song of Monimoy created a peaceful atmosphere in the hermitage. Sunand heard it with closed eyes as if trying to discover the heart of the melody.

'Song carries one's mind far above this world' —said Sunand after the song was over.

—'So do I sing. I sing to forget Amita,—the girl you must have seen here on occasions. She has appeared like an evil star in the horizon of my life. Believe me—I sing to forget her.' Monimoy appeared to be sentimental.

Sunand smiled,—'Is it?'

Monimoy continued,—'She looks charming outwardly but, believe me, she is the ugly of the ugliest in her mind. I proposed to marry her that day and believe me, she slapped me on my face.'

—'Is that so?'—Sunand's smile was still there.

—'My only fault,' Monimoy added,—was that I spoke my mind to Amita. 'Believe me, I love her and do you consider it a crime to love a girl? But she misunderstood,'—after a pause Monimoy said slowly,—'I have lost my peace of mind since then.'

—'Are you still unhappy?' asked Sunand.

—'Much less since I have come to you. Can you tell me why?'

—Sunand laughed,—'How can I say?'

The two years brought Amita closer to Sunand. She became more familiar with him. But time could record no change in Sunand. As before he obliged her with bits of smile and occasionally with sweet words. Everything seemed to come to his eyes, but his look was set within his ownself in search of realisation.

Should Amita take Sunand to be an idiot or a stone? How could he deny her proud youth? Had he no nerves in his eyes, or blood in his veins? She was no more satisfied in gleaning fragments of his smile. She must tear to pieces the curtain of austerity or silence which hung about Sunand. 'Has her closeness to Sunand cast a shadow of her love?' Amita asked her mind.

Life meant some thing different to Sunand.

Amita knew it. She knew Sunand was a Sanyasin—a sage. He could not make him susceptible to any worldly attachment. He must rise superior to it.

But her knowledge was totally curtailed by her desire. She must have recognition of her love from Sunand. She must win over him fully and finally. Amita grew stiff. She would draw the highest dividend from her youth.

Amita decided to meet Sunand that afternoon. He must yield to her youth. She must snatch him away from the clutches of austerity. She would trample down all barriers which Sunand had erected round him. She would bring out the essence from her blossoming youth and enamour him fully.

Amita put on a Scarlet Saree and dressed her hair in a charming fashion. She chewed betel to redden her lips and anointed her dark large eyes with collyrium.

Amita saw herself from different angles in her small mirror. She laughed within herself when she could place full confidence in her efforts and she set out for Sunand's place.

The sun was slowly going down the horizon. As Amita did not turn up in the usual time, Sunand started to clean the cottage himself.

—'You've done enough.'—Amita's sudden voice surprised Sunand. He turned towards Amita who was standing just behind him. Before Sunand could say anything Amita pushed Sunand slightly aside and took away the duster from his hand. The habitual smile in Sunand's face faded away. He tried to scan the action of Amita. The unusual dress and make-up of Amita also worried him. Amita's eyes were shining. But she felt uncomfortable before Sunand's asking looks.

Sunand slowly moved inside the room. Amita seemed to be relieved of a burden.

The next moment her inherent desire expressed itself. She couldn't forget the purpose of her visit that afternoon.

Amita entered the cottage. Sunand was sitting on a mat. An opened book lay before him.

—'What are you reading?'—asked Amita.

Sunand became alert and replied gravely,—'A Sanskrit book'.

Amita snatched away the book from Sunand. She laughed which sounded like the fall of a glass on the floor.

Sunand kept silent.

Amita suddenly sat down by the side of Sunand and asked,—'Can you read anyone's mind?'

Sunand became gloomy and replied slowly,—'Yes. I can.'

—'Your readings are all rubbish,—said Amita. After a while she continued,—'Don't you covet the company of any girl in your life?'

Sunand felt uneasy at the trend of the topic. He said,—'Let us stop here.'

Amita came closer to Sunand and asked,—'Do you think—love is a crime'?

—'No.'—replied Sunand without any hesitation.

—'Then? Why don't you allow it to blossom in your life?' Amita's eyes were shining,—her respiration became quick.

Sunand kept silent for sometime and replied very softly.—'Go home Amita. Never come to this place again.'

The light was taken away from Amita's eyes. Her ears turned red. Her body seemed to be a burden to herself.

Amita had to wait. She would prefer somebody dragging her out of the sight of Sunand.

Slowly Amita left her seat and went out of the room. Amita was never again seen in the hermitage since that afternoon.

Sunand performed all his work himself. On some dull afternoon Sunand was cleaning the floor of his room, but his mind seemed to be thinking of something else. He did not know when he stopped to work and ceased to fix his eyes on anything.

One day just before sun-set Sunand heard the familiar voice of Amita. He was hesitating to leave his seat to receive her. But the next moment he detected his own error. The voice of his own mind echoed in his ears. A smile flashed on his face.

Sunand got annoyed with his mind. To have full control over it, he devoted more time in meditation. He tried to shut out his mind against all worldly thoughts and concentrate it on his only mission of life—the realisation of God in his own self. He must have a taste of the eternal bliss by identifying himself with the omnipresent love of his Dearest. On occasions his mind was so absorbed in that one and only thought that even his physical need went unheeded.

The last ways of the setting sun had cast long shadow of the cocoanut trees on the courtyards of the hermitage. The village women were hurrying towards their houses with pitchers full of water collected from the big tank of the Landlord.

Monimoy could not find time to meet Sunand during the last few days and therefore started for his place that evening. He was singing to himself as he entered the cottage of Sunand.

In the twilight of the small lamp Monimoy found Sunand sitting like a statue. He suddenly stopped singing and asked.—'What has happened to you Are you unwell.'

Sunand smiled coldly and said,—'Physical sickness does not concern a Sanyasin.'

Monimoy could not exactly follow Sunand. He had not the mind too. He brought in a different topic which concerned him more.

—'Amita met me the other day, you know.'—Monimoy began,—'she invited me to their house. Believe me—I did not go to their place for a long time. Since the incident of which I have already told you. But I could not refuse as I found she is quite serious.'

Sunand tried to be indifferent.

—'Believe me—she is not a bad girl after all. We had a nice talk that evening.'

He paused for a while to take his breath and said again,—'She also served me some wholesome sweets which she prepared herself for me.'

Suddenly he came very closely to Sunand and whispered in confidence,—'Believe me—Amita loves me deeply. Please do not break the news to anybody.'

Some wrinkles appeared on the usual calm face of Sunand. He tried in vain to relax his mind.

Sunand got up and with a smile said,—'I would like to read out a chapter of the Ramayana now. Please come tomorrow.'

He then slowly moved to the corner of the cottage. The sudden change in Sunand perplexed Monimoy.

After a few days Monimoy was seen again hurrying in through the gardens of the hermitage.

Monimoy felt embarrassed before the presence of Sunand. He blushed, stammered and then said,—'I have a bit of a very good news—Believe me, Amita has given her consent at last to my proposal. We are going to be married.'

The whole body of Sunand shivered for a moment. He looked vacantly at Monimoy. His mind tossed on the waves of various feelings which rolled on one after another. Sunand's usual smile disappeared from his face.

'She wants to honour my love with that of her own.' Said Monimoy,—"With tears of her eyes Amita told me that the flower of love may bloom in the meanest creeper. Should anybody trample over it while moving about with eyes fixed in the sky?'

A high storm began to blow within Sunand. His strong control over his mind became loose. It seemed to drift away from the chart. His austerity could not hold him up. His practice went in vain. He became helpless like a child.

'What an amusement? Severe one indeed? Who are you operating me from behind? Is there no end of it? Has not your play with my present life given you enough amusement? How cruel is your eternal play?'—Sunand talked silently to his Beloved who exists within him and in whom the universe exists.

Monimoy stopped. The peculiar silence of Sunand was inexplicable to him and he went out.

Sunand smiled in his mind. He sat alone till midnight and was absorbed in deep meditation. He controlled excitement and regained his calmness. The gloomy confusion of his mind drifted away and he was ammused to spot out a new life for himself in the twilight of the dawn. The more Sunand felt his Dearest in meditation, the more ammused he became.

Slowly all his desires and feelings melted away and he lost himself in Him.

With day break Sunand left the hermitage and walked aimlessly throughout the whole day. In the afternoon he felt tired and sat down under the cool shade of a mangoe tree. Shots of rays from the setting sun were hitting the tops of high trees.

Sunand lived within his own self for the whole day with a sense of unattachment. The inner truth of the new life was thus revealed to him. He most calmly decided to surrender to it.

The sun went down. Gradually the whole valley turned grey. Small lights could be seen in houses. Sounds of bells and conchsells heralded the

(Continued on Page 92)

THE KEEPSAKE THAT PRICKS

PASUPATI BHATTACHARYA

SUFI

YOUNG Himangsu and his younger wife Ruchira were compelled to settle themselves in almost a deserted corner of the Sunderbans area. The place is like a small island detached from the mainland, and surrounded by rivulets and canals winding their way into the big river, spread like the five fingers of a hand. The village is called Gosaba, and the sea is not very far from here. The only means of communication with the mainland is a motor launch that plies only once during the day, carrying passengers from Calcutta, Canning and Laxmikantapur. Sometimes tourists also come there to visit the forests. It is only then that people get busy, loud human voices are heard, and some activity is noticed. With the departure of the launch, all become quiet again.

Himangsu keeps himself busy with his own allotted work, Ruchira with her domestic affairs. They have very little to talk about. Life seems dull for Ruchira, she does not know how to fill the long hours except by knitting and reading, and there is not much to read. She would often sit by the window gazing at the same unchanging scenery outside, brooding quietly in her mind. But Himangsu wants to talk and Ruchira to listen. Ruchira hears unmindfully and says a word or two in reply.

In this uneventful life of these two people, one day a letter came from an old and close friend Ranadeb, a carefree bachelor, a big-game hunter. He has written that he is shortly coming to visit them here and see what they are doing, how they are enjoying.

Highly excited, Himangsu went to show the letter to Ruchira. He said—"Look here, Ranadeb

is coming. What a joy! He will keep us busy, and will tell us so many of his hunting adventures".

Ruchira indifferently asked "Why is he coming to us after such a long absence?"—"Well, that—perhaps he is tired of running after wild animals in the jungle and now wants to talk to human friends for a change. He may like to tell us about his thrilling experiences, one of which I will now tell you."

He began to narrate his oft-told story about a dangerous encounter with a bear, how Ranadeb had to tackle him at close quarters.

Ruchira had already heard it several times, but again listened to it with as much patience as she could, but at last could not help laughing, she laughed and laughed.

Himangsu was flabbergasted. He asked with bewilderment—"Why do you laugh? Just imagine the terrible situation.—"

Ruchira answered still laughing—"Yes, I know, your friend's acts of valour are quite known to me. The bear must have been overthrown and fled in fear of him."

Still laughing, she went away with a gesture of contempt.

The enthusiasm with which Himangsu came to give her the glad news was damped. Himangsu took off his specks and began to wipe the thick lenses, wondering how could such a dangerous thing be a matter for laugh and contempt!

Ranadeb arrived there shortly. A tall graceful figure of a man, a blackish giant with a wealth of shaggy hairs on his head, and a deep scar on one side of his forehead. He wore a full pant, a khaki half-shirt and a pair of mud-smeared heavy boots. A rifle hung at the back and a suitcase swung in his hand. He entered through the outer gate with his heavy boots noisily thumping the ground.

He brought out from his pocket a small cardboard box and gave it to her.

Ruchira who was knitting by the side of the window saw him coming. She left her knitting, drew the window's curtain, and quietly lying down on her bed shut her eyes, pretending deep sleep.

A few minutes later somebody entered the room and shook her. Is it possible that Ranadeb would thus touch her body and give it a shake! Impossible! Must be Himangsu.

—"I say, get up and see who is come!"

She hurriedly sat up on the bed.

—"Open your eyes and see, Ranadeb is here."

—"Oh, where?"

Ranadeb now spoke from the door in his familiar deep voice—"Present here. May I come in?"

—"I am going immediately."

She sluggishly got down from her bed and then scratching her head dishevelled her carefully-combed hairs. Carelessly letting fall the loose end of her sari on the floor and trailing it along she came to the door.

Ranadeb asked—"How is it that you were sleeping untimely?"

—"Not feeling so well, I had a touch of headache".

Ranadeb became grave. Similing wearily Ruchira said—"That's nothing. Tell us now something about yourself, the latest news. I have been hearing from your friend that you fought a wild bear and overpowered it."

—"So it happened".

"Were there only bears in the forest and no other animal?" There was a jeering note in the voice.

—"Of course, others were there, but I must get them within my rifle's range. This bear from behind came so near me that I had to turn round and get at it. You perhaps know it is quite easy to shoot from a distance, but when it comes so near your chest.—"

—"Then, only to clasp it in your embrace, is it not so?" She smiled mysteriously.

—"Yes, in death embrace",—he seriously answered.

Himangsu who was silent so long, eagerly asked Ranadeb to take off his shirt and show her the claw-mark on his chest.

Ruchira immediately changed the topic and said—"You have come to see us after such a long interval and, may be, with some present to offer me!

—"Sure". He brought out from his pocket a small cardboard box and gave it to her.

—"Seems something readyhot for me!" She opened the box. Inside it was a tiger's nail mounted with gold. Her face lit up with joy.

She however suppressed her emotion and asked as if casually—"Did you secure it only for me?"

—"Yes, I cut it out from the tiger's paw only for you".

Ruchira smiled and said—"That's not so difficult after the tiger is dead. The difficulty is killing it. I hope you did it yourself."

Ranadeb did not reply. Ruchira took the box away.

II

But Ranadeb did not come here simply to stay as a friendly guest. The Sunderban forest had a lure for him. He had been to a few forests in Assam, Orissa, even up to Kumaun, but never visited this side. Unfortunately he could not go there for hunting since these were Reserve forests. To enter there one has to secure a permit from Alipore

or to approach the local Beat-officers and Rangers. But that cannot be arranged in a short time.

So it was decided that they would go round the place in a boat and see the jungles on the river bank outside the reserved area. Here they might have something worth hunting, at any rate it would be a worthwhile excursion.

They hired a big country boat, rather a barge with five members of the crew. Immediately after lunch they started from Gosaba. After covering two miles the barge reached the confluence of a river on the otherside of which is the Reserve forest. So they kept to this side of the river bank. They also were five. Two girl neighbours who joined them brought a gramophone, a stove, and other cooking paraphernalia.

The two girls occupying the back portion of the barge played gramophone and prepared tea and titbits. In the front part Ruchira chose a comfortable place for herself. She sat there, sometimes knitting and often looking away with wonder in her eyes, towards the wild vegetation over the river bank. She was tastefully dressed and on her neck was glittering a fine necklace, under which swung, like a pendant near the centre of her chest, the tiger's nail now fixed to the necklace. Himangsu noticed it and thought that she must have liked it, and therefore attached it to the necklace as a keepsake.

He also noticed that Ranadeb was unusually grave and quiet now, not that jolly and boisterous sort of fellow when he stayed with them at Madhupur a few years ago.

Ranadeb was engrossed with his binocular, looking for something inside the bushes and jungles. But there was nothing visible except the dense forest of Sundri and Garan and Hantal and Keori trees of various shapes and sizes entangled with each other. Nothing really worth so much attention!

Himangsu felt very awkward. On one side Ruchira, on the other Ranadeb, both were quiet for different reasons. He had expected Ruchira to enliven the party, suitably entertain their guest, keep him always engaged, and to encourage him to tell stories of his adventures. He himself tried in vain to do it. Strangely, Ranadeb preferred to recount only stories of his failures inviting taunts from Ruchira.

He remembered having heard from him a similar story of unsuccessful attempt when they were at Madhupur. News reached him that a deadly leopard had become a terror to a village, snatching away cattle from inside the pens almost every night. Ranadeb went to the place with his gun and sat on a machan over a tree, keeping as bait a dog tied under the tree, waiting for the leopard. When the beast appeared he signalled his attendant to flash the torch and raised the trigger to shoot at the first opportunity, but just then somebody made a sound and the leopard vanished before the trigger was down.

As the time Ranadeb narrated this story, Ruchira sympathetically consoled him saying that failures are the steps to success in life. Now there is a complete change in her attitude. She seems to have become vindictive towards him. For what?

III

It is about evening now. The barge is moving along a narrow canal, and it being ebb tide, the current is sluggish and the water less deep and muddy. On either side of the canal are dense vegetations making the approaching darkness darker. Now is the time for tigers to come to the bank to

Obviously, he had felt insulted, Himangsu remarked

catch fish from the shallow muddy water.

The sun has set. Ranadeb, quite alert, brought out his gun and stood at the edge of the planks. He remained there motionless, watching.

Finding him in this position Ruchira came near him and said in mock seriousness—"No no, this idle enjoyment of the sight won't do. Now you must use your skill and hunt something, at least to keep up the prestige. We are all expecting it. You must find some target for your gun. Look, there are those monkeys hanging from the branches. What about them?"

Everybody laughed at this, but Ranadeb was silent.

The night became darker. The moon rose overhead. The experienced majhis of the boat warned him and asked him to go inside. The 'animal' might spot him and jump overboard from the bank. These people never utter the name of tigers, they allude to them as "animal".

But Ranadeb does not care. He stays on where he is, now and then flashing his powerful torch of five batteries, clearly exposing the interior of the forests up to a distance.

The peculiar bray of a deer was heard from somewhere. The torch moved around and at last was fixed at a point. A beautiful deer with long horns was discovered there—no, not one, a pair of them very close to each other. They were startled by the focus of the light and stood stunned, staring with wonder. The majhis understood the situation and slowed the boat's speed.

Ruchira had noticed it. She hurried to Ranadeb and eagerly whispered to his ear—"Let me hold the torch, you kill them both immediately, first the female one".

Ranadeb gave her the torch and raised the gun. He was taking aim, but the pair of deer still remained there motionless with wide-open eyes in mute wonderment. The light of the torch fell full over them, and now it looked like a beautiful picture depicted by some eminent artist. Surround-

ing them on all sides were the dark jungle leaves and branches, making it a contrast background. Ranadeb was profoundly moved by the scene. He forgot his object. He simply looked on and on with enchanted attention. The hands that had raised the gun became inert.

Unable to control her excitement Ruchira gave him a sharp jerk, and said impatiently "Why this delay! Shoot, shoot them quick, or they would run away".

Ranadeb ignored it and giving no reply heaved a sigh and moved away from there.

Frustrated an angry, Ruchira cried aloud in a shrill voice—"Hopeless!"

* * * *

They went back to their place the next day and Ranadeb abruptly departed the following morning. Himangsu tried his utmost to make him stay for a few more days, but Ranadeb was adamant in his attitude. He took up his suitcase and walked straight out of the house without even saying a word of good-bye to any of them. From the window Ruchira watched him go away with firm steps, the gun at the back and the suitcase in hand, just as he came.

Obviously, he had felt insulted, Himangsu remarked. He scolded Ruchira for her rude behaviour toward their honoured guest. At other times Ruchira would nave forthwith given him some cutting reply. But now not a word escaped her lips. Tears trickled down her cheeks. At this Himangsu softened and regretfully said "what you did was not proper—shouting an insulting word to him, in the presence of all those people, *Chhi!*"

* * * *

Early that night Ruchira lay alone on her bed in semi-darkness. The lamp was not lit. The moon was in the sky as on the previous night. It was now high tide in the nearby river and water was rushing through it with a continuous babbling sound. She was listening attentively as if it has some similarity of rhythm with her secret heartache, that would like to flow out in a rush. She was alone in the house and all was quiet except this outer sound and her inner heart-beat.

She was recounting in her mind the whole history of the incident that had happened at Madhupur only a few years back. She was then newly married. At Madhupur they were at the extreme outskirt by the side of the narrow river. The place was very quiet, only a few Christian families lived there in scattered houses. Beyond the river nothing was visible except paddy fields. Their conjugal life had just started.

In these circumstances, one day Ranadeb for the first time came in their midst on invitation. As on this occasion, so then, she vividly remembered, Ranadeb entered with a gun hanging at the back and a suitcase in hand, the face lit up with a debonair smile. Ruchira was taken aback! She stared with astonishment at his extraordinary manly figure. How tall, straight and stately! She had heard enough of him and his perilous hunting adventures. That notable hero of those stories was now standing in front of her! He was far more remarkable than she ever had imagined. She was overwhelmed.

But Ranadeb was looking around on all sides of the place and his first words were in praise of her aesthetic sense—"Though very young, you have a refined taste. How nicely you have furnished the house!"

Ruchira felt elated.

—"But haven't you placed a photograph of you two together? That should be hung somewhere here." Himangsu hastened to say that there was none like that.

—"Well then, I can get one for you now, this very moment. I have a camera with me. You simply stand close together as you are, only don't move".

He took several snapshots. One of these he got enlarged and framed, and in due course hung it himself on the wall.

After about a fortnight Ranadeb wanted to leave. But Himangsu requested him to stay for two more days.

Ruchira also begged him to stay when she found him alone saying—"What is the hurry to go home, is there anybody anxiously awaiting you? Please stay with us for two more days."

Ranadeb consented.

During this time Himangsu came to know that his revered Gurudeva was at Deoghar, and if he likes to see him he should go there without delay otherwise he might miss the opportunity. So Himangsu became anxious to go there. Ruchira wanted to dissuade him but in vain.

Ruchira then said,—"Well, go, but don't stay there, come back this very day before night".

—"How can I promise that! If Gurudeva wishes—"

—"Your Gurudeva! Do you mean that I shall stay here alone in the night?"

—"Why alone! My worthy friend Ranadeb is here.

—"But he is an outsider. How can I—"

—"Oh, what of that. He would be a better guard than me".

—"That may be, yet is that decent?"

—"If you have such scruples, come with me for darshan".

—"No, I don't want it. You go if you must. But try to come back before bedtime today."

Himangsu busied himself making arrangements to start. Ruchira kept silent, determined to take adequate revenge.

When Himangsu was gone, Ranadeb came to her with a pleasant smile and said—"Don't worry, it will be great fun between ourselves, we shall talk and play and arrange for a new kind of picnic. Just see!"

Ruchira smiled with pleasure. All day they were busy with different items of entertainment.

Then came the night.

Ruchira was expecting up to the last moment that Himangsu would be back, but was disappointed. In a fit of pique and anger surging in her mind she became stiff in her attitude and gloomy. She concluded at last that to leave her alone like this did not mean that her husband was liberal about her but it was due to his cowardice and lack of common sense.

Night advanced. She went to her room to sleep. But there was no sleep, she tossed about in her bed uneasily. Ranadeb was lying in his bed in the other room. The intervening door was open, none thought of closing it.

After some time when Ruchira was almost asleep, she suddenly woke up at a sound near the outer gate. She was terribly frightened. Recently she had heard about dacoities here and there. She sat up and waited, and heard the sound again, as if somebody was knocking and pushing the gate.

She atonce cried aloud—"Do you hear?"

Ranadeb jumped up from his bed.

—"Come here, quick."

Ranadeb entered her room with his torch light.

—"Did you hear that sound?"

—"What sound! Where?"

(Continued on Page 92)

TWO SISTERS

By JATISH BOSE

SUSANTA Babu had two daughters, Rina and Nina. Rina was the image of her mother, tall, fair and gentle in nature. Nina was just the opposite, stout in body and mind, sharp-tongued and sharper in intellect. If proverb sometimes rubs off on correctly, Nina had inherited maternal uncles' characteristics, the roguish zealousy coupled with a clear perception. But more of it later.

A small house in North Calcutta, a smaller family and with an income, every pie of which was judiciously spent against the battle of rising prices —that in a nutshell is the pivot round which Susanta Babu always had to move. Barring this of course, his pendulum of activity oscillated more rapidly in his mercantile office.

Susanta Babu almost on every day had a rough time with his younger daughter in the morning. Irritated with sky-high prices of fish and vegetables, his return from the market coincided with Nina's shoutings.

—Father, tell Didi to go about her own business. A girl who does such a poor show in her own examination, must not meddle . . . .

What do you mean? enquired her father in an angry voice.

His wife Urmila stepped in. Calm in nature, she was calmer in tones.

—Nina complains of disorderliness of her book-shelf. May be it was hung loose by Pradip. Susanta Babu's son Pradip, a medical student, had an air of mischief hung around him in his leisure hours and this he scrupulously set in motion to fan the clashes between the two sisters.

Susanta Babu called for his son aloud but he was nowhere nearabout. Nina's magniloquence too took to a sudden flight before the red eyes of her father. Susanta Babu bemoaned his fate—his three children could not carry on amicably, then what about a large family with conglomeration of ideas and heterogenous elements.

* * * . . . . .

Pradip was the first child of Susanta Babu. A fairly long period intervened the birth of Pradip and Rina; and Nina was born only after an interval of one year.

But younger by a year did not mean lesser intelligence and intellect. Nina bypassed Rina in the school and she was recognised in the same breath as a haughty, naughty and a 'class' girl. The teachers liked her not for her manners but her intellect had something to do with it. Her egoism had a psychological impact and this made her go forward always.

Only a year ago she toppled Sumita in the race for superiority in the class—Sumita who had been its proud possessor for a number of years.

And its origin was simple. The class teacher was testing the capability of students on some difficult sums.

Sumita volunteered but fumbled with a harder one

—You, Nina—the class teacher Surama Didi asked.

Sumita sneered, no less were the whispering taunts of other girls.

—Alright, cried out Nina, her egoism got better of her manners,—I am an idiot if I don't take up this challenge.

The class teacher atonce called Nina to order.

—I know your talents, but you must behave when you are in school. Manners get precedence over all other qualities . . . . .

Nina apologised at once. But from that day onward, her vow of beating Sumita in educational

race took a concrete shape and in her next annual examination she stole a march over her.

* * *

Pradip had an intimate friend in Ananda. The two together made an ideal pair. Ananda was a sprightly young man. A frequent visitor to Pradip's house he also chose medical line as his career. Susanta Babu had an eye on him and in his heart of hearts he nursed an ambition—beyond his reach though it be. But man never knows his limits, he pins his hopes higher and higher and it is the Almighty who finds out for him some sort of an equation to live upon. It was a chilly afternoon with full wintry conditions having set in. Nina was lying on the bed with a slight attack of chill and Urmila was having her daily round of day-sleep. Rina had been away to school and Susanta Babu to his mercantile office.

Sound of footsteps followed the entry of Pradip and Ananda.

—How are you Nina? asked Pradip. He tried to feel her pulse and thereby to ascertain her temperature as an would be doctor.

Nina did not reply, only she threw the blanket over her body.

—Nina, Pradip jokingly said, do you notice Ananda? He has become very grave today. Is it due to the absence of Rina at home?

Nina replied—that is obvious. Face is an indicator. It betrays the feelings. Specially Anandada .....

Ananda tried to wriggle him out of the awkward position with a high-sounding laugh. He made a further mess of it when he said: Nina is sentimental, and Nina is zealous of Rina's gentleness and grace.

This might have been the signal for Nina's verbal explosion. It was her strong point, anything that pleased Rina was an anathema to her, whoever admired Rina, got the harshest rebuff at her hands. She might not strike at that moment, she was just in her shell then, at the opportune moment she struck and struck very hard and severe leaving the victim to reel under a tormenting blow.

Psychologically it seemed most improbable, the two coming from the same blood, had so widely differing views on life and the means to attain its goal. Rina was all love for her younger sister—a normal direction pursued by God's creations leaving aside the nature of criminals. And Nina grew in her peculiar qualities which constituted personal individuality.

The sombre outlook took a lighter turn with the appearance of Rina. She had charming manners, jovialty and her company is enjoyable.

Tired a bit, her face beamed with a smile as she greeted Ananda.

— Anandada, it is long since we saw you. You seem a bit pulled down also. Had you been ill or were you busy with this devilish examination of which I am mortally afraid and Nina plays with it very easily.....

I don't think I will ever compromise with this devil. Now tell us what caused your rather longish absence.

'Anandada, it is long since we saw you.

Ananda was keeping up a smiling face and Pradip intervened on behalf of his friend.

— Rina, you have been up with a spate of questions like a cross-examining counsel. Is it becoming of you to greet a guest like that?

A peal of laughter, everybody but Nina participating, burst and shot out its echoes in gay and light atmosphere that prevailed.

Urmila too was happy to see that the clouds, that had gathered a few minutes earlier, made room for streaks of sunlight—the uncouth darkness giving way to gay merriment.

She hailed Ananda and all of them were then invited to refresh themselves with some home-made delicacies.

A few days later the family was celebrating Nina's birthday. Susanta Babu had to bow to the desire of his wife for this, and being the youngest, Nina was chosen and her birthday was voted to be solemnly observed. Susanta Babu, having a religious bent of mind, spent this day as a day of dedication for the good of the family.

It was a simple ceremony befitting a family with a limited income. Only two outsiders were invited, Ananda and Rita, a friend of Nina (she had very few to boast of).

Curiously enough, Ananda brought two sets of presents for two sisters, and Rita a costly Saree for Nina.

Basically this might seem appropriate to Ananda but it was ticklish on an occasion like this. Rina was flabbergusted and Nina suppressed her annoyance. Others also might have drawn some inference from it.

Nina's annoyance found abundant expression in the dinner-table.

Shanti, their maid-servant, was handling some glass plates and these accidentally fell from her hands and broke into pieces. Nina burst out.

— Shanti, you have crossed the limit of my patience. It is due to Didi's indulgence that you are turning out to be an idiot.....

Rina remained quiet apprehending the situation to take an ugly turn. Now it was Susanta Babu, otherwise a quiet man, who had sparks of fire kindled in him.

— Nina, he raised his voice gradually,—I have repeatedly cautioned your mother about you. But you are growing so wild, so individualistic as to call for severe reprimand. No, more than that. You deserve a lonely habitation out of the reach of civil life.

Urmila atonce caught hold of her husband's hands and implored him not to lose himself in anger.

Ananda was in a dilemma. If he possessed astrological powers, he could decipher to what extent he was to blame for it. Pradip could feel the pulse of Nina's feelings and he correctly read the situation as it developed since the entry of Ananda with the presents. And Rita, the newcomer had her share of wonder, she had seldom been a party to such an awkward situation.

Rina made no efforts whatsoever to read it, she was used to such taunts from her younger sister, only that night she had a touch of romance when she thought of Ananda's presents.

The party, however, ended in a discordant note.

* * *

More than a year rolled by. Nina was a student of the Ranchi Medical College. She was awarded a State scholarship for her proficiency in Biology, a stepping stone to medical science.

She remembered those agonising words of her father in the birthday dinner party:—'You deserve a life of seclusion'. Those words were still ringing in her ears. That was why she preferred Ranchi to life in Calcutta. She had the greatest devotion and respect for her father. Could she not, by self-control and self-sacrifice, if need be, give a little solace, a little comfort in his old age.

Her didi Rina was a lovable girl, liked by all; it mattered little if she was rubbing her shoulders against the H.S. examination for a couple of years.

Shanti, you have crossed the limit of my patience. It is due to Didi's indulgence that you are turning out to be an idiot .....

Nina was rambling aimlessly on the stretc ground that separates the two wards of the Ka Mental Hospital. Sometimes she came there of own, sometimes despatched by the college auth ties, to look into peculiar cases of mental disequ brium.

The setting sun was spreading its golden and hillocks and mounds nearabout looked lik necklace of gems.

Nina was lost in thought, she did not no that a car running along the street suddenly swe ed into a ditch. In an instant a crowd collected great efforts were made to pull the car out of stone-ridden swampy land. The difficulty was v the lone occupant-driver who had been rende unconscious either due to a head-injury or might from concussion of the brain.

Nina approached a little, peered through crowd, next moment she uttered a sharp yell, t shrieked aloud :

—Oh, Anandada, what a scene, let Hea help me.

Ananda sat motionless reclining on the drive seat, his head swang down, and marks of blood w visible on his face.

A doctor of the Mental Hospital was near hand, he knew Nina, and with his help Ananda w rushed to the city's main hospital.

Then began a gruelling battle against dea For three days and nights Ananda remained u conscious. His parents were urgently summon from Calcutta and they were at his bedside next day.

The doctors at the Hospital strained th utmost, specially when they came to know fr Nina that he was a brother of the same professi

On the fourth day, almost at the identical ti of the accident, Ananda regained consciousness.

Twilight spread a charm all over the room Ananda's parents and Nina sat by the bed-side.

Slowly Ananda opened his eyes, his look w vacant at first, then gradually it settled down to parents and Nina. He could now recall to memo that he had come to Ranchi on a short trip in car and then.....

* * *

A changed Nina thought she had got t greatest reward of her life. Ananda's paren were so pleased with her that they were rea to take her as their daughter-in-law. Ni preferred her sister to take her place. Sh remembered those days in Calcutta when h sister Rina was a joy to Ananda. Her pleadi to the old couple bore fruit and they consen ed to their son marrying Rina in a month or s

Nina wrote to her sister from Ranchi.

Didi,—I am repaying you the debt which owed you so long, nay, possibly something mor

You will now be the proud possessor of jewel among men. Tell father I am not hi ungrateful daughter.

Your loving sister,
Nina

THE KEEPSAKE THAT PRICKS

(Continued from Page 88)

—"Near the outer gate, I distinctly heard it."

Ranadeb wanted to open the outer door and go out to see, but she clutched his hand with frenzy, and said in anguish—"No no, don't go there, somebody may be lurking".

—"Now leave me", he said in a commanding tone, took the gun and went out. With his brightly lit torch he searched all over the place but nothing was seen.

—"Oh, that was nothing. Must have been some dog".

—"But I was so frightened."

To reassure her, Ranadeb fired a blank shot in the direction of the river, and the sound reverberated in the air.

Ruchira was relieved of her fear and was thankful. She said she would never forget this chivalrous act.

Ranadeb went back to his room and lay down again.

But Ruchira could not try to sleep. She felt so terribly alone in this lonely room, how could she close her eyes! She noticed that Ranadeb was fast asleep, already snoring! How could he! How could he be so thoughtless and desireless! Why should he!

She became restless, could not stay in her bed. Half consciously, without knowing what she was doing, she went to Ranadeb's room, came near his bed and touched his body.

Ranadeb woke up atonce, and found her like this.

—"What is it now? Frightened are you?"

—"Yes. She shook her head as if in a dream.

—"Alright, you stay here."

Ranadeb gently laid her down on his own bed, covered her body with his own sheet, and himself went out to the open verandah outside. There he drew an easy chair and remained there for the whole night.

Ruchira of course was ashamed and afterwards returned to her room.

Not only this was a shame for herself, but she felt a bitter hatred for that heartless man. This was not his generosity, it was impotent and abject cowardice-hopeless indifference.

Luckily Himangsu came back very early the next day. She got some means of support to hide her shame.

Ranadeb went away that very day. Before leaving he took another snapshot of them, husband and wife standing close together, and said—"This is for myself, a picture of a charming pair".

Ruchira now understood clearly what he meant, —he appreciated the beauty of a pair, any pair. He is a lover of a kind of beauty, the inner beauty. He is a seer of the inner side of things, looking through the outer appearance. So he admires the beauty of a pair providentially brought together. That is the reason why he could not shoot at the deer, he must not break the Nature's pair.

Ruchira suddenly felt a pricking pain in the middle of her chest. Looking down, she saw, it was only the sharpened of the tiger's nail that pricked her skin.

This souvenir of that adorable person was swinging very close to her body in the middle of her youthful breasts. Its gold mounting and the supporting gold necklace were glittering in the moonlight.

Translated from a Bengali story

A DREAM LOST IN SOUL

(Continued from Page 84)

advent of night. Fireflies came out of the bushes. Sunand was still sitting here with closed eyes and open mind.

At midnight Sunand got up decisively and began to walk very fast towards the East. After a few minutes he stopped just in front of Amita's room. The doors were not bolted as she was awake still then.

Sunand entered the room and after Amita could overcome her fear and surprise he said calmly,—'I have come to confess my defeat. I have decided to surrender my present life to your Love—Will you come with me?'

Amita got astounded and pained. She said with tears in her eyes,—'You are not defeated—you can't be.'

She could not even think of such a defeat of Sunand. She placed him in the most esteemed part of her mind. She could not bring him down in the worldly plane. She said with chocked voice,—'No, that can't be. You must not surrender.'

Sunand slowly held her in his arms and said—'Wo'nt you go then?'

—'No'.

—'Wo'nt you feel?'

—'No.'

Sunand remained silent for a moment and said slowly in a heavy voice.—'Then let me go.'

Amita made no reply. Her tears gradually dried up.

Sunand released Amita from his arms and came out in the open. He saw before him the winding path of the village meeting the horizon.

Sitting in her bed Amita looked towards the dark blue sky through the door. She knew that Sunand would never come again.—Never. Heavy drops of tears rolled down her cheek. She closed her eyes. But no. Slowly she felt a sense of unknown bliss. In profound calmness of her mind she discovered the presence of Sunand within her and found herself in Sunand.

THOSE GLOSSY Curtains

By RAJENDRA AWASTHY

OUT I came in the corridor. At the flat across the road, there was a slight stir in the transparent curtains, drawn behind the glass shutters. The curtains stirred .... stirred again .... and were finally drawn. I kept my gaze coned that way. A dirty frightened dog ran past on the road below. There was a silence again. Something like a convulsion shot through me.

Now, there was a sound of unlatching the door at the opposite flat, followed by a rustle in the silken curtains. The curtains opened, opened apart. I looked into the room and found that the walls had been distempered recently.

Evidently something made of glass was broken and the sound of it frightened me and I ran downwards and dashed straight to my drawing-room. I don't know how I had the intuition that the sound had originated from that very room.

I was amazed to see that the new bottle of Parker Ink had toppled down and crashed to pieces. The ink had stained the clean face of the floor, and everything around—the little table between the sofa set, the open pages of the magazines. All the pages of the short story that I had completed yesterday, were as if smeared with mud. So n ink had been spilled all the blotting papers I could not soak it. Everything was spoiled. But I not distressed at that. Not for the stained table, for the magazines that had been spoiled, nor for the short story destroyed once for all. I rather pained to see that the clean face of the had been stained. Very bad it was, indeed.

"Who has spilled the ink?" I shouted.

Everybody was silent.

"I say, why don't you speak out, any one you?"

"Guddoo has done it", someone said in a m voice. It was my daughter's.

What? Guddoo has done it!....Alright, Gudd .....O, Guddoo.....!!" I clenched my teeth, felt like giving him a severe thrashing. Rascal, monkey of a boy! Does it befit him to spoil the fl like this? I would have taken Guddoo to task if had not heard a soft sound outside. I went out to corridor again. The rustling behind the curta opposite had increased. The door panes quivered.

The ink blots on the distempered wall oppos seemed dancing before my eyes, as though cryi

why the remaining expanse of the whiteness should have been spared?.....why?

I was all the more angry with Guddoo. "What was the fun in toying with the ink pot?" I shouted, entering the room.

The ink pot was kept at a small height on a wooden fixture in the wall. What was Guddoo looking for there? what .....? I drew close to the wooden fixture and subjected that to a close scrutiny. At first, I could not find anything. On second attempt, I saw, an airmail letter lay there. The letter bore the American post-mark. It was from a friend of mine. I picked up the cover and found that the postal stamp had been plucked off from over it.

The whole mystery lay unearthed before me. It was I who had encouraged stamp-collecting in him. Then, no wonder if I had to reap the harvest. But did Guddoo read the letter as well? Could Guddoo read a letter? I knew his knowledge of the three Rs. was as good as that of Ram Bharosey's, who in the course of cleaning and dusting the furniture would involuntarily place the pages of my morning paper turned upside down. He even did not know how to hold the paper correctly.

I hastened to open the cover. The letter was folded and untouched. I gave a sign of relief. I pitied Guddoo.....poor boy!

"The meal is ready", my wife informed me.

Yes, it must have been ready for consumption even three hours ago, I told myself. After all, I'm destined to devour it cold — *chapattis* just like little folds of leather, elastic and cold, smeared with cold *ghee*. And then, I could well imagine that small metal cup of vegetable curry, in which one could see small pieces of potato and cauliflower, besides the little pieces of brinjals, stuck at the bottom like lumps of meat. These are the things not to be cherished, of course. And I know, if ever I happened to treat myself to a steam-hot meal, it was due to the good-luck of my friend's and not my own.

That is the reason, why I've never taken keen interest in what I have to grub at the meal time, nor have I ever longed for it with any fraction of eagerness. One has to fill his belly. That's all.

So, as it is, it is better to go to the corridor rather than sit at the dining table.

"May I bring the meal?" asked Mrs. Verma.

"Take your own time", I said with a care-free gesture.

"As you wish....But, I'm feeling awfully hungry".

"In that case, you may get along with your meal. No need of waiting for me".

"But, I can't take it alone. I don't want when you are here. I can't get my heart to agree to that".

"That too you'll have to do, someday".

"I'll face the situation as it turns up".

I couldn't help, but fell silent.

Suddenly, there was a light tap at the door; and in she sailed, smiling, without even waiting for an answer.

"Namaste, Behnji.....!" said she, and went to add: "Oh, I'm sorry to have disturbed you out of your love talk.....But, it is hardly....."

"....eight o'clock. Isn't it?" I completed the sentence for her, giving her a meaningful smile.

"Yes, yes", she indulged herself in yet a louder laugh. "You always pester me with such jokes, *Bhai Sahib!*" The words were obviously addressed to me. Then, she turned to my wife: "But I came to see Mrs. Verma on some purpose. Isn't so, Sister?"

And touching my wife by the shoulder she took her to the adjoining room.

She departed after two minutes.

I felt a pinch within me. She came like that every day and went back thus. Neither I like her coming to us nor do I like her slip away quietly. I do, however, like standing in the corridor and watching those hustling curtains at her flat opposite.

How strange? Isn't it?

II

"Has Mrs. Chopra gone away?" I asked my wife.

"Why, yes. What else she was expected to do; stay back for you?" tart came the reply.

A light tap at the door; and she sailed in smilingly, without waiting for an answer and said "Namaste, Behnji—"

"I say, why do you always talk aimlessly? What I ask for is an answer to my simple querry".

"Yes, she's gone".

"She must have taken away something today, also?"

"Yes....."

"What did she take away this time?"

"Tea leaves".

I felt, as if it were not the window curtains but pieces of newspaper that were fluttering like the damaged wings of a helpless bird. Was my place a charity house? And.....

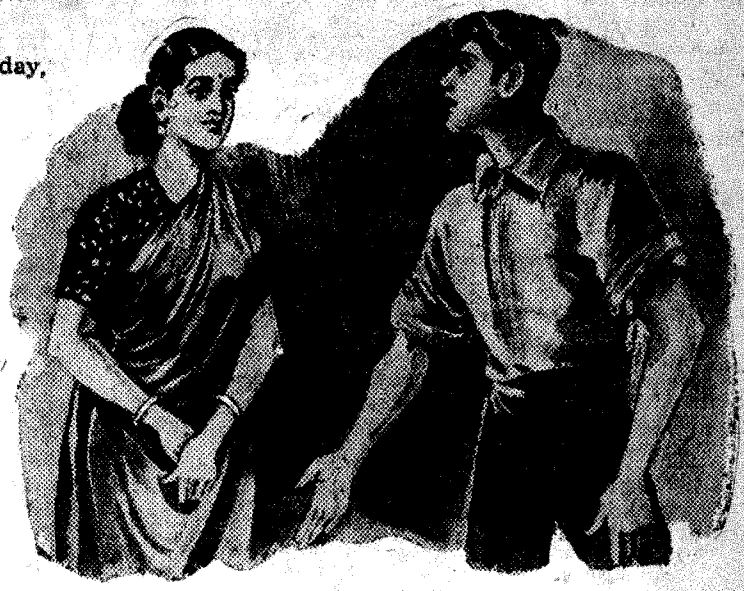
"And you too obliged her?" I asked my wife in right earnest.

"Should have I refused?"

"No. I won't advise you like that. But you can tell. henceforth, that we are short of tea leaves, if ever she asked for it again."

"Well, I'll have to, if we really don't have it".

Strange it is, really, this house of ours. Is it a mint, I ask myself, to print currency at will? It has to meet the needs of people.... tea, sugar, *zeera, heeng* .... and so on: the days of the month slip by. Then, there is a request for one glassful of flour .... two pot-fills of rice.....



"Strange it is, this house of ours. It has to meet the needs of people—tea, sugar and zeera."

"He's to be pitied", Mrs. Chopra would justify. "Poor fellow works like a horse day and night, Behnji. He has little or no leisure. He comes home dog tired in the evening. And by nine in the morning he is again at his desk in the office. Market does not open till nine-thirty....And on Sundays, there is a host of guests to attend to throughout the day....poor man, my husband....."

My face was filled with blood. That poor fellow works hard. But, how the hell are we enjoying our time? Can one simply ask Mrs. Chopra?

(III)

It happened two months ago.

That Saturday is still fresh in my memory. We rented a new flat. There was a lot of luggage to be transported and fixed up and so many things to be accomplished. Every one is a stranger at a new place. You have to run to the market even for such petty things as a broom. But, what a helping hand Mrs. Chopra extended to us at that time. Hardly had my cart, full of household effects, stopped in front of our new tenement, when Mrs. Chopra appeared on the scene. She was clad in a green sari and half-sleeved blouse. Though she put on fat yet she possessed a thin voice, just like a silk yarn.

"Why should you take the trouble of doing all this by yourself?" There was the offer of fullest co-operation from Mrs. Chopra. "My servant will fix up every thing for you. And you are to dine with us, of course. I'm preparing *prathas*. You should regard our house as your own, Bhai Sahib!"

No. She wouldn't listen to me. What a heart full of affections she possesses!

Never mind the flat. God has sent us a good neighbour. It is a stroke of luck that one gets a good neighbour. I thanked my stars for that.

And thanks to the resourcefulness and co-operation of Mrs. Chopra that the luggage was fixed up in no time, as if it was all lifted by a swift gust of wind and then placed at its proper place by some miracle. No fretting. Otherwise who knows, how difficult it would have been for me to do the job, all alone.

The flat was rented and inhabited. Mrs. Chopra's co-operation continued as usual. That window needed such and such type of curtains, sofa should be of such colour and chairs of that. The Divan should be of such dimension. Dining table should be of such a design that it should accommodate twelve guests at a time instead of six.

I pity my wife. She has no sense of decorum. And here is Mrs. Chopra, who surpasses her in all respects. Mrs. Chopra knows the ways and means of accomplishing everything. What else does one cherish in a housewife?

And one day, Mrs. Chopra was good enough to have prepared a household budget as well for me. I was amazed as it was presented to me for perusal. How to get two thousand rupees? Short of that how could the flat be furnished? Prestige would be cast to the winds if that was not done.

The curtains at the flat across the road rustle. The silk curtains are raised and drawn. What of distance? Simply a road in between, a wide black line, across which shines the moonlight. But on this side of the road is a gloom, the gloom of self-respect and modest living. The fact to reckon with is that the Chopras are not better off than us. I know, I'm nothing, if I don't possess two thousand chips. One must possess the means to succeed in life. But what a simple means Mrs. Chopra has adopted!

(IV)

And, on a Sunday morning.....

"Hello....." Mrs. Chopra seemed definitely having some time to spare that day.

"O, hello. How nice to see you here, Mr. Chopra".

"How's it, you are seldom to be seen....?"

"Yes. But on the other hand, I have had the good fortune of seeing Mrs. Chopra, almost every day....."

Mrs. Chopra flushed crimson. She dropped her gaze. She wore red coloured nylon sari and a matching half-sleeved blouse. Her hair was done in the high-dome like a bird's nest. She wore round her neck an array of glittering multicoloured stones. Her eyes flickered like neon-light. What was Mrs. Chopra upto?

"What would you like to have Mrs. Chopra?"

"Nothing else, Bhai Sahib, we'll have tea only".

This was followed by a loud laughter.

"Only tea?" said my wife.

"Yes, Sister. Nothing else. However, we won't mind *pakoras*.... "And she turned to her husband. "What do you say?"

Mr. Chopra was happy, immensely happy. So far it was smooth sailing. "Let it be, if she says".

Yes, it must. Can't be helped. Life would stagnate without that. The thread of life itself would snap.

I felt, as though the hired furniture and window panes obstructing the free inflow of gusts of fresh air were laughing at us, unabatedly.

Repeatedly, Mrs. Chopra remarked: "M|s. Ravi & Sons are the best furnishers we have here. All the Embassies get their requirements from them. Why don't you also visit them someday, Mrs. Verma?"

Mrs. Verma looked at me as if I was an uncomely fruitless thorny bush in a orchard, unlike the vase of cactus plant that took its place of pride in the drawing room.

Like rose, cactus is favoured by its species. Cactus plants are now being imported even from France and America. "If there is a bush worth its name, it is cactus", people are inclined to remark. The plant can survive for months together even without water and air, and with no discrimination of soil or climate. Its thorns are as much liked by every one. But such a thorn am I, who though possessing every bit of virtues of a cactus plant is regarded to be quite ugly and uncomely, like any other thorn of ordinary origin. Mrs. Verma should curse her Fate for that. Had she married someone else, she must have risen superior to Mrs. Chopra in such a manner that.....

Tea was brought in and *pakoras* as well. Mrs. Chopra leapt forward to take the tray from my wife. "Your crockery is enviable indeed, Mrs. Verma. Ah, ...how nice it is....."

Mrs. Verma's eyes brightened. We got a chance after all, when someone was envious of us.

"I suggest, Sister, bring the tea-cosy as well. We'll then sit down comfortably to have a nice cup of tea".

"Tea-cosy!" Mrs. Verma shot a look, full of disgust, at me; as if I was a mere statue, a senseless and soulless stone, not a human being.

Mrs. Verma was quick to realise.

"Ah, leave it, please, if you don't have the tea-cosy. Tea gets cold without that, as a matter of fact".

I pressed hard with both hands at either side of my chest. The tea contained in the kettle would get cold within a few minutes, if that is not covered with a tea-cosy; as if it is the skin of one's body, as if blood would ooze out without that.

"What a nice thing a tea-cosy is. What beautiful tea-cosies we get now-a-days. In Connaught Place....."

"Please, leave it, Sister. It's not a new thing that you're telling me. But, I say, can one get these in this house of ours?"

"And this is your weakness, I tell you, Sister".

Yes, it is a weakness of course. Mrs. Chopra's thrust went home. Deep lines of concern appeared on my wife's face. Its colour underwent a sudden change. With an effort I controlled my self.. It was better to keep quiet.

I kept quiet. But,.....but, the tea-cosy had uncovered all the faults that I was supposed to possess. I don't have heart and the means to furnish the house properly, nor am I able to supply my wife all the items of a bright make-up, nor do I know the art of looking after the house, nor can I learn these things from any one. What to say of other things, I'm not even able to get one tea-cosy, the tea-cosy that could keep in check storm brewing in the kettle. No, I'm not capable of achieving anything. How helpless I'm, ...how helpless! It is due to my helplessness that I have to take ice-cold meal every evening. Else. why should I have to face the wrath of scornful eyes of my wife's, which are full of hatred and disgust towards me.

I feel, it is a sort of a binding, a helplessness, that makes Mrs. Verma stick to me, the helplessness of that working girl, who asks, like a machine, on her return from office every evening: "May I bring you the meal, Babuji?" It was a case of Guddoo being a play thing of blind fate that drove him to search for the ink-pot and made him spill the ink on the floor and clean it with his shirt. It also humbled him and he was an object suppliant of mercy. He made me look that I was evil incarnate. The ink would have been wiped out and floor swept clean had his mother matters all her own way. But it is not his mummy who ruled the household. What a sad state of affair for Guddoo....! and for me as well! !

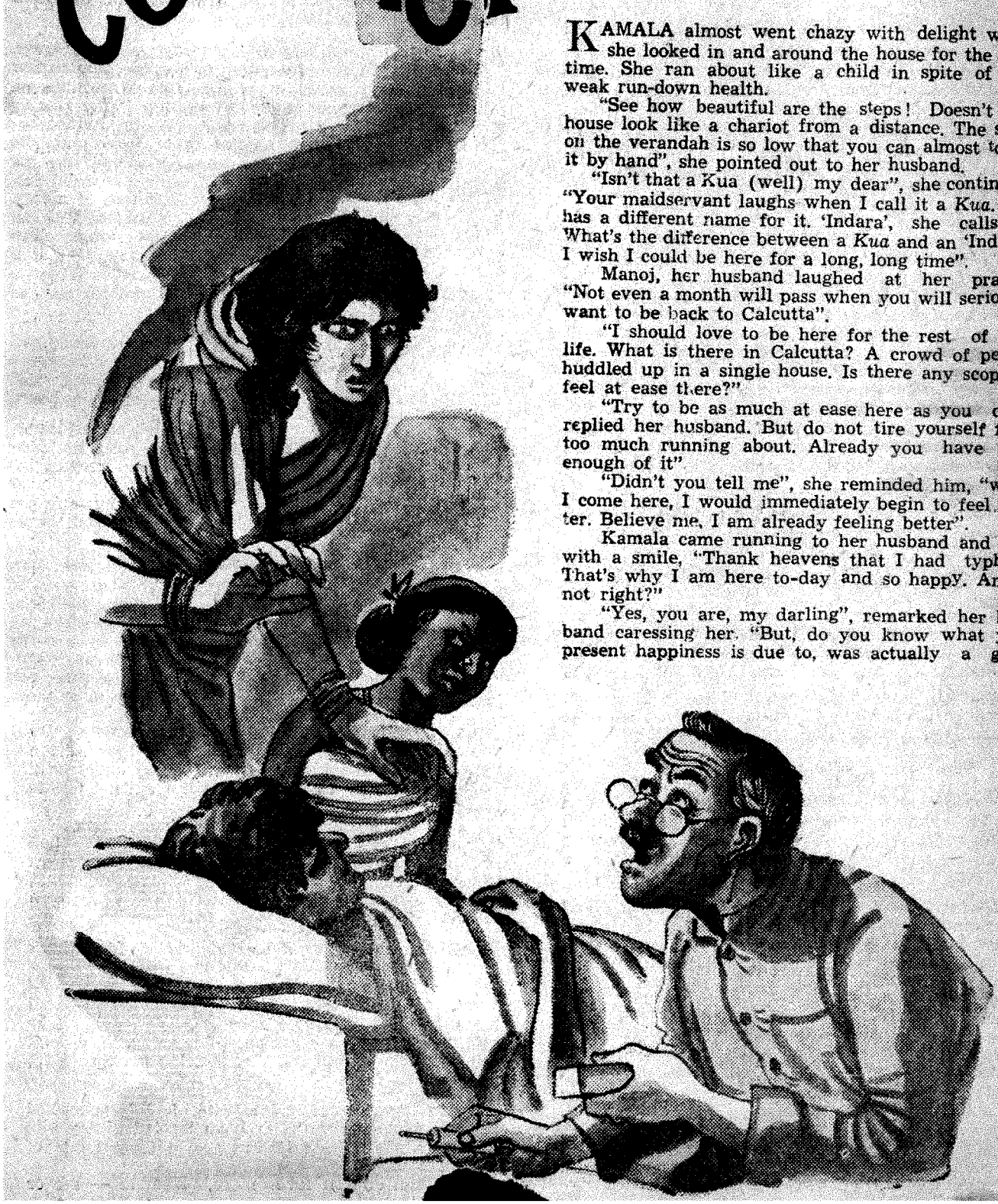
Such a despair, muteness and despondence had never been experienced before. Never and nowhere in this wild world. All the rooms are shining, full of light as they are. But this light pierces my heart.

The same corridor is there, the same movement in the glossy curtains across the road, the same darkness at this end. The curtains are rustling at this hour also, in the manner as one's own image shimmers in deep waters. The moving curtains get parted, and the ink-stained distempered wall comes to sight again.

The ink spots are still thereon, darker than ever, just like spots of clogged blood. But, what of that? Mrs. Chopra knows the art of doing justice to everything. Her fair-coloured wrists rise before my eyes. Once again my glance is arrested by a rustle in those very curtains. My wife says, and says rightly, I'm given to staring at women, all the time; and that I have nothing else to do except stare at them.

CONFLICT

by Asha Purna Devi



KAMALA almost went chazy with delight when she looked in and around the house for the first time. She ran about like a child in spite of her weak run-down health.

"See how beautiful are the steps! Doesn't the house look like a chariot from a distance. The shed on the verandah is so low that you can almost touch it by hand", she pointed out to her husband.

"Isn't that a Kua (well) my dear", she continued. "Your maidservant laughs when I call it a *Kua*. She has a different name for it. 'Indara', she calls it. What's the difference between a *Kua* and an 'Indara'. I wish I could be here for a long, long time".

Manoj, her husband laughed at her prattle. "Not even a month will pass when you will seriously want to be back to Calcutta".

"I should love to be here for the rest of my life. What is there in Calcutta? A crowd of people huddled up in a single house. Is there any scope to feel at ease there?"

"Try to be as much at ease here as you can", replied her husband. But do not tire yourself from too much running about. Already you have had enough of it"

"Didn't you tell me", she reminded him, "when I come here, I would immediately begin to feel better. Believe me, I am already feeling better".

Kamala came running to her husband and said with a smile, "Thank heavens that I had typhoid. That's why I am here to-day and so happy. Am I not right?"

"Yes, you are, my darling", remarked her husband caressing her. "But, do you know what your present happiness is due to, was actually a great

punishment for me? You had an attack of typhoid but how great was the mental agony I had to suffer and what an anxiety.

"You feared I might die. If it happened would it matter much?

"You shouldn't utter such nonsense Kamu" resented Manoj. "Now tell me how you want your household to be set up here. Mind you, you should do no work yourself but get everything done by the maidservant. Moreover, here's this obedient fellow at your service—always!"

"A nice way to talk to me! Is it for this that you have taken two months' leave?"

"Then what do you think it to be", enquired Manoj.

"All right" she said, "then take the first lesson of your service from me. My khokan needs a feed now. Please light the stove."

Manoj proceeded to light the stove. Kamala kept on chirping. She suggested "since the stove is lighted, couldn't we have some tea for ourselves".

"Tea", "You naughty girl. You can't have it more than once a day. You have already had it. Better have some Glaxo now.

"Why Glaxo?" asked Kamala disapprovingly.

Resting her head on her husband's lap she whispered: "You want to treat me like a patient here also. Look, how I have improved. I can even cook a fine meal for you".

"Spare me that plesaure, Kamalrani", said Manoj endearingly, "Instead, oblige me by taking a cup of Glaxo".

"Do as you please", submitted Kamala. "But, later on when you find me worrying you asking to eat this or that, you would perhaps snub me then", she added.

"Why not?" Manoj pretended to be angry. "You already deserve something more. Your head is on my lap and the maidservant over there is looking furtively at us. Still you don't care to take notice of it and sit up. How indecorous of you".

Kamala held herself closer to her husband. "Let her take it", she said with a smile, "as a specimen of Calcutta's civilised style of living".

"What a fine example you are setting to her" commented Manoj. "Very well, when she has seen it already, let her see a little more of it". He bent to touch her forehead with his lips.

Good heavens! Manoj was reflecting. He was going to lose his darling Kamala for ever. But love triumphed over death after a strenuous fight lasting over forty days. Although Kamala has been reduced to skin and bone, he would restore her to glowing health. He would take her back to Calcutta as a rich treasure won after a hard-fought victory.

Through tendermost care bestowed on her and her simple whims satisfied, Kamala had begun to behave like a child. Having eluded the jaws of death, she appeared to have earned her husband's infinite gratitude. Was it after all, small happiness for her to have been able to come away to this distant place with only her husband and her child, Khokan, freed from various restrictions usually imposed on living in a joint family in an overcrowded house? What would Kamala do with so much happiness if she could not give expression to it, behaving like a restless child? Shouldn't the house, she so much liked, appear unique to her?

The house that she made so much of, had just two rooms. In front and at the back were verandahs, roofed low with tiles. In the open cemented courtyard at the back, there was a well with no walls around to screen it from public view. The absence of privacy in the courtyard, was no handicap for there was no house close by for prying eyes to intrude upon her free and unsophisticated mode of living.

From the house stretched a wide open space at the end of which there was a cluster of huts occupied by Santhals who were, so to say, their only neighbours. It is from this quarter that Manoj secured a woman to work as a maid-servant.

Khokan had waken and Manoj got busy preparing milk for him by stirring up the imported milk powder in hot water—the baby having no claim on her mother's milk before and much less now.

"How do you like your job?"—asked Kamala. "You should not grumble now, for you have accepted it voluntarily. Feed him yourself and I shall enjoy the fun, watching you". But she did not wait to watch the child being fed by his father. In an instant she went close to the well and told the maidservant "I want to see how you draw water from it".

Manoj heard this but could not, at first, decide whether to laugh or show his temper. Finally he called out to her from the room with a touch of annoyance in his voice, "Why all this Kamala? Will she not think you are too childish?"

"Let her think whatever she likes. It seems you are much interested in what she thinks about this and that".

"What's your name", she asked the maidservant. "Jhumri, you said. What a funny name!"

Khokan too was getting naughty. He had not yet learnt to walk but when he toddled with his tiny legs, Kamala's heart leapt with joy. She repeatedly forgot to obey the strict order that she must not carry the boy in her arms in the present state of her weak health. Whenever she was seen doing it, Manoj would rush towards her, snatch Khokan away from her arms and say complainingly, "It's too bad, Kamala. How am I to make you obey my instructions? You are getting naughtier than Khokan. What made you pick him up and carry him?"

"Would it be better if he fell from the verandah?"

"Yes, rather" said Manoj as if to correct her. "What wonderful brains you have! Couldn't you just stop him and call me to pick him up".

"Why do you say so", whispered Kamala. "Do you think I would never be well? See how I have improved. My old blouses have become undersized. Take a good look at me and say if I am not telling the truth".

Manoj looked at Kamala with admiration. Her hair cut to short length during her illness, had grown and a few of them dangled on her full-blown cheeks in ringlets. This Kamala, he imagined, was entirely a new person as if, not God's but his own creation.

Khokan, however, did not appreciate his father's admiring gaze fixed on his mother. He began drawing his father's face sideways with his two small hands. "Pappa, pappa", Khokan babbled on. Manoj hugged him tightly to his breast. "Yes, pappa", he said, "But my nose is not an edible thing. Why don't you go in for your mother's nose. It's more pointed, more sweet, my boy".

"As if you have had a taste of it" remarked Kamala blushingly. "You have started giving him bad training. Already he has grown more fond of yo[illegible]han me".

"[illegible]om do you love more, Kamala — me or [illegible]"

"Well, I love our milkman most. With his big moustache when he comes early in the morning and shouts "Milk, Bahuji.....

"Good heavens, my rival then, is a milkman with a big moustache. What a tragedy".

In the evening Manoj and Kamala would sit close to each other on a bench in the courtyard, flooded, at times, with moonlight. Khokan, at this time, would sleep in the room. Kamala would talk about things that had little sense. Sometimes she would ask "What do you think my Khokan is going to be when he grows up—a doctor, a barrister or an I.C.S. officer?" She however, wished him to be a national leader. She would imagine him standing on a spacious platform and looking modest with garlands round his neck in token of respectful admiration for him. Slowly he would cast aside his shy modesty, his speech would generate emotional heat and influence the big audience. In that spectacular setting Kamala would see her Khokan's face shining like a bright star amongst thousands of faces around

Well, I love our milkman most with his big moustache when he comes early in the morning and shouts, Milk Bahuji"

him. His resonant voice would give her a shiver and bring tears to her eyes. Some people might think her to be too sentimental not knowing who she was. They would never know that, this great personality of to-day, for days on sat on her lap and called the moon to come to him. To-day also when he goes into the room, he would probably sit up and perched on her lap would say "Mummy I am so thirsty. My throat has gone dry from too much talking".

Manoj was listening to this tommy-rot from Kamala so long. He broke into a loud laughter and appealed to her "No more of it, please. I do not want my boy to be given away to the people. He belongs to us and should stay as such".

"Then what do you want him to be?"

"I want him to be a businessman with a pot-belly, owner of a jute or linseed godown. He should have a big house and several thousands of rupees in banks" replied Manoj.

"What nonsense are you talking"! Kamala turned her face away.

"Is it bad to have money in banks?" asked Manoj. "If I have lot of money in banks, will you be sorry? Will you not like our having a house at some healthy resort and going out to stay there for a change of climate and relaxation at least twice a year? Say, is the prospect of owning a linseed godown still unacceptable?

"It's all bunkum" commented Kamala. "Couldn't one have money if one wanted to be a national leader?"

"Yes", replied her husband. "That is possible only if one is able to bluff the people. In my opinion the linseed godown is definitely a better proposition. We have also to think of our daughter-in-law. It is not enough that the boy grows up so that only our personal interests are served. On the other hand, it is mainly for that future claimant—"

Kamala hardly appreciated her husband's point of view. Khokan completely belonged to her. There must be no other person to share him. She could not think of it. The very idea was unbearable. She put a stop to further talk on the subject.

* * * * *

On that day Manoj had gone out early in the morning. It was already about 11 O'clock and he did not return. Kamala felt annoyed. Now-a-days she herself did the cooking at day time and the Ic-mic-cooker had been granted leave. She had to keep watch over the cooked food. Moreover Khokan gave her a trying time, crying nonstop throughout the morning. He didn't even give a bite to his favourite biscuit which was lying on the floor.

When Manoj was back after some time his face long exposed to the sun looked red for extreme fatigue. Kamala without noticing it burst out saying "what a fine man you are: You went out in the early morning and return at midday. I don't like it all. Moreover, Khokan has given me such a horrible time, crying all the while'.

Taking off his moist shirt and spreading it to dry up, he took Khokan in his lap saying "What a competent mother you have got, Khokan, who does not know how to humour her child. Well, Khokan, let us do something to tease your mother. No, no, not that again. You have learnt to eat so many things. No more biting my nose, you little savage!"

"Stop petting the child", said Kamala. "Take this towel and go and have a bath first. By the way, what made you return so late.

"I just met a person who happens to be the local doctor. His residence is not very far from here. A fine gentleman and for a Behari speaks Bengali well. I have invited him to come to our place and be introduced to you".

Shall I be able to talk freely with a Bihari gentleman?"

"It is better to establish friendship with a doctor when we are away from home. Who knows that we may not need his services some day.

"Oh no, no, we should not think of such a thing. it's already about a month and a half we are here. How long more have we to stay, not more than a fortnight, I suppose. Then, why bother about getting friendly with a doctor?"

Manoj felt a bit depressed for he had already earnestly invited the doctor to call at their place.

"Why should you fear having just a few words with the doctor and treating him to a cup of tea?"

"I did not mean it that way" explained Kamala. "He will monopolise your attention from me for

I feel rather scared — let us go inside the room

sometime at least. Why build up this barrier of separation between us unnecessarily? Haven't we just a few days more to live here like this, so close to each other? Back to Calcutta, where will be such nappy days! That same old way of living among the people with whom we have to live".

"This is too bad, Kamala, you should not say such things. Happiness is something of our inner nature. Who on earth can put a barrier between us? But look, Khokan is sleeping. He seems to have a touch of fever".

Manoj finished his bath quickly and sat down for his meal but could not relish it. He felt a bit uneasy both in body and mind. Since they came here, Khokan's health has much improved and he has gained good weight. Why is this fever now?

Manoj had the soft heart of a woman. He could not dismiss the thought from his mind that on the very day he picked up acquaintance with the doctor, Khokan should have fever. He shuddered at the idea of the illness taking a serious turn. Wouldn't he be able to take his Khokan back to Calcutta? "Oh God" he prayed within himself "don't please snatch away the little happiness from this budding life!"

Kamala brought a bowl of hot milk for Manoj and noticing that he had eaten very little, suggested "You must have lost all appetite having been out in the sun for long. Better drink the milk".

"I don't feel like drinking it. Is there fire in the oven?"

"Why" enquired Kamala.

"I want a little hot water with a pinch of salt in it to gurgle with. I feel pain in my throat", replied Manoj.

As on other days, to-day also, in the evening, the husband and wife sat on the bench in the courtyard but both were in subdued mood. Khokan lay quiet in the room, due to fever. Why he seems so weak when the fever is slight, why he's crying so feebly? A restless boy of his type, to keep so quiet even for a while, is rather unusual. Manoj's mind was full of gloomy forebodings which he could hardly get rid of. Isn't he asking for too much—expecting the boy would grow up without ever being indisposed. Why should he unnecessarily feel so worried, he argued with himself.

But still the worry returned. Its dark shadow growing in size enveloped him and gradually spread over to all that he saw before him. He imagined having seen something crouching at the dark corner close to the well whose ice-cold breath, mingled with the breeze of the approaching winter, gave him a shudder.

Manoj thought this uneasy feeling might be due to the unpleasant prospect of their departure from this place they liked so much. The date for winding up the household and packing up things was almost in sight. Yes, they would have to go leaving behind the rooms, the verandah and the courtyard as silent witnesses to their many moments of great happiness.

The courtyard under the canopy of light from the full moon in the mysterious sky, would lie still, looking upward without the whispers of intimacy exchanged between them, without a loud laughter from Kamala at times.

The bench on which they sat and with which was associated the memory of their happy times, would have to be brought into the room on the day they were to depart. Dust would gradually settle on the verandah just as they had found it, when they arrived one and a half months ago.

Suddenly Kamala took hold of her husband's hand and said. "I feel rather scared. Let us go inside the room".

Manoj, too, felt likewise, but did not mention it. Softly he replied, What is there to be scared about, my darling?"

"I can't tell you why. But Khokan is alone in the room".

Against Manoj's instructions she had come out to the courtyard to sit by her husband's side. She however knew how to keep the child under divine protection when left alone. She had placed an iron key under the pillow to ward off the influence of evil spirits. She learnt the secret from her grandmother but still she shook involuntarily.

Rising from the seat Manoj said, "Let's go in, Kamala. I should no more expose myself to cold for the pain in my throat seems to be increasing. I too may have fever".

"Very good indeed! Now both of you scare me as much as you can", remarked Kamala nervously.

"There is no reason to be nervous. Is there anybody on earth who never gets unwell? Don't worry for me. This sturdy physique is able to withstand a lot of sickness. Let us see if Khokan's temperature comes down to normal to-morrow. Otherwise I get the doctor to examine him".

Next morning Manoj was hardly able to go out for the doctor Both father and son had high fever. Poor Kamala, what could she do? She did not know the doctor's address. Even if she had known it, how could she have gone to bring him leaving two patients in such condition. Those relatives in Calcutta for whom she had little consideration, now appeared to her to be the people to whom she could turn for help, at this juncture.

The Santhal girl, her maidservant's daughter was however there. The mother had left her behind so that she could be of help to Kamala when necessary. Prviously the girl had come twice or thrice with her mother with a flower tucked in her hair-do, her both hands adorned with thin shiny glass bangles. Clad in a coloured sari and a blouse of printed cloth, she flaunted her exuberant youth,

much to Kamala's chagrin. What is worse, the girl could speak Bengali. She had confided to Kamala, by hints and suggestions, that she had an affair with a Bengali youth who stayed in this very house before they came. It was from him that she learnt to speak Bengali.

But to-day when the girl's mother proposed that she would send her daughter to stay on for the night, Kamala could not say 'no' to it. She thought even this frivolous girl at this moment was dependable.

Since the morning Manoj had been thinking of sending somebody for the doctor but who was to go! He tried to sit up but failed. He was feeling weaker gradually and feared it might be a case of diphtheria both for him and the child. He did not care much for himself. But how would Khokan fight it without any treatment? Doctor, medicine, injection, serum—so many things crowded within his weak head, at the same time, he felt as if somebody clutched his throat to stiple him. But he fought back to keep himself from losing consciousness and kept on thinking who would bring the doctor, who would save the life of his dear Khokan, who would look after Kamala when he would be no more. Why did he take this house at a lonely spot to be away from the noise of neighbouring houses? Oh God, what would happen to his Kamala, to his Khokan!

Luckily towards the evening, the doctor himself called in response to Manoj's invitation. Tall and big, with a smile on his face, the doctor got down from his bicycle, removed the khadi cap from his head, hung it on the handle of the cycle and started ringing the bell to announce his presence. The Santhal girl came out of the house and informed Kamala about the doctor's arrival.

Entering the room the newcomer was surprised at what he saw and was speechless. Soon, however, the physician in him woke up and took action. He examined the father and the son thoroughly. Both were cases of diphtheria. But how would he procure that potent medicine—the serum, from this obscure place when it is difficult to get it even in big cities —having gone underground as the result of war-time black marketing.

What an awful situation is this, thought the doctor. But could he allow two lives to be lost without making some efforts to save them. Perhaps there is not much hope left but still he would try—

"Wouldn't you be able to remain alone for some time" he asked Kamala.

"You mean to go away just now" enquired Kamala with a shudder. Looking at the doctor's grave face she instantly realised the seriousness of the illness of her husband and child but still his presence gave her a kind of strength. Some means, she thought, would be found out, to overcome the crisis. Wouldn't Manoj, after sometime, ask her fondly "Why didn't you give the doctor a cup of tea" and her Khokan moving his wax-like limbs smile showing his small teeth and calling out "Mummy".

But why this? Why did they turn bluish gradually? Was it due to the shade cast by the evening or the delusion of her awe-struck mind? Whatever confidence she gained from the sudden appearance of the doctor like the advent of an angel from heaven, she felt she was losing it now. In a state of despair she entreated the doctor not go away.

"Haven't I to search for the serum, though I am not very hopeful I would be able to get it" replied the doctor.

"Doctor Babu are they both—". The doctor, by suggestion, stopped Kamala crying out. "You should not do that" he said. "This is not the time for you to be upset. You have to maintain strength of mind. Please tell me if any telegram has to be sent".

She muttered—"Yes, a telegram should be sent". Why didn't she think about it so long? What about Manoj's parents, his brothers and sisters? Hasn't she in a sense snatched him away from them? What explanation will she give?

"You do please send a telegram. Here is the address and the money. Many thanks—"

"The time for giving thanks is not yet. Keep careful watch on both". The doctor went out on his cycle.

The evening gradually advanced into a fearful night. There was no sound except the intermittent low groan from the child and the obstructed heavy breathing of Manoj. The Santhal girl was attending with a fan. But where is the doctor? When will he return with the life-saving medicine?

Back at about nine the doctor said "Only one may be saved". Although he spoke in Bengali, the Bihari accent in his voice was unmistakable. What did the doctor actually say? "Haven t you got the medicine" asked Kamala. Her voice sounded like a scream.

"Yes I have got it, but just sufficient for one patient only".

The doctor got ready to give the injection. The time he took to do it was a little more than necessary, as if to give Kamala some time to think.

"I have done all I could to get it" observed the doctor.

"Then what do you propose to do" asked Kamala in a dazed manner.

"I will make a last minute attempt to save one. Tell me whom shall I give the injection?"

I will make a last minute attempt to save one. Tell me whom shall I give the injection. .....

What a question to ask! Is Kamala expected to answer it?

"Listen" said the doctor impatiently. "The condition of the patients is getting worse every moment. I must hurry up. Let me give it to Mr. Chowdhury",

"What about Khokan"?

"I don't have it for two. I am awfully sorry, you will have to give up hope for one".

Is Kamala an inanimate object? Why can't she say something? Doesn't she have strength to move her fingers even.

The doctor approached Manoj with the syringe in his hand. The Santhal girl got ready to assist. Khokan was on Kamala's lap. Her groaning had just stopped. He was trying desperately to breathe. Kamala with all her mother's affection would not be able to prevent the calamity. Khokan—the pet name that she gave to her child, will be effaced for ever. From the world will disappear a lovely little flower.

"Doctor Babu", screamed out Kamala. She placed Khokan down on the ground and like a mad woman rushed towards him and caught hold of his hand that held the syringe.

Manoj had not lost consciousness fully. He kept mum because he was unable to speak.

"Are you mad Mrs. Chowdhury? Leave my hand and let me do my duty".

"What will happen to my Khokan? Is it not your duty also to save the helpless child?"

"Don't you see" the doctor appealed to her, "I am helpless myself".

"Kill me doctor babu, take pity on me" implored Kamala.

The doctor put the syringe down, released his hand from Kamala's grip and despairingly seated himself on a chair.

Oh God! What am I to do? Has any doctor ever been in a situation like this. Why did I come to-day, he thought.

"Is it the child you want saved, then?" he asked Kamala with all seriousness.

At this, the santhal girl got excited and spoke something in the local dialect. She understood the situation as the conversation between the doctor and Kamala was going on in Bengali.

The doctor sat erect and told Kamala "Do you understand what she says? If you lose the child, she says, you have hope of getting another but if you lose your husband—oh I can't wait any longer. You better go to the other room, leaving your fate in the hand of God."

"Do please save my Khokan's life" entreated Kamala again.

"No" replied the doctor sternly. I am not prepared to listen to your mad ravings. In a case like this, there is no other alternative but to assess the comparative value of two lives. I attach more value to Mr. Chowdhury's life".

He went over to Manoj with the syringe again. Summoning all strength Manoj pushed the doctor's hand away mutely suggesting that Khokan should live to enjoy the air and light of the world of its days unborn.

The doctor then came over and crouched close to the child. "All right as you please" he said. "Already it is late. I am not sure if the medicine will work. He turned towards Kamala and asked, "Tell me finally, whom do you want—your husband or the child?"

Did any woman ever before this have to answer such a simple but awful question? Whom does Kamala want—husband or child? Who is dearer to her?

"Just think of your future and the helplessness you are likely to face if you lose your husband. Will this little child be able to give you the protection you will need then. He too may die. What strength has he to fight this dreadful disease".

Alas, isn't it just because her Khokan is so frail that Kamala's heart sought desperately to save him. Should consideration of self-interest always outweigh all other considerations!

"You give the injection to the child" said Kamala in a tone indicating that she had made up her mind.

"All right. But this means I have to act against my conscience" remarked the doctor regretfully.

He gave injection to the child rather hurriedly for, in his eyes, he was just a lump of flesh and hardly anything more. The Santhal girl with fire of hate in her eyes looked on.

The doctor stayed on for he would have to give another injection after a few hours in his fight to ward off death. But who would accept defeat? The sound of death's footsteps seemed to wander from room to outside, from verandah to courtyard. A shudder ran through all the three persons who kept watch over the two patients. Shadows upon the walls of the house grew in size as the night advanced. Was the messenger of Death waiting for the appropriate time to collect the lives in the grip of the fell disease for taking them to his Master as offering to his insatiable hunger? This night of all nights, appeared to have come journeying through the ages, to settle upon the earth like a big mountain. Wouldn't this night ever come to an end? Has Kamala actually gone out of her mind? Otherwise why, when the doctor was getting ready to give the second injection to the child, did she catch hold of his hand and cried out frantically, "Doctor Babu, do please excuse me. You attend to my husband and save him. I touch your feet and beseach you to save him. I do not want the child to be saved. Leave him to God's mercy".

"I am not here to listen to your whimsical talks." Calling the santhal girl he ordered "Take her away from here".

Kamala obeyed the doctor's order and moved away. Strange, how very strange, thought Kamala. Why didn't she feel the least affection for her Khokan now! For that almost inert lump of flesh looking like a faded flower, what was she going to lose —after all, what was Kamala without Manoj? Without him where would she find her entity? How would she face the society, the whole world, after losing him? What could she tell Monoj's parents? Khokan belonged to her only but Manoj belonged to so many. What right had she to destroy what belonged to others also? What would Kamala do? Why doesn't she go mad, why doesn't she die of heart attack this very moment?

The following morning the doctor gave the last doze of the life-saving medicine to the child. He stood up and said, "Keep good watch on his breathing. I think your child will be saved. Now for your husband, I will try other means, even some surgical operation may be necessary. But, I am afraid, it is rather too late".

To get the surgical instruments for the operation and somebody to assist him, the doctor rode fast on his cycle. It was no use his going earlier for his compounder Sukhan lived seven miles away from the dispensary although he managed to open the dispensary at seven in the morning every day.

Khokan's breathing gradually became easy. The toxic condition was clearing up. The body showed signs of returning life. The swollen eye-lids opened

(Continued on page 127)

good deal of research work in both London and America. So she had not the least trouble in coming by a suitable job in India. It was her high achievements that placed her on a high pedestal. She came of a family which eked out an existence. Her father, though a petty clerk, begot as many as ten children. Had she not all along been the recipient of scholarships, she could not have gone to a university. A government scholarship enabled her to go abroad for higher studies. She appeared in all her glory which she earned herself. She took upon herself the entire responsibility to keep her father's family going.

She looked into office-files and disposed of them. Hastily did she finish the work. She looked at the clock and it was half-past ten. It was awfully strange that Chandra Babu had not yet come to office !

Chandra Kanta was ashamed as he entered her chamber. Ah, it was past half-past ten.

"Will you look at the clock and tell me what time is it, by it ?"

Chandra Kanta was taken aback. "I regret the delay in my coming to office to-day too". He could only mutter, "Well madam, I had to call in a doctor for my ailing wife—"

She interrupted with a sharp retort, "Have done with your cock and bull story, please. I know very well that you are not yet married. Your father is on the hunt for a suitable girl and he is sorting girls out. He has been looking for a fair princess with a royal fortune, to have as the wife of his son—the son who is nothing more than a petty clerk. Take it from me—I know all about you. Chandra Kanta was ashamed and was struck dumb. He lowered his eyes. His face became as ugly as a wet loaf of bread.

Anger got the better of her and she burst out "who has brought this paper-weight here?"—

"It's mine", he stammered, "and I've put it here for your kind use. The one that was on your table was too ugly.."

—"Take it and be off", was her quick retort, "my one will serve my purpose quite well. What do you hold in your hand?"

Chandra Kanta did not speak for a few moments. Then he said in an inarticulate voice, "Kaju nuts—"

—"Kaju nuts! By Jove, do you mean to chew them here in the office !"

"No madam", he murmured, "these are for you. I have heard that you are very fond of these nuts".

Sunanda was so angry that she could not utter a word for some time. Her nostrils quivered and sparks rushed out of her eyes.

"What a trouble are you getting me into" "Clear out here and now. I'm going to suspend you forthwith. Well, what on earth prevents you from leaving the room?"

Chandra Kanta Ghosh suddenly burst into tears. He went forward and with a dramatic gesture caught hold of Sunanda's feet. "I'm helpless, utterly helpless", said he, "please forgive me, do forgive me. For heaven's sake give me one more chance!"

God knew whether Sunanda had forgiven him or not, because last night bugs did not give her a wink of sleep. One could catch a glimpse of the hard life she had to live. The nauseating bed, the dirty walls, the skeletons of her naked and half-naked brothers and sisters who were lying asleep, were writ large on her brow. The foul smell of the surface drain was oppressive. It was evident from her looks.

She heard her mother shout, "Suni, get up from your bed at once. Light the oven. Don't you remember that to-day is Monday? Won't you prepare meals for your father before he starts for his office?"

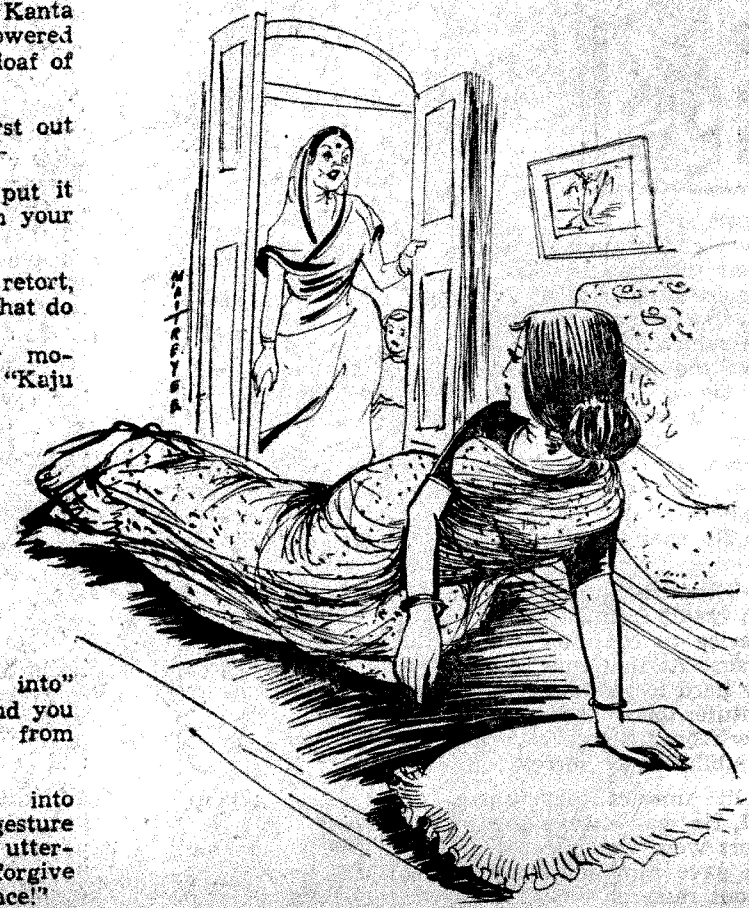
Sunanda remembered that a few days ago Chandra Kanta Ghosh with a party had come to see her. She also remembered how much her poor father had flattered them. They had tea with him and for this he had to spend ten rupees. But dear, dear, she was not upto the choice of Chandra-Kanta.

Sunanda heard her father say to her mother, "Oh dear, get Suni well-dressed in the after-noon. My colleague Ramtaran Mitra will come to see her this evening".

Sunanda was a meritorious student. She was always on the top of the list of successful candidates. As her father was on the pecuniary rocks she could not go in for higher studies. Sunanda left her bed. She flung open the back-door of their house and disappeared, no one knew where, never to return again.

Your attention might have been arrested by her portrait published in the 'missing column' of the newspaper.

(Rendered into English by Mrinal Kanti Das)



"Suni, get up from your bed at once"

THAT ATOM OF SAND

By "ATCHYUT"

NOBODY had ever seen Prof. Ganguly lose his temper. His class was most disciplined and the students heard him with rapt attention. Simply from looking at his face even the most mischievous forgot all mischief.

One atom of sand got lodged at the top of a peak in the Himalayas. The power of an atom of sand is so great that in spite of all the scientific advances nobody has yet been able to utilise its entire energy. Each atom is a universe in itself. Round the heavy kernel or nucleus which is formed of neutrons and protons revolve the light electrons like planets going round the sun.

Professor Ganguly was a student in the Science College when an atom was fused and blasted over Hiroshima. Student Ganguly read about it in the newspapers next morning. But whether it had any effect on his mind or his thinking nobody could tell. No change was noticeable in his facial expression.

Then the war ended. Student Ganguly passed with credit from his college. He wanted to go to America to continue further studies in Nuclear Physics. At that time it was difficult. He had to try very hard to get himself admitted to the appropriate Institute there and succeeded. But nobody could know from his face whether his success was a cause for jubilation or sorrow.

In America the student Ganguly worked very hard. He was always ahead of his class. His professors were well pleased with him so much so that they gave him additional responsibilities of carrying out research on certain problems. Ganguly performed this task with great credit for four years and returned to Calcutta with a halo. He had also grown a French beard which lent him dignity.

Immediately on return he was employed by his own Science College as a professor in the most senior grade. He also comfortably quartered in the upper flat of a two-storeyed house nereby.

His landlord was one Mr. Bhattacharjee, General Manager of a factory, who lived on the ground-floor. It was a modern household. Bhattacharjee's wife was dead, leaving two children. The elder was a girl of twenty and the younger a boy, only six years old.

Sunita was very fair and copper tanned. Quite a few young men wanted to marry her. Many a time her path crossed with Prof. Ganguly's in the passage of her house. He meandered along the extreme end with his hands in his pockets, watching his feet. She smiled brightly and her accent must have entranced him.

Prof. Ganguly was busy going through the latest publications on his subject. The young son of Bhattacharjee affectionately called Mintu, became curious and entered his flat. Mintu found some of the illustrated magazines and papers very attractive and looked at them with greedy eyes. He tore out a few good pictures. While he was there Prof. Ganguly neither looked at him nor said a word to him. It was difficult to ascertain from his face whether he felt irritated by the presence of the boy and tearing of the pictures by him. Next day, however, Mr. Bhattacharjee got a long letter from Prof. Ganguly complaining about the behaviour of his young son.

The atom of sand was still at the top of the mountain. There was a storm and a fierce wind swept the peak but it could not dislodge the atom. That year winter started early and it became bitterly cold. It rarely snows in Darjeeling but that year it did, even as early as the middle of December. This brought a cold wave to Calcutta.

Snow piled upon the Himalayas. The atom of sand lodged under the sheet of snow which had

now become ice. At the foot of the hill is Bengal and on the south of Bengal, there is the Bay which goes further down to join the Indian Ocean and on the other side the Pacific Ocean. The oceans are quite deep. Pacific Ocean has not yet been even fully chartered. To balance it perhaps on the mass of land there is the Himalayas with billions and billions tons of weight plus one atom of sand.

The Professor followed a fixed routine. He started the morning with a cup of tea and the newspapers, after which he passed on to the latest literature and was off to the College with a light brunch. In the afternoon he had a cup of tea and left the college for the municipal park where he walked for at least one hour. Ganguly returned to his flat early on Saturday. Mr. Bhattacharjee was held up somewhere and Sunita was alone. Up she walked and found Ganguly with a tea kettle and a cup. He kept on pouring.

"My, you certainly are over-formal; won't you offer me a chair?"

He winced. "It is nearly evening. I have to,. . . . . ."

"I know, for your daily constitutional. I am alone and hungry. I could make us something."

"You don't know where things are," he said. "I will bring it for you and then you are going down."

"Yes, sir," she said.

He went out to the kitchen bringing back a piece of cake and another cup for tea. He poured tea into it and his head banged against her while handing it over.

"You are grumpy. I thought professors were used to company," she said.

"Sorry, I'm on my way." He went out of the door without a flicker on his face. Even if something happened inside nobody saw it.

He shunned social parties. The only change in his routine was the two cinema shows where he went regularly on odd days of the week.

Spring came and Professor Ganguly had been

Won't you offer me a chair ?

to the Eros Cinema that day. It was the usual love story where a villain created difficulties for the hero. Ultimately after much tribulations however the hero was united with the beautiful damsel. When he came out of the house the professor found conditions ripe for a norwesterner. Such squalls were usual at that time of the year. Suddenly he was aware of Sunita being by his side.

"Nice story," she said.

He replied with a simple guttural sound "Hun", and the storm came to his rescue.

But now he found that Sunita had no umbrella. "You take mine. I don't mind," he suggested.

"It would serve us both". She moved under it. The strong hiss of rain gave her excuse to venture still near to him. Lifting her sari with one hand to give freedom to her little flashing legs, she laughed aloud and let herself lean almost on him. A few peculiar sounds escaped from him with his lips against Sunita's hair, hardly conscious that he had spoken at all.

"We'll be soaked, now it is pelting down in earnest," she said.

"Run" was the only word he uttered. They raced the quarter mile distance to the bungalow and inside. The porch light outlined her figure there in the tangle of her drenched clothes. Tiny drops of rain still clung to her arms and face shined under the light and it reflected a great charm and beauty.

The professor pretended to be busy wiping his face with a handkerchief and with a nod for goodnight he walked upstairs. If there was a change in his heart-beat nobody could measure it.

The summer Sun started a thaw and the water flowed down the hills. The atom of sand could not stay any longer there. It got mixed up on the water and flowed down the fall, joined the river and was carried to the Bay of Bengal. The waves in the bay reached it to the Indian Ocean and the equilibrium was disturbed. There was a very rumbling sound under the earth. Everybody heard it and suddenly it turned into an earthquake.

For the first time they saw from the face of Prof. Ganguly that he was disturbed. Mr. Bhattacharjee rushed out with his daughter Sunita and Mintu. The professor also came out of the house on the small lawn in the front. Mintu was shaking with fear. He scrambled into the lap of the professor and started crying. Everybody saw the face of Professor Ganguly undergoing a distinct change. He embraced the boy and stroked his back. It was some time before the boy stopped crying.

After this Professor Ganguly became very fond of Mintu. Now he sometimes lost his temper while teaching in his class. His face also changed with different moods. They also saw him laughing and sometimes he laughed with such great gusto that rarely somebody was seen so happy Outside the college his constant companion now was Sunita and they never left each other. They were now the life of social parties and everybody known to them competed with each other to invite them. Nobody knew what happened and how Ganguly got suddenly married to Sunita, but the neighbours relate the story of the morning after the quake. The professor came down in a hurry. He had shaved off his beard and his face was shining.

"I was afraid you wouldn't come," Sunita said from the lawn where she was sitting.

"I was just on my way—I was going to ask you—well, what I am trying to say is, I am a teacher and it's hard work." Nothing more was heard but they saw the pair entering the house and going back upstairs.

TICKETLESS TRAVEL

By RAJ BHALLA

AS the train moved out of Gare du Nord at Paris, on its way to Calais, I took my seat in one corner of the Railway compartment and tried to look out of the glass window. Everything around was dark and dismal. A few lights shimmered here and there through the dense fog of an early morning in mid-winter. It gave me the feeling of crawling under the sea and added to my already depressed state of mind. I wanted to get away from under all those scrutinizing alien eyes. I was travelling all alone back to London — according to the Railway authorities without a ticket. I couldn't convince anyone that I had bought a return ticket before leaving London. Nobody belived my story — and in their eyes I stood condemned! The train-conductor, I imagined, took special pleasure in giving me a sarcastic look which clearly said — "Don't try it again, dear lady, we know the likes of you only too well!" I tried not to notice him and pressed my face still closer to the glass window to swallow my tears and the mortification I suffered.

The train was speeding through a bleak winter landscape. A little later, the first rays of the rising sun shone through the mist making it look like pieces of shattered glass. I hardly noticed the beautiful patterns it made all along the countryside. Instead, I tried to put some order into my confused and troubled mind.

My thoughts took me back to the day I walked out of the office of Cox and Kings in London holding on to two return rail-tickets to Paris and back. One of the tickets was for Miss B....., a friend, who was going with me and I handed it over to her the same evening. A fortnight later both of us stepped into the Continental Sea-route Express on our way to Dover and across the Channel over to France.

I also remembered how eagar and excited we were about our journey in spite of foreign exchange shortage. New restrictions had just come in from India. Still we were determined to make the most of what we had. We worked out a very simple economy, formula. If we wanted to see a theatre we would miss a lunch. If there was anything in the shop-windows that we fancied — and we fancied a lot! — we quickly calculated how many meals we would have to miss before we could buy that. Usually our resolution would break down the next day and my friend would argue it wasn't worthwhile sacrificing French cuisine for a pair of shoes or a hand-bag! And that would be the end of our shopping expedition!

At the back of my mind I had the comforting thought that as soon as I ran out of my French currency, I could return home. In my bag was my return ticket which gave me a sense of security. Miss B.....had already announced on our way to France that she would leave Paris earlier than planned and would then fly to Zurich on an invitation from a friend.

On my last evening in Paris, Rue de Rivoli saw the end of my foreign exchange. I spent all I had reserving a little for my taxi-fare to the station the next morning and a few incidentals on the French train.

Bidding a very fond farewell to all the familiar sights and sounds of Paris, I arrived at the station

an hour before the departure of the train. As I took out my tickets, still in its original folder from Cox and Kings and tried to cross over, the Collector at the barrier put out his hand and stopped me — *"One minute, madame"* he said "This is only from London to Paris. You need another ticket to go back."

I laughed, trying to conceal the contempt in my voice at the inefficiency of the man who did not know his job. I tried to argue but he gesticulated most violently in the typical French manner and insisted he had no authority to let me travel on that. The train-conductor who was nearby also joined in and supported his colleague. I was still not perturbed. I knew there was a mistake somewhere, which would soon be discovered. I then appealed to the Station Master whose superior knowledge, I thought, would sort out the matter for me. After a thorough examination of the ticket even he declared that it was a single journey *"billet"* and if I wanted to travel I must buy another ticket. He added dryly — "I thought only students did things like this."

I felt hot tears stinging my eyes. I knew at once that the travel agents in London had made the mistake and that I would take up with them as soon as I returned.

"I assure you, *monsieur*, it is not my fault," I stammered.

"It is not mine either", he answered, every syllable brittle and hard and meant to hurt.

How was I to buy a ticket? My purse was nearly empty.

Fortunately, I had with me a small amount of Sterling which one was permitted to carry. I had

I assure you monsieur, it is not my fault . . . .

reserved this for my meals on the way and for buying some duty-free cigarettes on the boat as a gift for my husband.

I emptied my bag of all the currency I had. While they calculated, I waited breathlessly to see if that would be enough. Ultimately, they handed me a ticket and 150 Francs as change. This was not even enough to buy me a sandwich on my long journey back to London!

The journey seemed endless that day as I sat all by myself in the railway compartment. The coffee-vendor was wheeling his trolley through the corridor pouring steaming hot coffee into large paper glasses. *"Voulez-vous, madame?"* he asked me. I shook my head to say "No", whereas the whole of me was aching to say "Yes". I wasn't sure if the two coins in my pocket would buy me a cup.

The chocolate vendor came next and I looked longingly into his tray. I picked up a thin wafer of chocolate marked 100 F. I made it last as long as I could.

In the meantime, I constructed one speech after another for the benefit of Cox and Kings, but I couldn't put enough venom into any one of them!

I had never noticed so many happy people around me as I did that day. On the Channel boat passengers were merrily eating and drinking; in the train from Dover a French mother was feeding her two healthy-looking children with big mouthfuls of luscious-looking ham sandwiches. On that day I understood what it was to be hungry while there was so much food all around!

On the last lap of the journey from Dover, it was announced that the train was going to be three hours late in London. I took the news stoically. I was prepared to accept almost anything that day.

The train at last steamed into Victoria station. I found my husband waiting for me. All the way home he listened patiently to my tale of woe. He made no comment till we reached home and till he saw me go through an enormous meal with amazing rapidity. And then, to my consternation, even he said the French Railways were quite right in holding me back!

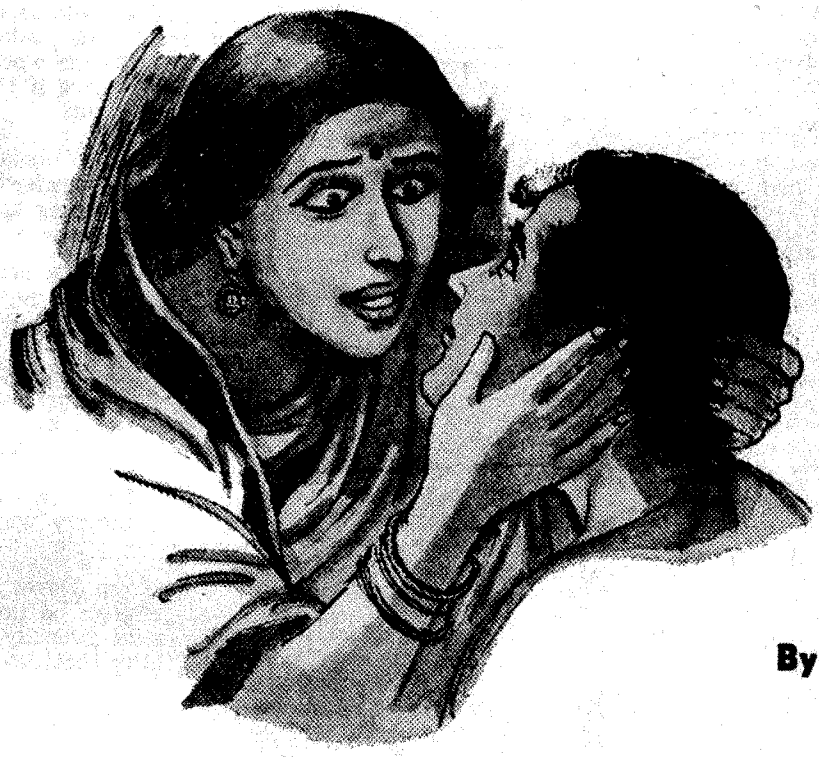
The next morning I went to Cox and Kings quite determined to give them a piece of my mind. The man at the counter pulled out a register and turned over the relevant page. "The number of your ticket, Ma'am," he said "indicates that it was issued in the name of Miss B.....". "But", I interrupted. "Miss B.....had already a return ticket which I bought for her a week earlier".

More turning of pages. His finger travelled down the columns till it stopped. "That ticket, Ma'am," he explained, "was returned to us and a single journey one was bought in its place. She also booked an air passage from Paris to Zurich".

I did not need any more explanation. My head swam and I felt I had suddenly seen the back-side of a picture which was still in the dark. The polished voice at the counter was saying "Is there anything else I can do for you, Ma'am?" I thanked him and turned away leaving him to wonder at the futility of my queries.

On returning home, I dashed off three letters—one at each port of call, to my friend, Miss B..... who was then sailing the high seas on her way back to India. I thanked her for the day of misery, of starvation and humiliation she had subjected me to.

A few weeks later I received a heavily stamped envelope containing my return-ticket and a few words of apology.



DEAD MOTHER REGAINED AND AFTER

By MUKULIKA BANERJEE

I WAS shocked by the sight, so painful beyond description! My head reeled; I could hardly believe my eyes. I covered my face with hands and wept bitterly. Prithvis, once a bright jewel of the village, a boy with rich promise in life, was now a tragic wreck! He was doing strange things and uttering strange words, cursing passersby , fondling a cur with sores all over its body, and eating from a dustbin where left-overs from the table of the guests had been deposited the previous night. I cried.....'Prithvis'. He looked at me and cursed me, then went away.

Prithvis was the best boy in our class,—nay, in the whole school. He used to secure not only the highest but also record marks in all the subjects in the examination. Nirapada Babu, the old Headmaster, used to boast that throughout his long career of forty years as a teacher, he had not come across a student of his calibre, who would certainly be either an I.C.S. officer or a famous professor ; the Headmaster's vision of Prithvis' future would be corroborated by the physical instructor of the school, —the 'drillmaster' as we used to call him, since Prithvis was a very good sportsman too. He could play almost every kind of outdoor game with remarkable agility and dexterity and in the annual school sports, used to bag quite a few trophies. In spite of this, he never bragged about his achievements and never stood aloof with a grave face and an air of superiority; he was an affable and sociable personality, laughing heartily and making friends quickly. Eternal joy lit his face and nobody could guess that he was an orphan. He was living in the house of his maternal uncle who was bringing him up. That house was adjacent to ours and Prithvis was a very intimate friend of mine. I was proud of him. But the hands of fate descended upon him in a strange way.

During one summer vacation when Prithvis came to the village from the Post-Graduate hostel we went together to my maternal uncle's house in the village called *Dipai* which it took us two hours to reach by bus. After staying there for three or four days, we were returning on a Saturday afternoon and, after occupying two comfortable seats in the bus, were waiting for the bus to start and exchanging pleasant experiences of our stay at *Dipai*. When it was just half past five and only five minutes were left for the bus to start, fate boarded it in the shape of a lady, probably in her early twenties followed by a bright young man possibly her husband. The lady was well dressed but elegantly, not extravagantly, wore ornaments, and bore the stamp of culture and education on her face. Her husband, a young man of 25 or 26, was equally graceful.

The moment she boarded the bus, her eyes landed on the face of Prithvis (we were sitting facing the entrance) and she startled. The small suitcase she was carrying fell from her hand. Prithvis picked it up and handed it over to her. By then she had taken the seat near the window. Her husband who sat beside her gave thanks. We were

rather amused, since we do not frequently hear a 'thank you', specially in a *moffussil* bus.

The lady, however, kept on staring at Prithvis. Feeling uneasy, he was casting surprised looks now at the lady, then at me, sometimes at her husband and also at the bus conductor (who now rang the bell signalling the driver to start), constantly trying to evade the lady's stare. As the bus gathered speed, the same thing went on for minutes together when suddenly the lady touched Prithvis' chin and turning his face to the left side said : "Yes, that mole on the right forehead is a sure sign. Is not your name Gora". Gora indeed was Prithvis' nick-name : he nodded, both embarrassed and amazed. Perhaps he was trying to recollect if he had ever seen her.

Then followed a scene, an unforgettable event in my life. The lady suddenly jumped to her feet, caught Prithvis by the shoulders and shouted excitedly: "I have got you! Atlast I have . . . . you must be my Gora and none else, my dear, dearest son. . . ." And then turning to her bewildered husband she said : "Did I not tell you only the other day how I am haunted by a rather unusual memory—something which comes into my memory for a few seconds and then vanished ? Now it is come in full force. . . . . I recollect everything. . . . . everything. . . . . everything."

Her husband with a dignified self-composure held her hand and made her sit down and then said "yes, you have said so. But please calm yourself and don't create a scene."

"How can I restrain myself . I have got back my son after 20 years, I did not see him for such a long time "

It was a surprise for all in the bus. Everybody was silent and curious to know more of it. The sound of the heavy tyres speeding on the metalled road was, for a time, the only sound heard.

Prithvis broke the silence : "How can you be my mother ? She died 21 years ago when I was only one-year-old. She was then twenty. By any reckoning she would be forty-one now. You seem to be half that age."

A mysterious smile played upon her face. turning to her husband she said, "See, a son questioning the age of his mother." And holding Prithvis' face by both her hands, she suddenly hugged him into her bosom. Both he and her husband felt embarrassed but I could clearly see that nothing but pure and supreme motherly affection radiated from her face. She appeared to me not a girl of twenty but a full-grown lady of forty, self-confident and proud as a mother—indifferent to and disdainful of her age ; as if suggesting that a mother has no age ! Mother is ageless !

Prithvis released himself from the lady's affectionate hands, set his long hair to position and looking straight at her husband, said "Sir, please don't mind, kindly put your wife under expert medical treatment."

The husband smiled and replied "Medical science has its own limit, I am myself a doctor."

"Not medical care, my son!" said the lady, "I am under God's care now. You were wondering at my age ! yes, I died twentyone years ago. Leaving you on the ghat to play, I went down into the water of the pond ; suddenly I slipped and went beyond my depth. I did not know how to swim and there was none nearby. I died. It was the full moon day of the month of Ashar, 1335 B.S."

Prithvis was stunned but rallied quickly. His mother had died by drowning and his father by his own hands. So strange were the circumstances in which he had become an orphan that it was well-known in the village. Anybody could have heard of it. Although unusual, it was not absurd for an unknown lady to reproduce a well-known fact. Prithvis was not easily to be beaten. "Do you want to say," he asked, "that my mother who died years ago has been reborn ?"

"That is as true as I am now living", replied, she.

"Then tell me how my father came to his end."

"Came to his end!" Exclaimed the lady. It was apparent that she felt somewhat shocked. She looked at the young doctor by her side. Oh yes, her husband was sitting there. She remained silent. Passengers nearby who were listening to the conversation almost breathlessly were keen to hear her reply. My curiosity knew no limit. But she disappointed us all and remained silent. By this time, the bus reached village Dooria and halted at the stop. Those passengers who were to alight at that stop were reluctant to do so without hearing the lady's reply. The lady, still speechless, was rubbing her eyes with a handkerchief. Disappointed passengers had at last to get down and some were seen waiting nearby till the bus moved again.

Then the lady said, "Well, Gora, are you a science student ?" "No Madam," replied Gora, jubilant that he had put the pretender to a tight corner and wearing a victorious smile, "I am an M.A. student in philosophy."

"I am proud of you," she said, "but you ought to know that I can narrate events of your life, as a matter of fact, of my previous life, till I died. Judged by any standard of science or philosophy. I cannot know any event of your life, after I was reborn."

An old man who was listening intently from a back bench exclaimed, "True, that's quite true". We all considered it a sensible answer, when the lady again said "A *Yatismwar* (one who can tell the events of the past life) is not omniscient my boy." A brilliant M.A. student that Prithvis was, blushed, perhaps at his own lack of common sense and nodded concurrence hurriedly.

"Then tell me something of your previous birth, for example, what my mother used to like and dislike ; first tell me what my father was and what your father, my Dadamoshai, was."

The lady who was now perfectly self-composed and began to talk in a perfectly normal way replied : "My father in the previous birth, your *Dadamoshai*, was a *tehshildar* and your father a clerk in the Revenue Department."

"It is exactly so," replied Prithvis, "please tell me where your father's house and your father-in-laws had been situated."

"My father-in-law's house was near Haringhata and my father's ancestral house was and may be, is, still at *Jiratia*, where we are now going. Do you live there ?"

Prithvis was visibly everwhelmed by emotion ; at one stage he could be clearly perceived to be breathing more frequently than usual, and his eyes were moist. I looked at her husband and enquired: "Why are you going to *Jiratia*, Sir ?"

"I am the newly appointed medical officer in the hospital there and have been there for the last few weeks. My wife is going there for the first time today." Then he volunteered : "Even since she heard the name *Jiratia*, she has been searching something of old recollections in her brain, but is

unable to express herself clearly.....only saying she has been seeing some disjointed fleeting scenes".

Turning to the doctor she said: "Now the scenes are joined together in a coherent whole and I can see everything. As soon as I saw him the dim memories assumed concrete shape. His features have changed beyond my recognition, yet his face acted as the reflector. I did not remember my previous birth because of his face, the urge to remembrance had already been felt by me, his sight only lifted the curtain. I can't say which is the cause and which is the effect." She asked Prithvis. "Are you staying at Jiratia now ?"

"Yes", at my maternal uncle's house." It is he who has brought me up after you .....my parents.....died".

"Which uncle ?" the lady asked without any visible emotion now, "your Boromama (elder maternal uncle) or Chotamama (younger maternal uncle) ?"

"The younger one left the village during the War and nobody knows where he is. It is Boromama who is staying in the ancestral house. "Do you remember.....do you know his name ?

"You still want to test me, my son ? "My Barda's (eldest brother) name is Manmatha, the younger one is Somnatha, my father's name was Dakshinaranjan, and Gourhari was was my grandfather."

And when she said "Barda once cut off the thumb of his left hand with a chopper, Prithvis broke down completely by the weight of emotion and cried hysterically "Mother, Mother I have no doubt.....you must have been my mother..... forgive me.....forgive me,....." and he began to weep. Most of us found it difficult to hold back tears. All of us forgot that the bus had already reached the terminus of Jiratia.

After alighting from the bus we requested the couple to come along with us to Manmatha Babu's house. They readily agreed. As we proceeded I inadvertently tried to point out some special features of the village, namely, a very ancient temple by the side of the large *dighi* (tank) when she blurted out that she had known all these things before I was born. When in reply to her query I said that I lived in the house adjacent to Manmatha Babu's, she asked me to specify whether our house was in the eastern or western side of Manmatha Babu's house. When I said 'Eastern' she mentioned my father's name and began cheerfully to narrate many anecdotes about my father and grandfather. As we were talking and walking, I noticed that she was not asking us to show the way to go but was herself leading the party along the road which she had trod, so it appeared, many times in her life.

Manmatha Babu was then sitting at the outer verandah in an easy chair. I cannot adequately describe his facial expression when the unknown lady touched his feet and said "How are you Borda? Yes, your appearence has changed much since I saw you." He asked them to sit down and amazingly looked at each one of us. Prithvis and I vied with each other in telling him in detail what had happened. Manmatha Babu being a professional moneylender, was a cool and calculating fellow. When we finished the story he was not moved, at least not visibly. Then, he said "I can't believe it. It is so strange!"

I can't believe it. It is so strange ! said Manmatha Babu....

"Yes, so strange ! said the lady. "I am also feeling strangeness in the whole affair."

Then Manmatha Babu slowly entered into conversation with her. As it continued we noticed a queer change coming over Manmatha Babu's face, even in his method of talking. The redoubtable moneylender was gradually becoming a child. He began to search the past for the insignificant incidents in life and when such an incident could be found *they* talked and laughed heartily. When they began to talk of their mother, Prithvis' *Didima* (grandmother) Manmatha Babu's eyes filled with tears. It was getting dark then. After talking nonstop for an hour they paused. Manmatha Babu suddenly covered his face with hands, and began to weep."

Prithvis was glad beyond measure. The lady passed the difficult test of money-lender Mona Datta (as the villagers used to call Manmatha Babu). Not an iota of doubt was now left that Prithvis was going to get back his lost mother! Excitedly, Prithvis rushed towards the door to break the news to her maternal aunt (Mamima) and bring her there. None of us noticed in the encircling darkness that she was already standing at the door.

"Oh, you are here!" shouted Prithvis in joy.

Mamima replied "yes I have been here since I heard your voice and have heard everything. But I am not going to believe this cock and bull story." Turning to Boromama, she said, "your age has deprived you of common sense. You are suffering

from Bhimrathi (mental senility). Can't you see through the game ? This small girl is befooling you. They must have secured all this family information from somebody."

It was now all confusion. Has Mamima seen through any possible deceit ? We all knew her to be a woman of extraordinary common sense and that the uncle's material prosperity is all due to her.

But Prithvis impatiently cried out. "Ah aunt ! What are you doing ?"

"Stop, Prithvis, don't think yourself superior to me by reading a few English books," she angrily retorted.

Prithvis touched her feet and said, "Forgive me. I am in a great fix." He sobbed and *Mamima* hugged him affectionately, wiped his tears and said : "Don't fall a prey to cunning, my son ! It is painful to lose a mother but absurd to regain her in this life. I have no son of my own but never thought that you were not my son. Have I ever failed in my duty to you as a mother ?"

"Not at all, not at all", Prithvis began to cry bitterly. The scene was poignant the atmosphere was surcharged partly with emotion and partly with suspicion. In the gathering darkness, I tried to look at everybody's face. All were sitting almost motionless and certainly perplexed, except, so I felt, the lady herself. As Prithivis stopped crying she moved herself a little in the chair and said in a clear voice :

"*Borda !* Bowdi (sister-in-law), has remained as peevish as she was when she came to this house at the age of 13. On the very first day she came here she burst upon me like a bombshell, because I told her, in jest, that her brooch was not pure gold but gold like phoney metal." She, paused, laughed and resumed to say : "You don't know *Borda*, next day nobody could induce her to take her food, she fasted the whole day. She insisted that I must pull my own ears before she would agree to break fast. At mother's command, I did it at last but behind bolted door where only *Bowdi* saw me pull my own ears. I did this on condition that she would not narrate it to anybody else. If I were not her *nanad* (husband's sister), she must have then broken her promise."

"No, I did not break my promise," saying this *Mamima* sat down on the floor, thoroughly confused, all her psychological resistance rapidly evaporating. As just then, the servant brought a lantern there, I saw Prithvis' face once more glowing with joy.

Then silence, dead silence. *Mamima* sat with her eyes closed and all our eyes turned on her face. After a few seconds, she opened her eyes and exclaimed: "All right, if you were my *nanad* (husband's sister) in the previous birth, go from here straight to room of the family deity. There are two deities—one your ancestral and one I brought here from my father's house after my parent's death. Pick up your ancestral deity."

Without saying a word the lady rose from the chair, took the lantern in her hand and passed through the door. We all followed her except *Mamima*, who through some queer reason, kept on sitting. The lady went straight into the room and just as she approached the platform on which the two idols were placed, *Mamima* came running and shouting "Don't touch the deities. Of what caste are you now in this life!"

By this time, the lady had picked up the ancestral deity as Manmatha Babu vouchshafed. But no sooner had she done so than she shouted "I am no longer a Sudra. In this life I am of a higher caste than you. I am a Brahmin," So saying, to our consternation, the lady, with the deity in her hand, fainted on the floor.

Her husband immediately attended her. After two hours of nursing, she opened her eyes, sat up but, now, a completely changed personality. She asked her husband as to why she was sitting in such an unfamiliar surrounding and whose bedroom it was she was lying in. (She had been in the meantime removed to Manmatha Babu's bedroom). When Prithvis addressed her as mother, she felt offended and surprised and wanted to know why a young man like that was doing such fake reverence, why she was surrounded by such unfamiliar faces in such an unfamiliar bedroom and why her husband had brought her there instead of taking her to the hospital quarters. The doctor asked us by gesture not to say anything. We all helped him to remove the lady to the hospital quarters. After keeping her there we all returned home at about 10 P.M.

Still Prithvis' faith was undiminished. He came to put full faith in the doctrine of rebirth and sincerely believed that he got back his lost mother. He began to visit the doctor's quarters daily but everytime the doctor prevented him from seeing his wife, saying that he could see her only when she recovered. Daily Prithvis stood in front of the doctor's quarters,—once, twice, thrice or even four times a day. But he was unable to catch a glimpse of her. After a long wait one day he went to the doctor at the hospital to enquire of his 'mother'. The doctor was busy examining a patient and told him curtly that his wife had forgotten everything of her previous birth—the memory left her as suddenly as it had come, he would disapprove any idea of reminding his wife of that incident.

It was hard for Prithvis to believe that his mother could ever forget him. He never boasted having stood first in the examinations and winning scholarship and medals. But of late, with a great sense of pride, he had been proclaiming to all his friends that he got back his lost mother in this very life. The doctor's refusal to allow him to see his mother was too much for him to bear. He was confident that if somehow he could appear before her, she would hug him once more in her bossom. He was so sure, he could not brook delay.

One evening he stood in front of the doctor's quarters for a long time. The lady sometimes came and stood at the window, sometimes her eyes fell upon him but she showed no concern. She went away. When she reappeared at the window and saw Prithvis still standing, she raised her eyebrow in definite anguish, drew the curtain and left. Prithvis still lingered. An hour after dusk, a servant emerged from the house to ask him why he had been standing there in a suspicious way under the shade of a tree. Prithvis said he wanted to see the doctor. Saying that the docor had gone to the town and would return after two hours, the servant went away in the direction of the market.

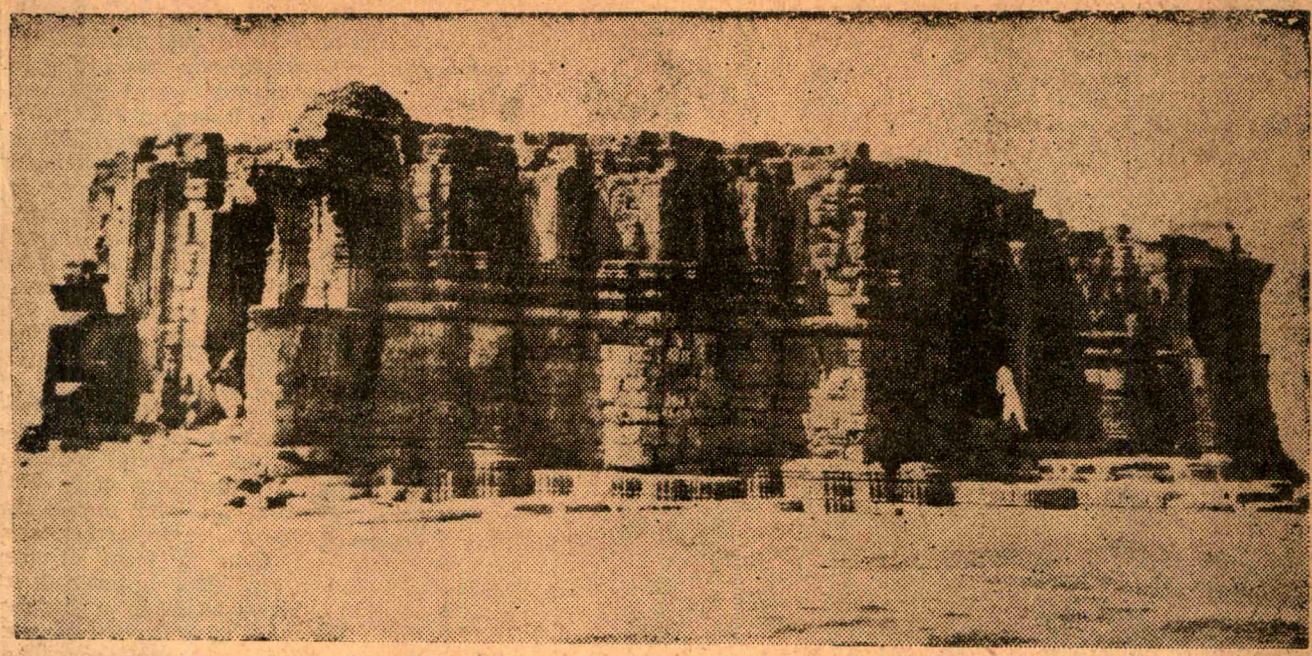
Prithvis would not let this opportunity go. He walked straight into the house, fully confident that now the doctor was away, mother and son would be reunited in a happy remembrance of an old life.

The lady received him politely but coldly. She denied having seen him ever before, met him in a bus, talked with his uncle and aunt, that she picked up the ancestral deity and that she had any previous birth at all. Emphatically she denied that a man could have anything like a previous birth. She felt sorry that Prithvis had no mother, the best advice she could give him was to find a partner in life.

She requested Prithvis not to leave before taking tea. She went in to prepare the tea. When she cameback with the cup, she was surprised that the young man had left.

Since that evening, nobody saw Prithvis in the

(Continued On Page 123)



A general view of the old temple of Somnath.

SOMNATH — the shrine immortal

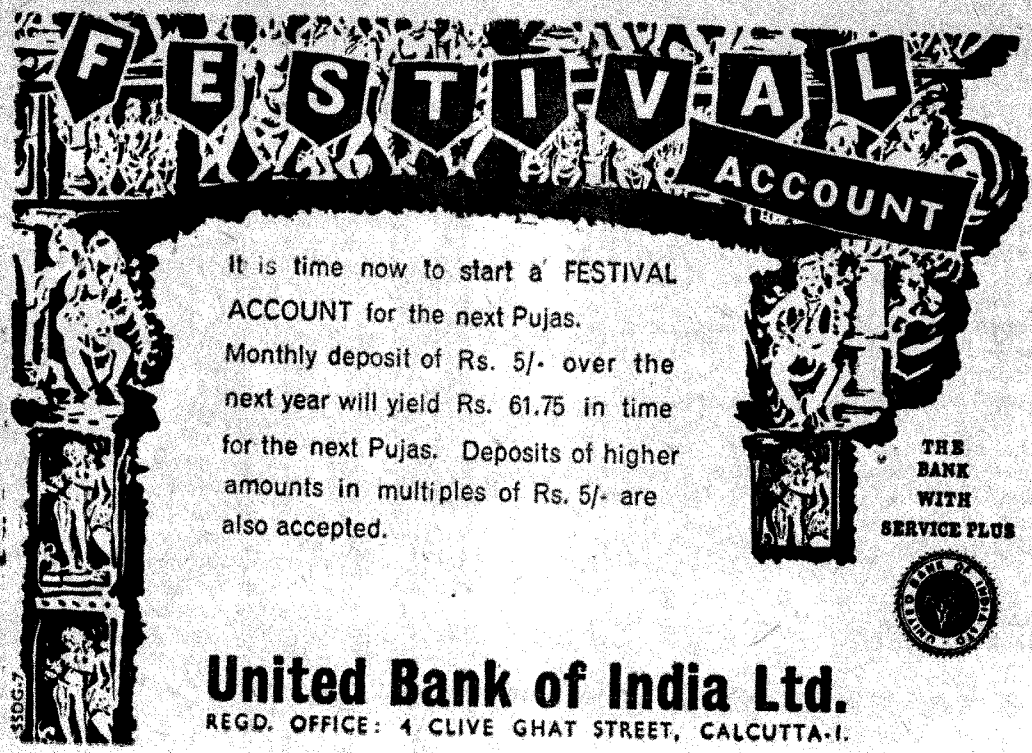
by PHANI BHATTACHARYYA

SITUATED at a distance of about 5 kilometres from Veraval, a seaport of Gujarat, the temple of Somnath claims a sanctity and hoary antiquity unequalled by any other temple in India. Somnath Patan, also known as Prabhas Patan and Deva Patan, has a great religious and historical background. The history of the temple of Somnath is a history of creation, destruction and reconstruction. "Many a time have its walls borne the brunt of battle and been levelled by the hand of the barbarian invaders only to rise again from its ashes, like the phoenix, as soon as the enemy had turned its back. The banner of Siva was again raised aloft above its pinnacles and the bells, the conch and the drum once more announced the resumption of worship within". This temple of unique historical importance has withstood the naked aggression of Muslim invaders times without number. But centuries of vandalism could not efface the great shrine from the face of the earth.

The origin of the temple of Somnath is, however, shrouded in obscurity. The Mahabharata and the Puranas refer to Prabhasa with a reverence not shown to any other place. It was a traditionally sacred place in the days of the Pandavas. It was in the Prabhash Patan that Lord Krishna met his death at the hands of a careless tribesman who mistook him for a deer. The Rigveda also refers to the sanctity of the temple of Somnath.

There is a legendary story narrated in the Prabhaskhanda of the Skhanda Purana about the origin of the temple. The story runs as follows : "Prajapati Daksha had 27 daughters corresponding to 27 constellations. All of them were married to Soma, the moon-god. But Soma was specially attached to Rohini as she was the most beautiful among all the wives. As a result, all the wives except Rohini were neglected. Now, the 26 sisters of Rohini brought the matter to the notice of their father Daksha who made an attempt to bring out a conciliation. But his attempt proved abortive. Daksha then cursed Soma saying "thou shalt wane". The result was that Soma, the moon-god, started waning day by day. He performed sacrifices but they were of no avail. Ultimately on the request of other gods, Daksha agreed to retract his curse on certain conditions. Soma should behave equally with his wives and have a dip in the waters of the sea at Probhasa, erect the shape of the Linga of Mahadeva there and worship him. If he did so, he would, during one-half of the month, wane every day, but during the other half wax every day. Soma did so. 'Som' means the moon and 'nath' means master; so that the whole word 'Somnath' means master of the moon." Since then Prabhasa has been the holy of holies to Indian Hindus. There goes the legend that Soma bathed there every recurring day of the dark fortnight and regained his form and beauty.

From the available historical data, it had been found that during the first and second century A.D. Somnath was a place of pilgrimage to those who

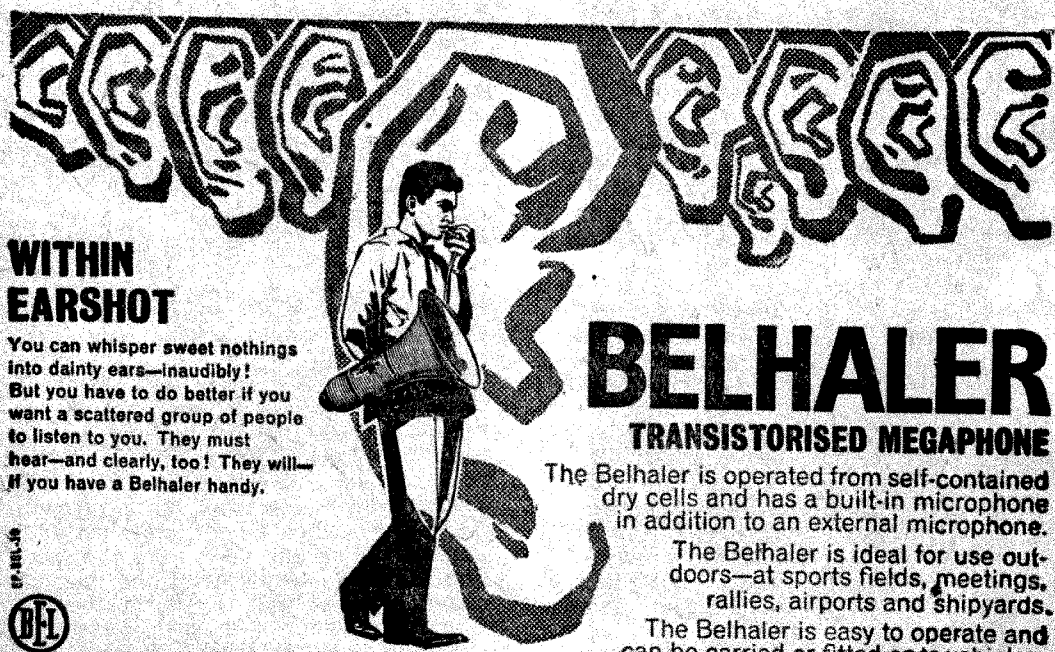


It is time now to start a FESTIVAL ACCOUNT for the next Pujas. Monthly deposit of Rs. 5/- over the next year will yield Rs. 61.75 in time for the next Pujas. Deposits of higher amounts in multiples of Rs. 5/- are also accepted.

THE BANK WITH SERVICE PLUS

United Bank of India Ltd.

REGD. OFFICE: 4 CLIVE GHAT STREET, CALCUTTA-1.



WITHIN EARSHOT

You can whisper sweet nothings into dainty ears—inaudibly! But you have to do better if you want a scattered group of people to listen to you. They must hear—and clearly, too! They will... If you have a Belhaler handy.

BELHALER

TRANSISTORISED MEGAPHONE

The Belhaler is operated from self-contained dry cells and has a built-in microphone in addition to an external microphone.

The Belhaler is ideal for use outdoors—at sports fields, meetings, rallies, airports and shipyards.

The Belhaler is easy to operate and can be carried or fitted on to vehicles.

BEL

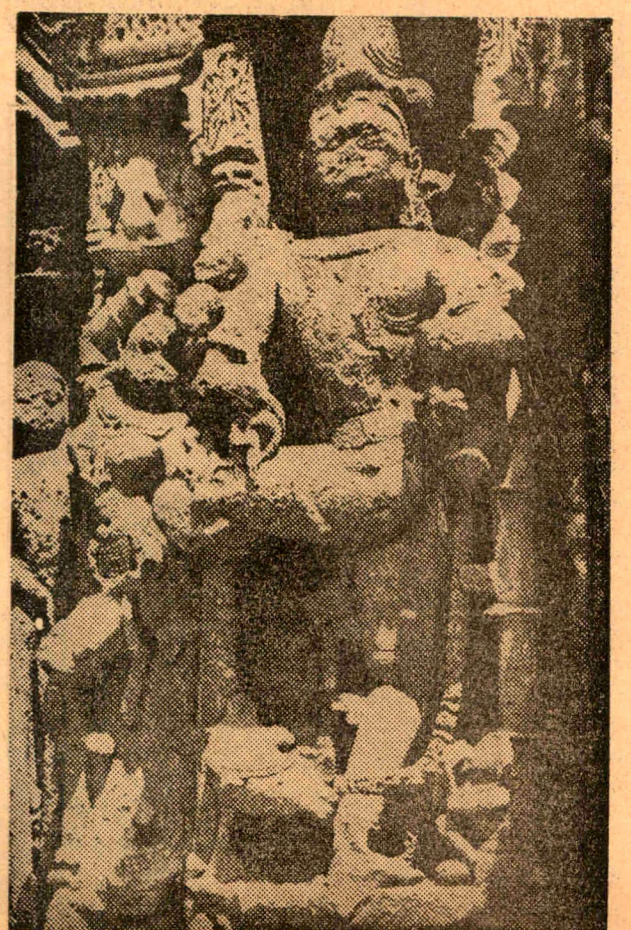
BHARAT ELECTRONICS LTD. REGD. OFFICE: JALAHALLI, BANGALORE-13.

were wedded to the Pasupat Saiva cult and it is presumed that the first temple of Somnath was built during this period. But no epigraphic record of Probhasa or Somnath was available during the Gupta period (A.D. 320-500). As the Gupta Emperors were all devoted to Vishnu, it is presumed that during the Gupta period, the shrine of Somnath received less attention.

Between 6th and 8th century A.D., the Valabhi kings ruled Saurashtra. Most of the Valabhi kings were the worshipers of Siva. It was during the reign of Valabhi kings that the Second Temple of Somnath was built. "The Second Temple was constructed on the spot where the First Temple stood. It had possibly an open 'Sabhamandopa'. Terraced steps of Kanjur stone led from it to the sea on both sides and on the south was constructed a retaining sea-wall. These were all found embedded in the earth".

About the beginning of the 8th century, the Arabs turned their attention to India. Junayad was appointed the Governor of Sindh in A.D. 725. In the same year an Arab army was sent by Junayad to invade Ujjain, Malwa and Gurajaradesa. On their onward march, they defeated the king of Saurashtra and the king of Valabhi and the place of Valabhi was completely destroyed. Perhaps, the sacred temple of Somnath was also destroyed at that time.

The Third Temple of Somnath was constructed when the Kings of Gurjara Pratihara dynasty was in the throne of Kanauj. They were very powerful and influential kings and reigned during the period of A.D. 800-950.



The stone image of Siva Natarajan in the old temple of Somnath. The stamp of vandalism is evident in the dismembered limbs of the statue.

In 1025 A.D. the great crisis in the chequered history of Somnath came when Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni, the great iconoclast, made his memorable invasion on the shrine of Somnath. On the 18th day of October, 1025, Mahmud, with an army of 30,000 cavalry and 30,000 camels as carriers of water, started his historic march towards Prabas-Patan. On January 10, 1026, he surrounded the fort of Somnath. According to the early Muslim chroniclers the defenders fought with unabated heroism. 50,000 Indian warriors laid down their lives in defence of their beloved shrine. Mahmud entered the temple sanctified by centuries of devotion; broke the Linga to pieces and ordered the temple to be burnt to the ground. He also looted all the jewels of the temple. An account of the invasion of Mahmud is given in the Rauzat-us-Safa of Mirkhond compiled in the 15th century. It runs as follows — "Somnath is the name of an idol which, according to the Hindus, was lord of all idols . . . . Historians, however, agree that Somnath was an idol in a temple situated on the seaside, which idol the Hindus worshipped, specially at the time of eclipse and they believe too, that the souls of the deceased came to Somnath, on first leaving the bodies they had occupied and were there assigned to fresh bodies. They also believed that the sea worshipped Somnath and the rise and fall of the tide was considered to be proof of this. From the most distant parts of India pilgrims used to come to worship at this shrine. 10,000 villages were assigned for its support and there were so many jewels belonging to it, as no king had ever one-tenth part of it in his treasury. 2,000 Brahimins served the idol and a golden chain of 200 maunds supported a belt-plate which being struck at stated times, called the people to worship; 300 shavers. 500 dancing girls and 300 musicians were on the idol's establishment and received support from the endowment and from the gifts of pilgrims." Such was the glory of Somnath which Mahmud in his blind fury smashed with his own hands.

In his Tarikh-i-Hind, Albiruni (1030 A.D.) who adorned the court of Mahmud and came to India along with him, writes—"The image was destroyed by prince Mahmud—may God be merciful to him! He ordered the upper part to be broken and the remainder to be transplanted to his residence at Ghazni, with all its coverings and trappings of gold, jewels and embroidered garments. Part of it had been thrown into the hippodrome of the town. Another portion of the idol from Somnath lies before the door of the mosque of Ghazni. The temple was supported by fifty-six pillars ornamented with rubies, emeralds and the precious stones; each of these pillars bore the name of a different king of India as its embellisher. They were all despoiled of their treasures."

For an account of what had happened when Mahmud entered the temple, we have the story of Arab historian Ferishta : "In the centre of the hall stood Somnath, an idol of stone, 5 yards in height, two of which were sunk in the ground. The king was enraged when he saw this idol and raising his mace struck off the nose from the face. He then ordered that two pieces of the image should be broken off to be sent to Ghazni, then to be thrown at the thresh-hold of the public mosque and in the court of his palace. The next blow having broken up the belly of Somnath which had been made hollow, they discovered that it was full of diamonds, rubies and pearls of a much greater value than the Brahmins had offered to Mahmud to resist him from damaging the Linga".

But in neither Ibam Ashiri's nor Mirkhund's account, there was any mention of the jewels in the belly of the idol. "The idol was not an image

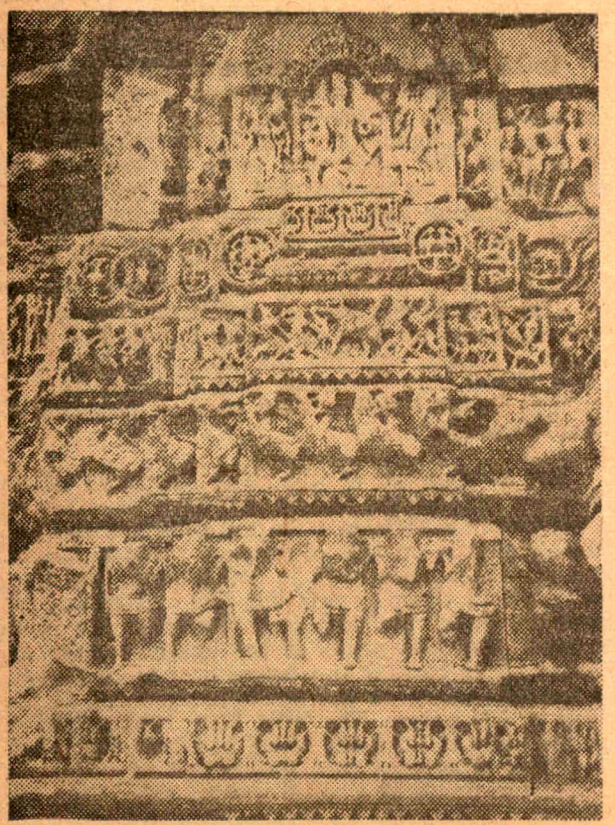
in the usual sense but a *Linga*, the regular symbol representing Mahadeva or Siva."

Though the temple was desecrated by Mahmud it was not completely destroyed by him. This destruction was carried out by Mitha Khan, whom Mahmud left behind to govern the country.

FIFTH TEMPLE BROKEN

After a few months of Mahmud's departure, King Bhoja of Malwa and King Bhimdeva of Gujarat (1022-1072) built a new temple in place of the ruined one. This was the Fourth Temple of Somnath. Between 1100 and 1169, either the temple was sacked again or it fell into ruins. Kumarpal, the heir to the throne of Gujarat after Siddaraja, rebuilt the temple in 1161. This is evident from a dated inscription still preserved in the temple of Bhadrakali at Somnath Patan. That was the fifth temple of Somnath. Since then for about a century the temple remained uninvaded. But peace was not destined for Somnath. In A.D. 1297 Alaf Khan, the General of Alla-ud-din, the Khilji Sultan of Delhi made the second largest attack on the temple. He broke open the temple and shattered the idol to pieces.

During the period between A.D. 1315-1325, Mahipaldeva, the Chudasana King of Gujarat started the work of rebuilding the temple. But he could not see the completion of the temple during his life time. From an inscription we come to know that Khangar IV, the son of Mahipaldeva (A. D. 1325-1351) finished the incomplete work of the temple and established the image of Somnath inside the temple. In 1394, Muzaffar Khan, the then Governor of Gujarat, made a vigorous attack against the Hindu rulers and the result was that the temple of Somnath built by Mahipaldeva was again destroyed.



A view of the elegant carving on the walls of the Temple of Somnath.

Sometime later in 1413 A.D., Ahmed Shah, the Grandson of Muzzaffar Khan and the founder of Ahmedabad, once again destroyed the temple of Somnath. Perhaps, he destroyed the temple built temporarily after the invasion of Muzzaffar Khan. In 1459, Begda, the ruler of Gujarat, removed the image of Somnath and turned the temple into a mosque. Fortunately, during the reign of the Mughal Emperor Akbar, his son and grand-sons, the peace at Somnath was not disturbed. But in 1706, Prince Mohammed Azam destroyed the Somnath temple once again under the orders of Aurangzeb.

In A.D. 1783 Queen Ahalya Bai of Indore built a new temple at a little distance from the old one. "And to save it from destruction, the *Linga* was placed in a secret underground shrine immediately below the usual upper one." Since the first quarter of the 18th century the temple was more or less neglected and it was fast falling into ruins. "The salt-ladden damp sea breeze was partly responsible for an early decadence of the body fabric. But under the initiation of Lord Curzon a compound-wall was raised and the entire area around the temple was levelled up."

PATEL'S CONTRIBUTION

After the achievement of independence, the late Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, resolved to recover the past glory of Somnath. A Board named "Somnatha Board of Trustees" was formed with the Jam Saheb as the Chairman. His Highness Jam Saheb laid the foundation stone of the present temple on May 8, 1950, exactly on the same place where the Fifth Temple stood. On May 11, 1951, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, performed the inauguration ceremony of the Linga in the new temple which has been constructed on the model of the old shrine. Before the demolition of the old temple, an extensive excavation was carried out. It brought to light the materials of the earlier temples buried below. Stones of older temples were found to have been used in the repairing works of the later ones. Some bricks 18" x 12" x 3" and 21" x 10.5" x 4", yellowish in colour were found below the *Yonipat*, the circular stone base round the *Linga* of Somnath in *garbhagrah*. In the old structure no material to cement the stones appeared to have been used. They were so well set that there was no need for a cementing material. But at places some stoney cementing substance was also noticed. One could see "Idols of various gods, animals and birds artistically carved, carvings of dancing girls, exhibiting various poses and emotions, images of men and women with drapings of the tenth and eleventh centuries were also found in the debris, lying to the north. The carvings of dancing girls were in the *tribhanga*, *dwibhanga* and *atibhanga* poses, a few of them were carved standing erect. There was also found a stone slab of the Valabhi period (6th and 7th century.) Names of the craftsmen were also found carved on almost every stone."

The story of two thousand years of devotion and heroism, of vandalism and destruction, of defeat and triumph, of the best and worst in man has been epitomised in this hoary and holy shrine. It is a romance in stone. It is a shrine which has flung a huge challenge in the face of time—it is a shrine eternal and immortal.

Half and Half

By
KESHAB CHANDRA GUPTA

I

THE ridiculous accompanied the sublime. The display of beauty in all its glory around the lake at Naini Tal, that morning, was sublime. The rays of the rising sun fought the waves of cold breeze, to pour comfort on numerous boats and yachts that pleasantly floated on the water. The radiance prompted Sri Sudhir to sing the popular Tagore song—"On the stainless white sail strikes the breeze, slow and sweet"—and the rest of it. The music ridiculously lacked cadace and harmony. Our sweet girl companion Srimati Krishna sought to rivet her attention on the sunbeams that peeped through gaps between the crests of the eastern rocks, to suppress her smile, to avoid any mark of disrespect to the singing friend of her dear father. Really the world seemed happy to all holiday-seekers.

But every rose has its thorns. From the boat just ahead of us rose a yell of distress. The crier happened to be one of my co-lodgers in Hotel Royal. Sri Onkarmull Singh was a jolly good young fellow. Gold is tested by fire but the worth and importance of a man are tested by gold. He was shouting in a ridiculous manner and trying to recover something from the cold waters of the lake. His boat became lop-sided. It ran the risk of sinking.

We learnt that he had dropped into the lake a metal box tightly packed with wads of currency notes. At least that was the interpretation of the cries of lamentation that was offered by our friend Sri Ajit Dutt.

The swimming swans got fidgety. Rowers from boats all around cried—take care, the boat will sink.

At last Singh gave up the quest and shouted to us information which we already had from Sri Ajit in a nutshell. The value of the notes ampunted to ten thousand rupees. Something like a metal box dropped from his hand was corroborated by Srimati Krishna. But the advocate Sudhir Bose quietly said—"yes the casket,

That opinion lacked wisdom for the youngman beat his brow in the Indian fashion. At least it must have contained a wad of love-letters, I thought, but I had to keep my judgment to myself as Srimati Krishna was sitting too close to me.

Sri Ajit Dutt collected further information by inquiries from the aggrieved. Yes, the metal container contained bundles of currency notes worth Rupees ten thousand. We all came to the conclusion that the man was either a lunatic or an uncommon miser to hug the treasure in his heart. But Sri Bose differed—

"All bluff !", he said, "He is just parading. Certainly he lost the box but it contained useful cuttings from newspapers about cases of blackmarketing. He wanted to avoid the old ways."

That the man was suspicious and miserly was the verdict of every one on the boat. For the manager of the hotel generally takes charge of valuables of the lodgers. But the ways of minds are diverse.

II

That season the Hotel Royal seemed to hold an international meet. Next to my cabin the big room was occupied by three Germans who consulted charts and maps to attempt a journey to the Pindari Glaciers. A visitor from the Punjab with his English wife was on the visit, to interview their child who was a student in the local hill school. An English businessman with his jovial wife lived there for three days. Mr. D'Silva came with his wife from Calcutta to meet their children too. There were other lodgers Parsi, Christian and Hindu.

In the hotel compound garden in the midst of a variety of season flowers, the topic of conversation tended one way—the loss of the box by an inmate. Outwardly the consensus of opinion led to sympathy but the Almighty knew and we could guess the private opinion of each other. My lawyer instinct was almost sure that the ruse was a fine way to settle the claims of creditors and undoubtedly to bid goodbye to the exactions of the Income Tax-Department.

In the Everest Hotel five of my colleagues, lawyers who practised in criminal courts in Calcutta, had found accommodation. The immersion had been the talk of the town. My friends had gathered information. Their final finding confirmed the loss of the box of notes. The loser, was a dealer in cloth fabrics, collected from different Indian mills. He supplied the materials to the shop-keepers in and around Cawnpore. He had some customers in Palli Tal and Mulli Tal, the two trade centres of Naini Tal and in the adjoining hill station of Ranikhet. He sought the advice of our friend Jatin Ray who had examined his accounts and it was true that he had collected ten thousand, partly out of his dues, and mostly as advances for the supply of warm cloths in the coming season which was close at hand.

I was lodged in room No. 14, upstairs, in the hotel. The number of the room occupied by Singh was four and in number five lived a young Jewish lady full of charms and of easy manners which indeed were charming. She was the fellow passenger of Singh on the boat when the drowning took place. She came from Delhi to enjoy the weather of the hills, evidently an inmate of a well-to-do family. Onkermaull had his early education in the Sherwood College in Naini Tal and although his name was old-fashioned, he had all the make-up of a modern Indian youth, in manners, talks and movements. He was thoroughly a businessman. But he used to utilise as much of his leisure hours as possible with gay talks with our co-lodger the Jewish maiden, Miss Marie Myers. She had the graces of budding youth and was well-versed in music and happy conversation. In the evening when she played upon the piano, Singh was happy to beat time with his hands and feet and all the time rivetted his attention on the charms of the piano player. The day before the loss the two of them rode on two spirited hill ponies and visited the Tiffin Top on the western hills. But life is full of contradictory motions. It was really ridiculous that such an up-to date youngman should carry a box of notes with him in the gay boat jaunt. Wonderful!

Early the next morning Miss Myers caught hold of me near the fountain as I was admiring the dahlias and the roses and several other types of flowers that the gardener had carefully helped to blossom. The garden and most of the rooms were empty as the lodgers had gone out to enjoy the glory of the lake in the morning. Onkermull went to report his loss at the police station under the advice of Jatin Roy, our fellow traveller.

That was in fact the topic which the young lady had come to start, I mistook the object of the visit —to while away the time while her friend was absent.

"I do not like this police business, Mr. Sen", said she. "I hope they will not visit this place and start interrogations. They might even start police searches, as I have read. The routine they follow is search."

I laughed and explained to her that the search will be in the lake with a dragnet if the police so intends. The advice was given by my friend to have a record of the fact that there was the loss. If by any strange magic the box is recovered, he would claim it. In the case of the income tax assessment or demands by his creditors, he can prove the loss.

The young lady felt relieved and smiled. During my experience I have noticed very intelligent people to get upset when they feel that the police might visit their place.

"On a holiday people like gaiety and mirth. Poor Singh. I like him so much. What a cheerful personality. But now, Oh Jehova, the poor fellow."

I told her how I myself felt that way about young Singh. But man proposes and God disposes. Yes, I am sorry for your old friend", I did not say —Boy friend.

She understood.

"No, no, Mr. Sen", she said, "I know him for a week. He is a business man and wants to start business at Delhi where my brother has his office too. Their line of business is the same—warm cloths and fabrics. They may help each other and expand."

There is a saying in Bengalee that the son of a Jew makes a profit even out of a drop on the floor, so very clever business people they are.

I understood. It was the God of business and not of love. The flirtation was merely an aid. So when Singh returned the lady friend ran up to greet him in a charming posture. The youngman showed relief too. But the meeting was to end. He had reserved his seat in the car to Kathgodam for the evening. He was on his way back to Cawnpore for the present.

III

A little after eleven thirty I came down to the garden to admire the blooming flowers. All around they smiled. The lake was visible in the distance —a shining sheet of still water. There were just a few yachts still afloat in the midst of the lake. My mind was eager to meet two sets of friends who were to visit my hotel compound to admire the flowers. It was a lovely clear day but it was stupid to hope that the fogs will not show up any moment.

First came the police court lawyers from Hotel Everest. Our conversation led us to the details of the immersion—of the casket.

Sri Nut Behary was definite that the box contained forged notes. He saw a police boat at a distance.

Singh was happy to beat time with his hands and feet . . . .

Sri Shibu Sirkar asked us to keep our eyes shut and to talk of something else. The ways of the rich merchants are difficult to understand. They make tons of money and who knows that immersion was not a part of the ceremony, as in Durga Puja.

Sri Bangshibadan said—"It is an innocent amusement to talk of the misdeeds of others.

Sri Parbati Sarkar had a hearty laugh when he reminded us how Old Jatin had earned a little by offering legal advise.

Sri Jatin took the pose of a wiseman and said —"Don't forget brethern that we live on the woes of others. Luck is also a main elements of our success or fall."

Yes, every one was happy. Hilarity is the main object of a holiday visit. But here also ultimate power of disposal is in strange hands. For as if to put an end to the light-hearted hilarity, came Onker-mull running, got hold of Sri Ray and dragged him to the other end of the spacious garden.

Then came Sri Sudhir Bose and Sri Ajit Dutt. We wanted to talk about the Government house and Bhim Tal and Khurpa Tal but the talk fell into the old grove of the drowned box.

Sudhir had collected information. Definitely there had been planted the seed of love in the two young hearts. Singh was the son of a rich merchant and she was sweet and had easy charms. But his case was true. He had shown his wads of currency notes to the manager of the hotel and had to carry the box away as the accountant was not in. Here comes the frolics of the God of love. He had no time to get back to his chamber to keep the box in the safe repository of his steel trunk. That would have been so much time wasted when the lovely one was by his side. She had also to spend twenty-five pysas to buy nuts to feed the swans.

"Bravo", cried Nut Behary. "It is wonderful for a civil court advocate to hunt up mysterious facts which the criminal court lawyer thinks was his absolute merit."

Sri Ajit Dutt summarised—"Theft, cheating, forgery, and even murder, became drudgery if there was no background of love for the crime to disport itself."

But the party had to be dissolved as Miss Myers came running, her hair dis-hevelled and almost panting. She got hold of me and dragged me to another corner of the garden near the slopping grounds.

"I want your professional help, Mr. Sen, "said she. "Never mind the costs, my interests must be in good hands and there must be an end to this grievance. Oh Ely."

I was anxious to get at the bottom of the matter and evidently it was a different problem from the one Sri Jatin Ray was solving at the other end of the garden.

IV

Her grievances had a solid basis. In her absence Singh had collected the key to her chamber from the hotel keyboard and trespassed into her room. When she entered amazed, the man was ransacking the lower drawer of the chest that was a part of the furniture for her sitting room. When detected, he had no apologies to offer. But on the other hand very impertinently shouted out—"Where is—the casket?"

At first she thought that the man was off his senses. She had pity and she quietly said—"I understand Onkar. Poor boy. You forget how the thing dropped into the lake".

He became boisterous and replied—"keep off all that stuff. I am talking of the one I kept in your bottom drawer."

I want your professional help, Mr. Sen. .. .. ..

Are we dealing with mad young people, at first I thought. Then the good lady explained. Singh alleged that he had two similar boxes and each one contained currency notes of ten thousand rupees each. One was lost in the lake and the other one that he had kept concealed in the chest of drawers in her room seemed to have been stolen and stolen by the lady herself evidently.

I looked at the daffodils and the roses and the daisies and the pansies and then I looked at her. The flowers were all shining but she was not. She was not smelling of liquor either. What was all this rigmarole ?

She gave us more details. The man alleged that while she was dressing in the inner room he had quietly kept the box in the drawer hidden by old newspapers the previous occupier of the cabin had left, as the dates indicated. The other one, he alleged, he took with him on the boat. He was definitely accusing her of theft and she is now sure that the man is not drunk for he was consulting his own lawyer.

I coolly considered the matter. The stunt probably meant extortion. Anyway, it could not touch the lady. I remembered having gone through the report Jatin had drafted. There the man definitely stated that he had with him in all Rs. 10,333 that day. He had lost ten thousand and the balance of three-thirty-three he had in his possession.

I explained the matter to the lady and she felt releived. But, what about the insulting insinuation of theft. He had definitely said that Miss Myers had pocketed the money and he was moving the police to take action, in the matter of theft.

"Ah the devil", she said and again became hysteric. "Think of the police searching my place and probably arresting me. Oh Jehova, My Kaddusim will never mature into Kaddusi which was to come in December. I can not go to the police either."

After some cross-examination I came to learn that she was engaged to marry a nice rich young Jew of Delhi. The ceremony of engagement which

is like our Ashirbad has been held. That was Kaddusim. Kaddusi or marriage was to take place in December. Yes, she was right. The appearance of the Police would mean the end of the prospect of wedding.

"We shall complain to the manager of the hotel and compel him to offer an unqualified apology before he leaves the station this evening." I summarised.

It brought some relief to the lady and she was still hysteric as her gaze indicated. I harangued and she listened. But I was at my wit's end and could not surmise the real affair. Was she concealing some affairs of love ?

Just at then Jatin Ray appeared. He was excited too. "I want your professional advice, Mr. Sen", he said. "My client Sri Singh is in another muddle."

"I know. I am retained by Miss Myers", I replied.

"Yes I shall pay you now. Anything you want Mr. Sen. I am hardly as poor as I look. My father left me enough money, not to stand insult from a silly fool who brags of his money and connections." She said.

I succeeded in keeping her quiet.

Jatin said he wanted to talk to me as to the advocate of the opposite side. He wanted to come to terms to avoid bitterness and unpleasantness. It would be pleasing to both parties, as they have confidence in us.

The lady could not make up her mind. She still appeared perturbed and disturbed. I considered that it would be a shame for the police to take up the case of trespass. I noticed appeal in the eyes of my young client. So I said :

"Yes. I am willing to meet you and your client, Ray on two conditions. First the discussion should be made in the presence of both the parties. And condition No. 2 is that the whole of the talk would be without prejudice. No party shall be able to state what took place at the conference in court or before the police, in case they do not accept our decision."

V

The conference took place in the hall, called the lounge. No one visited it in the early hours. Mr. Ray stated his client's case and sought to justify the wrongful entry.

He first dealt with the reputation of his client as a businessman and said that his father was rich and was in the first rank of merchants in Lahore. He was a refugee. Onkermull had his education in the Sherwood College of Naini Tal and in the course of three years he has built up a reputation.

He collected ten thousand rupees from people who owed him and from those who wanted to place orders. He showed his account to Ray in the morning. The accountant of the hotel was not present and he wanted to take the box with him in the short cruise.

Time and tide wait for none. The previous night after dinner Miss Myers promised to accompany him for a jaunt on a boat. Singh dressed in haste in the morning and entered the sitting room of the lady who was in the inner chamber dressing. She smiled and hooed and asked the friend to wait.

An idle brain is the devils workshop. If he secreted his collections, he could utilise the same as capital and defer his payments to those to whom he owed money. The chest of drawers in the sitting room was never utilised by the young lady, Singh had noticed. Why could he not put the casket within the lowest drawers hidden in old newspapers that filled it. He was no more idle and quickly did the work.

But people from our boat even, had seen the drowning. I questioned Ray about the truth of the story !

When the devil undertakes to instruct somebody, the disciple performs huge tricks in the twinkling of an eye. Singh quickly entered his own chamber got hold of an exactly similar casket, filled it with

(Continued on page 128)

Singh dressed in haste in the morning and entered the sitting room of the lady who was in the inner chamber dressing She smiled and hooed and asked the friend to wait.

THE FORSAKEN MERMAID

SRI TUSHAR KANTI GHOSH, W.B.C.S

THE telephone went ringing on. Another call, I thought. It was better to give up my medical profession. There was not a moment's respite. I shut my writing pad and took up the receiver. "Dr. Ghosh speaking," I began softly. A hasty female voice came from the other end. "Dr. Ghosh, I am in an urgent necessity, I must see you now." "It is 9 P.M. Better come tomorrow morning. I am busy now." But the other end was already disconnected.

Just a couple of minutes later, she came. Rather wonderfully, young and beautiful. She looked like the maiden I was in search of in my poetry. "My sister is awfully ill. You must come with me now. Our place is some distance from here." Bubu was all along eavesdropping. Exchanging a shy smile with her I got up with my caller and went out. A taxi cab was waiting outside. We got into it. The Sikh driver looked back and stared at me for a while and then started the taxi. As he did not ask the address, it was sure that he knew where we were to go. "My name is Meghla Mukherji. I have heard you are also a gifted writer. Isn't it so Dr. Ghosh?" The girl wanted to be friendly. The name was also dreamy. I said, "Leave that. Tell me, Miss Mukherji, what is the nature of the illness of your sister?"

The taxi speeded on along a broad road going out of the town. She opened her wallet. I wondered whether she would offer my fees right now. She brought out some cardamoms and pealed one and offered me. She touched my out-stretched palm with her fingers as she gave me the grains. We chewed and the taxi rolled on along the road by the side of the Shilabati river. On the other side of the river cliffs of small hills shone against the dim moonlight. For a moment the purpose of the journey was completely forgotten. She said, "My sister is suffering from a peculiar disease. No doctor could properly diagnose." I said, "Has it taken a bad turn today?" "Not exactly a bad turn." She looked outside at the moon. "But we do not want to take a chance."

The headlight awkwardly pierced the lovely trance of the dim moonlight. I had had never before such a beautiful drive. We got into the cool breeze. Her sari fluttered on my eyes as if to caress. But she looked away from me, towards the river and the moonshine, and the night outside.

"Dr. Ghosh," She broke the silence after a while, "In which of the Puja numbers will you contribute your short story this year? You must have already finished some as the Puja is not far off." This time I allowed myself to be dragged in the conversation concerning my personal affairs. I said, shyly, "Have you read my stories?" "Yes. But I donot like all of your stories. You cannot write love-stories at all." "Perhaps. But I find little time. Day and night I am pestered by patients." " As you are now being pestered by me," she said as she disarmingly laughed out loudly. But my thoughts took a different turn. I suddenly thought that we had already driven for about half an hour at a high speed. And it was night and I was with an unknown girl and a Sikh driver in a taxi. In spite of best efforts, my voice could not conceal a shudder. I said, "Miss Mukherji, how long will it take to reach?" "Why are you anxious, Dr. Ghosh? I shall not detain you for more than it is necessary."

But the peace of my mind which was once disturbed, was not restored. Not even when Meghla's feet absent-mindedly touched mine. She promptly apologised. After a brief silence, she spoke again. "Dr. Ghosh, if you donot mind, I'll tell you one thing which you may not like. I have told you a lie. The story of my sister's illness is all false." The driver suddenly looked at me and then continued driving. I had now understood the game. But I had no money, nor any gold buttons, nor any valuables with me, except my stethoscope and some medicine. But I was really afraid. I said, "Miss Mukherji, or whoever you might be! Please tell me what is all this nonsense."

For a full couple of minutes there was no answer. "No, I have not given you my false name," she said, slowly but more authoritatively than before. "I am Meghla. Yes, I become sometimes mysterious, as all womenfolk perhaps. But I donot tell many lies. Sometimes a lie is necessary. Otherwise I could not persuade such a busy writer and doctor as you to come with a girl like me."

I said, "Where am I to go and what am I to do?" She said, "You might have thought that you are being blackmailed or robbed of. If that was my desire, I could certainly do, but I would not have chosen you in that case. There are so many rich people in the town." "Then why I have been chosen this time," I said with a harshness in my voice. My fear gradually vanished and I tried to regain my self-possession. She said in the same, distant voice, "Don't think also that I am a bad girl."

The taxi entered a garden-house. It appeared there were no other houses in the vicinity. Several petromax lamps had illuminated the house. Two cars were also seen parked. Our Taxi stopped in the portico. Four or fiive young men were there, all neatly dressed. One of them opened the door to Meghla and said, "You are pretty prompt in returning, Meghla! Has your doctor come?" She gravely pointed out to me and said, "Let me introduce Dr. Ghosh to you. Dr. Ghosh, this is my brother-in-law Mr. Bose."

'You will get your full visit and even your detention charge.'

I said, as I got down from the taxi, "You gentlemen, I donot know what is going on around here, but arrange to send me back to my place. I donot like that a doctor should be disturbed by frolicsome or false calls."

"Dr. Ghosh," cried Meghla, "You will get your full visit and even your detention charge, if you call it so. And yet this is not a false call. You will see your patient soon." I said, also in a hot voice, "But why did you tell me on the way that the story of your sister's illness was all false?" "Dr. Ghosh," said the young man who was said to be the brother-in-law of Meghla. "Please excuse us for this episode. Now will you come to see the patient?" I decided to yield. I went with him and was ushered into a room inside the house. There was a young lady on the sofa and two elderly men. As we entered the two elderly men went out. "This is your patient Dr. Ghosh," said the brother-in-law. "Please talk with her. I shall wait outside. She is the sister of Meghla." He went out after telling something to the girl in whispers. I took my seat. She was a thin, faircomplexioned girl but since there was only one petromax at some distance behind her, I could not see her face distinctly. I said, "Tell me what is your trouble." She did not answer. I repeated my question. Then she said, "It is all extravagance on the part of sister. There was no need to trouble you at this hour of the night." She stopped. I waited for her resumption. After a while she said as if in a trance, "This is a marriage-night and they called in a doctor!" Still I waited for something more from her. She said, "You are the selection of sister. She also writes stories like you. And she loves me so much. Dr. Ghosh, let us exchange seats so that you may see me in the light, and discover my illness." She forced a smile. I got up. She took my chair and I took her sofa. I looked at her. The white light of the petromax fell on her face. I saw something but could not still understand. I said, "Unless you tell me clearly it is not possible for me to understand your case. Tell me what's your trouble?" "I will be married tonight, doctor," she said with the same strange smile. "The hour is 3-O' clock in the morning. My would-be husband is weeping in the other room. My sister, my brother-in-law, and a paid priest have come. They will observe the rituals. And you have also come. They all want to make me happy. But, my dear father who loved me so much before has forsaken me. If mother were alive I would not have been so thrown out. My brothers, my friends, — oh doctor, all except my goddess-like sister cut off their touch with me. I am such a wretched girl and today you all want to make me happy."

She sobbed. She wiped out tears with her handkerchief, and did not raise her head for some time. When she was calm again, I went up to her, asked for her hand to feel the pulse. She offered her hand. As I touched her hand, I felt as if I had touched a dried up skin. The pulse was alright. I returned to my seat.

She said, "No, doctor, I have now no illness. You have all assured me that I have nothing now. Once I was a patient, but now, I have completely recovered! I am like any other girl! When for the last time I came away from the Home, the affectionate Superintendent told me: "Rinu, do invite me when you marry, won't you?" I have not sent him any invitation. By some coincidence, you have come today, Dr. Ghosh. You must have been sent here by the goodwishes of the Superintendent. Today I recall his affection and care to me. I sometimes think he is my father. When the love and affection of my own father disappeared, it was he who took me up

She said, "No, doctor, I have now no illness."

in his arms. Dr. Ghosh, you write stories, won't you write a story on me?"

I sat closer. I looked at her face. The eye-lids were wet. The depressed nose, and slightly bent fingers confirmed what I had thought. She must have suffered from the scourage of leprosy.

I said, "When were you declared negative?" "It is one year hence," said she. "Father used to send remittances in time, wrote letters to me. But when I returned to our house after two years' stay in the Home, my father looked away for me; brothers suggested I should better take up some job and stay elsewhere, lest the younger sisters and brothers got infected. It was the most cruel moment in my life when I felt I was unwanted in my home. I decided to end my life. But for my ....."

At this stage, Meghla entered, in a hurry. She said, "Dr. Ghosh, this is my unfortunate sister. But she has made another good, very good boy, unhappy. I think you have heard something from Rinu. There is no time. I shall tell you the details later if you want to know. We have arranged the marriage of my sister Rinu with Ramen, who will be introduced to you shortly. When we forsook our loving sister, she was welcomed by Ramen. We have arranged their marriage this night. But Rinu, your patient, has become mad. She says she won't spoil the life of Ramen." I said, "What am I to do?" "We did not tell Rinu about the marriage at first. We came here in the morning saying that we would have a picnic. Ramen also came. Our father as well as Ramen's parents are dead against the marriage. But Ramen would not marry any other girl. When Rinu was at last told of our arrangement, she became childishly adamant. We could not make her agree. That's why you were selected. Your name was suggested by me. Rinu agreed that she would accept your decision whether this marriage would in any way be harmful to anybody."

Rinu was sitting with a distant look in her eyes. She suddenly stood up and said, "No, I donot like to hear any sermon from anybody. I have learnt very well to understand the negative reports when I was for two long years in the Home. The Superintendent said I was as healthy as any other girl. What else Dr. Ghosh will tell today? See my reports, doctor, and say that I am alright! And Ramen is weeping in the other room."

Rinu suddenly broke into an irresistable fit of cries. She said, "Dr. Ghosh, tell me what is the value of the negative reports. Those are scraps of paper. If I were completely recovered, why would father disown me in the family? Why everybody looks at me with fearful eyes? Why my friends have left me? Tell me, why my brothers and sisters also treated me as an unwanted person. Tell me, Dr. Ghosh, what is the value of those silly negative reports. Tell me, all of you, tell me, how can I make Ramen happy with such a burdensome life?" We were all as silent as the walls. Rinu said, amidst sobs, "Sister, I have made up my mind. I will marry. You go and complete the arrangements. You go and complete the arrangements."

X X X

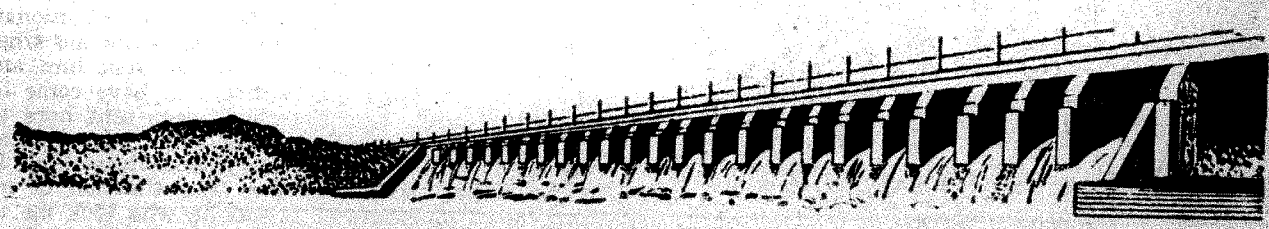
When I returned home by the same taxi, it was early in the night. Bubu was standing by the window all the time. She said, "What was the matter? I thought you would never return from that girl!" I put forth an excuse. I decided to keep the story to myself for some days.

DEAD MOTHER REGAINED & AFTER

(Continued from page 112)

village again. Nobody knew where he had gone. All search and enquiries were in vain. His Mama and Mamima died broken-hearted within two years, cursing the doctor and his witch-wife.

Then after 15 years, I saw Prithvis the other day near a Calcutta dustbin, in front of my sister's house, where I was staying to celebrate the marriage ceremony of my niece. I was taken aback at the sight ..... it was so painful, so heart-breaking, so unbelievable!

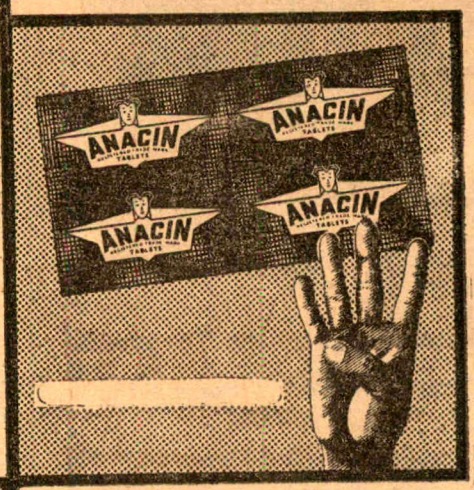


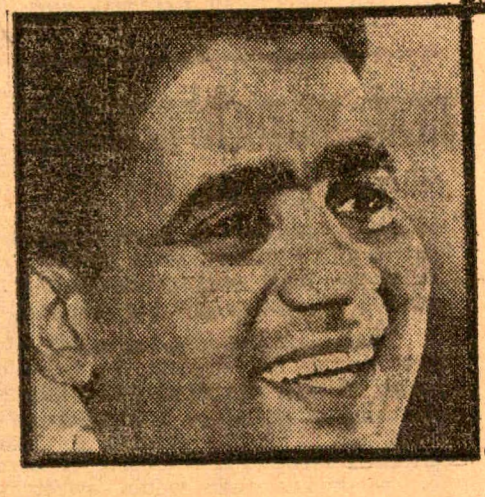
welcome, sure relief from

HEADACHE

Anacin is so effective because it is a combination of medicines—just like a doctor's prescription—to give fast, all-over relief.

- Anacin contains a unique combination of ingredients to relieve pain quickly.
- Anacin relieves nervous tension—a common cause of headache.
- Anacin helps reduce fever from colds and influenza.
- Anacin overcomes depression and fatigue that often accompany pain.





ANACIN *is better because it acts 4 ways*

R&R

Registered User:
GEOFFREY MANNERS & CO. LTD.

RED ROSE

By H. BASU

THE scene is laid at the corner of a Railway Station. The place is tense with exitement. A motely crowd has assembled at the place to receive one of their brethren, Ratan by name, a habildar of the Railway police who has been awarded a police medal for his gallant service. He is returning with the decoration. The crowd is composed of a variety of male, female, young and old members of a helpless band of refugees coming from East Pakistan who have settled at or around the station and somehow eking out an existence. Some of them could not turn an honest penny. There are, of course, one or two fortunate few who have managed to secure a job and found their feet. Ratan Habildar is one of these fortunate few. After a few moments of tense excitement a taxi is seen at a distance. In a minute it pulled up in front of the crowd. Ratan Habildar alights from it. The crowd in a trice gets excited and offer their congratulations. Sadananda Bairagi tears himself away from the crowd and goes forward holding a cup in his left hand and coming before him first puts sandal paste on his forehead. A loud cry of "Ratan Habildar Ki Jai" raised by the excited crowd rends the sky. Then every body comes forward in turn and offers his warm congratulation. The Habildar accepts the offers with folded hands. But he is sullen and mute and does not spea word in return. At the rear of the crowd rema standing a lean fellow named Sakhi Babu. Ag upon him and he is bent down with cares anxieties.

He slowly goes forward. When every b has had his turn, he advanced slowly towa the Habildar. Tears were rolling down his ch He was holding a red rose in his hand. He co before the Habildar and raises the flower was with tears to offer him as an humble present. I split second the whole scene was electrified. Ha dar snatches the red rose from his hand and d away like a shooting star from the scene hold the flower close to his breast. He weeps and looked as though tears would sweep it away. crowd began to melt away, every body went b to his place in the station platform to do his her daily work. Sakhi Babu is crest fallen ; drags his weary steps somehow to reach the cor of the station platform and he has selected the pl for his shelter. The death of the beautiful girl ca Puspa as beautiful as a red rose was a big blow him. He brought her up as his daughter when ti migrated to India from East Pakistan. Puspa deared herself not only to Sakhi Babu but

to all those who have come to this part of India from East Pakistan. Puspa was too good. What an amazing fund of fun she had for the elders. Children also came in for a fair share of it. She had a soft corner in her heart for Ratan Habildar and would not breathe a word about to any body. Nevertheless the interested people got wind of this and did not miss an opportunity to tease her by making some passing remarks about it. She did not like it and scoffed and frowned at them and used to remain sullen and mute.

Leaving the reception party Ratan Habildar began to run like a deer chased by a tiger and did not slacken his pace for a moment to look back or take a rest until he got to a spot in the station yard about a mile or so from the main station. There he stopped weary and out of breath and fell down on the ground. After sometime he recovered from his swoon and gathered up strength to take his seat on a slap of stone lying there and began to meditate on the past events that came crowding into his head. This is the place where the wagon breaking incidents took place and the Railway Police were at their wit's end how to capture the culprits. Strict and strong censure was coming daily from the higher authorities but they could not track down the dacoits. They had a feeling in their bones that some members of the police force were involved and they were suspicious of Ratan Habildar. This secret leaked out and Sada, a tea boy, came to know this. He went to serve tea to the station master when a conversation was going on between him and another Railway Officer. The station master mentioned that Ratan Habildar was going to be arrested as a member of the waggon breaking gang. This remark arrested the attention of Sada and he reported this matter casually to Puspa because Sada came in for a fair share of her affection.

Puspa — the very name — stirred him. He sighed heavily and his head drooped down to his breast where he stuck in the red rose presented by Sakhi Babu at the reception. He endearingly called the girl Puspa by the name of 'Red Rose' and he called her by that name whenever he met her in secret. This girl was a rare girl that can hardly be found in a thousand in any society. The story of early life of Puspa came back to his mind. They belonged to the same village and Ratan knew Puspa from her infancy up. She was born into a local Zamindar family. She was brought up along with her brothers in a different way. When she was hardly a teenager, she could swim across big tanks, climb trees, ride bicycles and was good at games. She cut a good figure at school. She was streets ahead of all girls of her age. Shortly after India was divided all the members of her family were done to death. He later heard from Puspa that she had been rescued by a young Muslim student of the University whom she called 'Dada' and who risking his life helped her to cross the border at night. It was a stroke of luck that she met Sakhi Babu who was also fleeing from his native land. He somehow managed to cross the border. Sakhi Babu felt pity for the desolate girl because unkind fate made him cast in his lot with her. He loved the girl like his own daughter and took her in his custody and kept her with him upto the last moment of her life. Then Ratan had thought that he and Puspa could be united in marriage and start a happy family life. But alas; fate ordained otherwise. Why? He preferred to say that destiny played him a trick. And he began to recall the entire story that had all the interest of a drama put on the stage. The scene started when Puspa one day said to him "well, I hear you will be chucked off."

"Who told you so?"

"Why, it is Sada. The boy was going to serve tea to the Station master when he was saying 'Ratan Habildar has been reported against for his negligence of duty and moreover he is being suspected of being an accomplice in the crime of the waggon breaking gang." Ratan got startled. He ran to Sakhi Babu and stretching his hand said "Please read it and say if I am going to lose my job."

Puspa was standing beside him. She flared up at once and said, "Leave it, don't be cowardly, go and do your duty, as you should. Your palm cannot save you, your hand can do it". Ratan kept on staring at her. At this she flew into a rage and said, "what is the good of staring at me for nothing. How will you manage things and make ends meet?"

"All I have, said to you, Puspa."

"Very good, just go and mind your business."

Ratan heard it as if in a trance when a Railway Constable appeared at the spot and said to Ratan, "Master Babu has sent for you."

"Yes, I am coming" and Ratan at once left the place.

Sakhi Babu asked Puspa, "Tell me frankly if you are in love with Ratan. If it is, you are going to ruin your life."

Puspa was staggered at this sudden remark from Sakhi Babu. She did not utter a single word and ran away from the place. She felt compassion for Ratan for she had been a bit too hard on him.

It was midnight. The sky was overcast with cloud and it was very dark. It had rained. Puspa was brooding over the day's events. She could not have a wink of sleep. Something was tormenting her. She remembered that when Ratan went to see the Station Master he looked very much depressed. She has not met her for the rest of the

"When have you come, my Red Rose ?"

day. Has he lost the job? She was rude to him she repented of it. She could not check herself. She knew that Ratan had night duty on that night. She could not lie down. She got up and slipped away most stealthily from the place and began to proceed towards the yard. She was walking along the side of the rail track. The darkness seemed to engulf her but she was so absorbed in her thoughts that she did not mind the danger, as if her feet dragged her towards the spot unknowingly where she could meet her lover.

At last she reached the yard. Rain had stopped long ago. The wind was cold. The red lamps spread over the path looked like so many sentinels. A few minutes before, the engine of a goods train about to start was seen standing there steaming off furiously. Turning round, Puspa found a long flash of light coming from a torch aimed at the waiting goods waggons. She followed it up and found that the light was coming from Ratan's torch. Ratan was amazed to see her and said, "when have you come, my Red Rose?" Puspa did not reply. Ratan took the gun from his shoulder and handed her the torch and said. "What's the matter, won't you talk with me?"

"No, no, no", roared Puspa furiously.

"All right" — Habildar began to go ahead. Puspa could not control herself. She suddenly asked, "Habildar, do you love me intensely?"

— "Why this talk now."

— "It is my curiosity."

— I say really, I am sick of this life, come, let us marry."

— "Marriage?", said Puspa, "How will you manage?"

— "Why? What I get is enough for us two to live on."

— "No, that can't be."

— "Why not, open your mind and say frankly what comes in your way."

Puspa remained speechless like a piece of stone but Ratan became desperate that night and asked "shall I take it that you do not love me?" She became restless and pressed her hand upon Ratan's mouth and said "please don't utter it".

"All right, then next month....."

Next month?" interrupted Puspa dolefully.

A waggon was slowly moving in front. It came to a dead stop at some distance. It was 2 O' clock in the morning.

Turning the waterproof into a pillow, Habildar was lying there and Puspa was rubbing over his head with her caressing fingers. The gun was lying beside him. "Habildar, Habildar," suddenly called Puspa but Habildar was fast asleep. It was pitch dark all around. Suddenly a terrific sound came from within the waggon waiting at a distance. Puspa grew restless. She remembered that Habildar had been suspected of being an accomplice in the crime of waggon breaking. He may lose his job. He must be saved. Not a moment to loses, she picked the gun up, called the Habildar once or twice but got no response. So she stealthily advanced towards the waggon. Some people were dragging some loaded bags from within the wagon. Suddenly there arose a loud report from a gun. There were a few exchanges of shots in quick succession. Habildar was startled at the sound and found to his amazement that the gun was missing. He could neither find Puspa near by. In frantic steps he advanced quickly towards the waggon.

Suddenly something fell tumbling to his f
He lighted the torch and found his Red R
bleeding profusely and pressing her chest with
hand she held up the gun. The Habildar at o
took it in his hand. He was at his wit's end.

"What is this, my Red Rose?"

"Oh, the price of love", gasped Puspa.

She gasped again. "It is only for saving
from the ignominy of being an accomplice in
crime of breaking the waggon. I could not st
it, so I have saved you with my life". She could
proceed further and lay still and motionless at
feet of her beloved. The Red Rose is faded for e

Next morning when the sky was aglow w
the first rays of the rising sun a band of men
seen coming towards the spot. Habildar saw
culprits in the custody of the police officers.
at once stood up and offered the customary sal
Tears were rolling down his cheek. Pointing
Puspa, the senior officer asked "who is
woman?" In a trembling voice Habildar repl
"She is my wife." Taking his hat off, the offi
looked at Puspa. In her forehead was a big
mark, sign of her being married to Habildar.
blood was flowing from her mortal wound.
mark was shining brightly in the morning sun.

CONFLICT

(Continued from page 102)

a bit as if to look at the morning sun. . . . The fut
man was already pressing his demand on the wo

Suddenly Kamala heard the shriek of the S
thal girl "Hey Maiji, Babuji mar giya". What—d
Kamala rushed to her husband's bedside. She
not notice her foot caught and displaced the pil
on which rested Khokan's head and the little bl
ket that covered part of his body.

Yes, Manoj was dead! Before the last attc
at treatment was made, he had been summoned
appear before his creator. Now with his lifeless b
Kamala may do whatever she liked. She can str
her head against the wooden bedstead and bl
herself but even so, would she get a drop of me
from Manoj? Would he ever say "What's all
childishness, Kamala, and draw her closer to
lovingly? Hasn't Manoj become hard as stone
her unbelievable indifference to save his life?

From Kamala's sharp cries, the doctor und
stood what had happened when he returned. Pus
as an automaton, he approached the door of
room probably to be sure about the event. No th
is no scope for doubt. Fighting hard for a breath
air from the wide world with its inexhaustible
of air everywhere, Manoj Chowdhury has at
accepted defeat and is now staring at him as if w
surprise at his cruel miserliness!

The doctor turned his eyes away. But wh
lying there on the ground covered all over with
small quilt? "Oh my God! who has done this to
child?" He broke out as he removed the cover
picked him up.

How could the dying child be expected to
alive under the weight of the quilt covering
entire face. He too has been prevented mercile
from drawing breath from the inexhaustible flow
air all around. Although defeated like his father
eyes did not have that surprised look. They w
just closed in an attitude of complete surrender.

*(Translated from the original Bengali by Bi
Chakraborty)*

HALF AND HALF

(Continued from page 120)

waste paper from the basket and came out. That was the box which was thrown into the lake, the one that contained the money got drowned in the drawer in the paper heap.

I hummed a tune and so did Ray. The parties looked at each other. Evidently they looked bewildered. The face of the girl turned pale and that of the youth deep brown.

After the act of concealment Singh acted definitely well in the comedy at the lake and later. But he met with a tragic end when the treasure could be traced nowhere in the drawer after a diligent search. He was to leave that very day with the money.

The matter was clear now. From the keyboard somebody had got hold of the key to Miss Myer's room and while the two young people had gone to the lake helped himself with the booty. Probably he had seen Singh hiding the box.

Ray said the question of the third party never comes. For on the plea of keeping the key on the board, Singh had got hold of it from the lady and put it in his own coat pocket. On their return after the comedy, as you call it, Singh played the same trick—handed over the key to her declaring that he had brought it from the board.

So there is but one conclusion, said Jatin and the conclusion was stated by Singh:

"And to play jokes with me the lady has shifted the box to some better place."

Naturally she flared up.

"The liar, the swindler, the thief. The devil now wants to place the whole jam on my shoulders, *Satan!*"

I made her quiet and asked them to keep the peace. And came my observations.

"Of course, Mr. Singh will be charged with laying a false report at the thana. The room of the lady will of necessity be searched in consequence of his new charge. The whole performance will afford a nice holiday pleasure to every visitor to the station. Of course, nothing will happen to the lady if the box is not found in her possession. Singh might be convicted for his lies. But the reputation of both the parties will reach the region known as pardition."

I took up a pleasant position to bring the parties to reason. From my experience of criminals, I came to a conclusion.

"Miss Myers when are you going to be wedded the Kaddusi as your ancient nation calls the ceremony ?"

The yellow colour came back to the face. There was just an indication of amusement.

"Why my wedding has been fixed to take place on the 17th of December next."

"All right you will have to get new clothes and jewels to deck yourself for the happy occasion."

Now she smiled and the atmosphere became a bit easy.

I took her apart. I delivered a lecture. She was sure to get off. But the police and the search and the arrest probable will all combine to ruin her reputations and career. The other party is sure to get convicted in the long run for instituting a false and malicious complaint. But all your friends and others will believe in the language of our proverb, that at least half of what is alleged is true.

Her face changed hue.

"Oh why should I pass through all these horrors ?" She said and then almost shouted out—"Oh Ely Elohi! What am I to do—I better commit suicide."

I patted her paternally and said—

"Listen Marie, you are rich. Five thousand rupees mean nothing to you. You pay me five thousand in an hour. I shall settle the whole affair. Yes the man will apologise. Personally I want no fees".

"How can that smooth down all the trouble ?"

"Leave all that to me my good girl Marie. Run and bring the money."

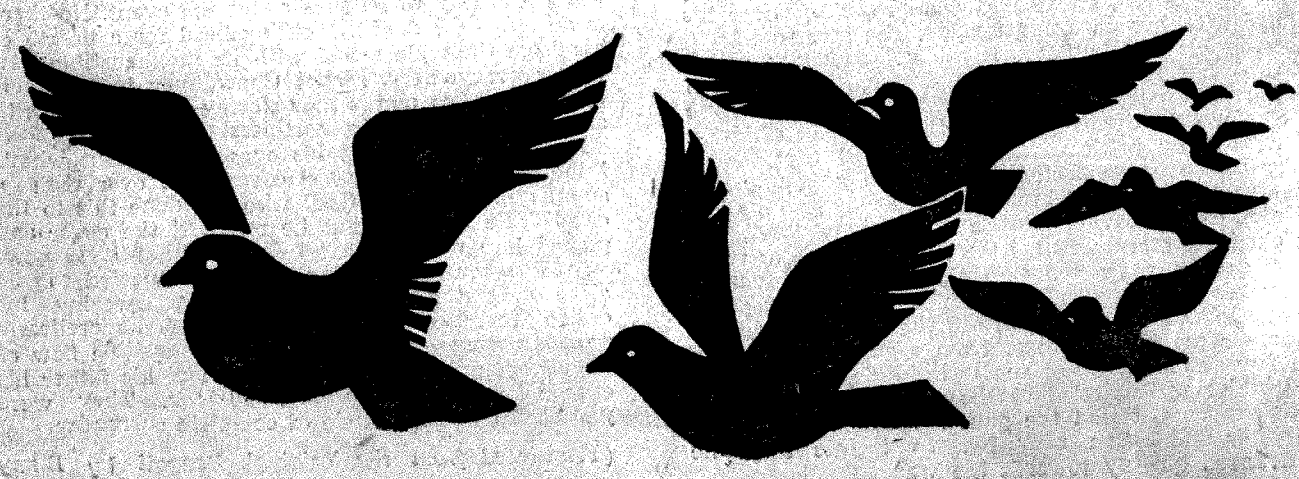
She burst out—"The thief! the scoundrel! Put money inside my drawer. Should I not earn the money? Any one would have taken it to befool him. The actor! I was right in taking the box! I have thrown the empty box into the lake. His name was not stamped on the wads of notes."

I heard quietly and nodded approval.

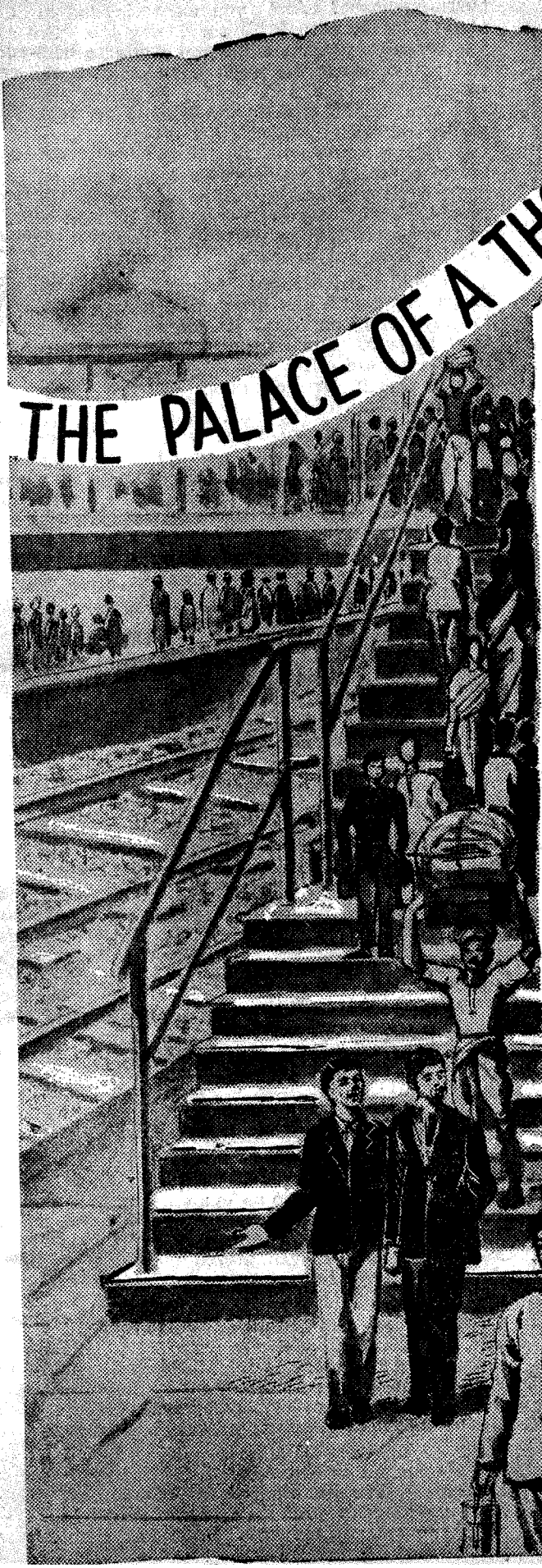
"Bad man. Let him pay a fine of five thousand for his folly. Let Jehova save you and your reputation. Yet do not forget to invite me at the wedding. "I shall enjoy the mutton after your priest sacrifices the lamb."

Next I had to tackle Onkermull. He seemed to find a bottle of drinking water in the midst of a desert.

"Well half and half. Thank you. That will do."



THE PALACE OF A THOUSAND DOORS



By ANNADA SANKAR RAY

THE train was standing in the station when we arrived but it pulled out as we were coming down the steps of the overbridge. Those who could ran to catch it, jumped in. The coolie started to run too, with the baggage on his head. The Kumar stopped him with a sign or he too might have caught it.

The Kumar's friend, Rajib, had come to see him off. "It's my fault," he said, "I didn't get you here on time."

"You saw how many people caught the train, didn't you? Merely by walking a little faster or running? It's not your fault. My reluctance is to blame. It offends my self-esteem. I've missed many a train in this age of bustle and hurry, pushing and shoving, grabbing and snatching. This one is not the first nor is it the last. Let it go, Rajib. It's nice to have a little more time to talk to you." Meghbaran, the Kumar protested.

They climbed the steps of the overbridge and recrossed it. "There is no train before midnight," Rajib said, "What will you do until then? Sitting in the station? Come back to the house with me. You can have your dinner on time at least."

"No, no. I don't want to give your wife a second surprise." Meghbaran shook his head, "She took the first shock with a smile. I called at your house this morning so unexpectedly! Twice in one day is too much."

Luckily there was a Refreshment Room in the station. Meghbaran entered and ordered dinner. Dinner for two. "Rajib," he said, "send a message

to your wife and ask her permission to dine here with me. We're old friends. We're meeting after fourteen years. Let us make it an occasion to remember by dining together tonight here in the station."

"I've fallen into the hands of a Mogul. There's no way out. He's a zemindar of the Mogul period even if he's not a Mogul actually himself. That's just as bad. And he's come from the land of the Moguls."

"Once upon a time," Meghbaran sighed heavily, "a species of dinosaur existed that was called zemindar. They're fossils now. Why do you put me to shame? Why should I be a fossil? I have other things to do with my life."

They had spent the day wandering around Santiniketan, seeing the sights. Their conversation had centred around the centenary celebrations of the poet Rabindranath Tagore's birth. They had also discussed the plight of Hindus in East Pakistan. There had been no opportunity for a personal talk. They seated themselves in chairs they had brought out on to the verandah of the waiting room, on the garden side. Drinks were placed before them.

"I can't do that sort of thing any more," Meghbaran regretted having missed the train, "not at my time of life. There was time enough otherwise."

"There was time to run," Rajib condoled with him, "What's the good of racing around? Do you want to be a B. V. Gupta?"

The famous mathematician, B. V. Gupta, once ran after a train that was pulling out and overtook it at the next station. But, in boarding it, he was lamed for life.

"To run after," the phrase set another sort of train going in Meghbaran's thoughts. "Do people only run after trains?", he spoke almost to himself, "Have you never seen anybody run after success? After power? After money? After women? They get what they want in the end. But they are lamed for life. They don't even know that they're crippled."

"Crippled?" Rajib took him up," You mean mutilated, disfigured. Tainted characters."

"You've still got your college habit of arguing over words, I see, even after thirty-five years. Drop it." Meghbaran spoke with affection, "What a brilliant boy you were! When I came here today, to this sacred place of pilgrimage, it was of you I was thinking. It wasn't possible to let you know in advance. You were not expecting me. Your wife has never even seen me. What care you have taken of me all day—both of you! You are reluctant to let me go. I too am reluctant to leave. That's the real reason I missed the train. Our subconscious is not quite willing to say goodbye for another fourteen years. If I live so long!"

"How was I to know you were going to stay in Pakistan like a stupid!" Rajib's voice was soft, "What I'm wondering is whether the food served in the Refreshment Room of this station will be at all to the liking of an Emir like you. Will you be able to eat it?"

"Don't worry about that, Bablu," Meghbaran went back to the days of his early youth, "You know, don't you, I eat whatever is available wherever I happen to be. With an Emir I dine like an Emir, with a fakir like a fakir. Food is no problem for me. Can we know people without wining and dining with them? Or learn what there is to be learnt? With sahibs I am a sahib, with Moguls a Mogul, a Vaishnava with Vaishnavas and a Baul with Bauls."

"Do you remember?" Rajib too was caught in the spell of their early days, "how many times you dined with me as my guest at that Mechhua Bazar boarding house? And you were invited to dine at Kyd Street with Professor Tenby too. I've seen you lunch on peanuts while you chatted at Gol Dighi and you've spent the night on a single cup of tea on excursions. You've been seen eating sik-kabab and sami-kabab with your Muslim friends. But you've always been a light eater. You sample everything, refuse nothing, but do not become addicted to anything. You never ask for a second helping. What you really wanted was to get to know people. Dining together was only an aid to help you accomplish your purpose. You were hungry not for food but to learn."

Meghbaran stroked his pointed French-cut beard. His beard, and his moustache too, had begun to grey. His hair also. He looked somewhat older than he was. The imprint of thought was on his broad forehead. He was a tall, handsome man. Clouds, megh, are of many colours. Meghbaran was dark.

"That hunger drove you to abandon science and take up the arts. You gave up economics and turned to philosophy. I handed the palm to you when I discovered you in the Persian class. I heard that you had studied Persian in school too. It was your family tradition to know Persian, like the wearing of loose trousers and jackets. Your interest in music was more than professional, almost a sadhana. I found you tapping the head of a drum sometimes and sometimes playing the sitar. You could even pick out tunes on the piano. And I watched you on the playing field. You were good at games, all kinds of games, football, cricket, hockey, tennis. You never tried to win. You played for the fun of it. I've beaten you badly at tennis. But where could I find a style like yours?" Rajib spoke with his old admiration.

"Bablu," Meghbaran said, "You make me feel thirty-five years younger. It's as though I'm back in those good old days. I breathe the same air. You may not know my subsequent history. I learned to dance in England—the waltz, for trot, charleston and—now there—I forget—the dance that was originally a folk dance in Spain or Argentina. No, I can't think of the name now. You don't know anything about all that!"

Rajib thought for a minute and said, "The tango."

"Tango." Meghbaran explaimed excitedly, "My legs went limp from dancing the tango. Father found out about it somehow. He cabled. I came home like a good boy. I was told my marriage had been arranged. Two puppets took vows. After the ceremony the head of the family sent me to look after the estates. The business of the zemindary was conducted in the old, established way, according to fixed rules. My officers looked after it. All I had to do was to keep an eye on them and remind them every now and then that they had a boss. I rode horseback, hunted and went pig sticking with English friends. I even played polo once or twice a year. I never backed out. Nobody was going to call me a cowardly rice-eating Bengali."

Rajib was also feeling nostalgic. "Santu," he said, "life has brought me many gifts but there's nothing to compare with those college days! Where's the leisure to remember! My heart fills with the sweet agony of young manhood again when I meet some one from those years and we speak of them."

Meghbaran was moved to declaim; *"jouvana-bedanarase uchchhal amar dinguli"* (My days overflowing with the sap of the agony of youth).

Rajib interrupted him. "The last time I saw you was at Mymensingh."

"Yes, Bablu. At your club. I wanted to call at your residence but there was no time. There was a big meeting at the Durga bari. It lasted until 10 o'clock that night. It was just before partition." Meghbaran recalled the occasion.

Rajib remembered that evening at the club. They had met after a long period of years and played tennis together. Meghbaran had lost. Drinks followed.

"What will you do when Pakistan comes into existence ? Rajib had asked, "Will you stay or leave ?"

"I'll stay," Meghbaran had answered.

"What gives you the courage ? What security will you have ?" Rajib expressed his anxiety, "We are all getting ready to leave."

"The inherent goodness in man's nature is not leaving. I have faith in it." Meghbaran proclaimed.

"What if you lose that faith some day ?" Rajib had questioned him.

"That faith is the breath of my life. Where is a family without dissension and strife ? There are and always will be people who, in spite of that, will keep together, bring together, be peaceful and make peace." Meghbaran spoke with feeling. "Who is to do it if I don't ? Of what use will the training my life has given me be if I shirk ? What will be the good of having known so many people and mixed with them ? Why have I studied music under Muslim ustads? Why have I sought a clue to the spiritual disciples of the Sufis from Pirs?"

That had been fourteen years ago. "Santu," Rajib voiced the thoughts that came to him, "Haven't you lost your illusions yet ? Are you going to stay on that side of the borders ?"

"Lost my illusions ?" Meghbaran was astonished, "What illusions ?"

"You said last time that you had faith in the natural goodness of human nature. Do you still have it ?" Rajib asked.

"By human nature we understand an ev tionary process extending over thousands of ye at each step in which a gain has been made in s control and civilised behaviour. By the human we understand a vast race which dwells all the earth. What has happened that I should render my faith and migrate to this side of border ?" Meghbaran asked a counter-ques "You must understand, Bablu," he continued, " the people among whom I live are simple, unsop ticated people. A beard as grey as jute was d ched in tears when its owner was told the Ch Kumar might leave and not come back a Again and again I've explained to them that no loves me the way they do. I'll stay where the love. God is there."

"Tell me the truth," Rajib was moved, "D you find it hard to be separated from your kinsf Almost all the members of your family are on side."

The Badhurani herself lived in Calcutta. had gone there long before partition. They only one child. A daughter. She had been educ at the Loreto Convent School where her m placed her when she was very young. The Ba rani resided in Calcutta in order to look after occupying a part of Pirnagar House. The dau was married now. There was no particular re why the Badhurani should not return to Pirn but she was terrified of Pakistani Muslims. Ne did she wish to return to the old ways and live hind the purdah. She had had a taste of free

Meghbaran grew pensive, "It would not be to drag Bishakha back to Pirnagar when she ob so strongly and of course I can't be constantly porting for duty over here. Can any man live out his work ? I've opened a workshop. I'm day and night. Love makes itself known thr labour. In this there is no difference bet Hindus and Muslims. Every single one of workers is a shareholder. Every shareholder worker. Nobody can qualify to be a director r

Drink was placed before them.

ly by purchasing a hundred shares. Each of us works. He works by the sweat of his brow. Our thesis is that work is wealth. Wealth without work behind it is not allowed to enter our concern. If any does get in we get rid of it as soon as possible."

2

Rajib had, in the meantime, sent a note to his wife through a rickshaw puller. He had requested her to make a trunk call to the Badhurani and tell her the Kumar had missed the train as well as to permit him to stay with the Kumar until midnight.

His wife's reply greatly relieved the two friends. It was brief, "Compared to the Badhurani I am deprived of very little. I've informed her."

"This is what we call a true wife," Meghbaran expressed his esteem, "She doesn't think of herself. She's concerned for the wife of her husband's friend. Let me thank a thousand times over. Not her. Myself. How fortunate I am! How fortunate!"

"Stop it. Stop it. What a scene you're staging. Meghbaran! People do such small services for each other, don't they? Do they expect thanks?" Rajib protested.

"My expectations are unlimited. I expect everything from everybody. They expect the same from me. When I was a young man I never thanked anybody for anything nor did I accept gratitude from anybody. The laws of love are the same for all. God's love enfolds each and every one of us. Can one say thank you for love or accept thanks? "Meghbaran answered his own question", No. You won't do that. I thought so too when I was young."

"And now that you are not young?" Rajib Lochan was curious.

"I'm not totally bankrupt yet." Meghbaran said earnestly, "but I've suffered one blow after another, even from those whom I considered closest to me. As for my kinsfolk who is not related to me? Are those into whose home I was born my only kin? Are those into whose family I married therefore my closest of kin? As I was saying, I have been hurt so often and so deeply that I thank everybody now at every other word, for the good things. Even my own wife. And my daughter. Strange, isn't it? I even thank myself when nobody else is around. How fortunate I am! How fortunate!"

Rajib laughed. "There was a boy like that in college," he said. "I think his name was Mohsin Ali Khan. Whenever he made a catch in cricket he'd be so excited he'd shout, 'Thank I! Thank I!' Do you remember him?"

"Of course. Of course. You tried to correct his English. You're incurable in such things, you know. And he turned up his nose at you and became, by Government nomination, Deputy Superintendent of Police. He made a good reputation for himself in the service and retired from a high post. Yasin has settled in Pakistan. Whenever he succeeds in doing something difficult he still cries, 'Thank I! Thank I'. 'He's a good man." Meghbaran spoke of him warmly.

The two friends were deep in talk of the past when the waiter from the refreshment room appeared. He salaamed. Dinner was ready. Meghbaran realised that he himself was not ready. He went for a wash. So did Rajib.

"Then," Meghbaran took up the napkin and spread it on his lap. "A timely dinner was in store for me. Of course a daintier and better repast was waiting for me in Calcutta at 10 o'clock. But hunger also has an auspicious hour. Once the hour is past one eats only to fill one's stomach. There's no satisfaction in it."

"Time. Time is the thing, "Meghbaran went on, "Even ambrosia is tasteless out of season."

Rajib sensed that Meghbaran had something more to say and that this was the preface. He began to eat silently.

"Have you heard that Pirnagar House has been sold?" Meghbaran asked.

No, I hadn't heard. When?" Rajib was surprised.

"About five years ago. Father died suddenly. Those who shared the property said they wanted to set up separate establishments. They wanted cash. Each took his share and made the arrangements that suited him best. Bisakha's residence is on the other side of the Dhakuria Lakes. You'll have no difficulty in finding it. The name is one the gate: The Badhurani Bahadura of Pirnagar". Whether Meghbaran was laughing or crying was not exactly clear.

Rajib was staggered. "How can she be the Badhurani Bahadura when the wives of your elder brothers are still living?" he asked.

"The eldest lives in Brindavan. My eldest brother died there. He became a Vaishnava in his old age." Meghbaran spoke haltingly, "My second brother is anglicised in his ways. In the old days he would have lived in England like an Englishman. As that is no longer possible he has purchased a tea garden in Assam, and lives the life of a planter. His wife, the second Badhurani, has to live in Shillong for the sake of appearances."

"So the family has broken up," Rajib was sorry.

"The country has broken up,,' Meghbaran said sadly, "What's a famiy!"

"I feel for you," Rajib's sympathy was in his voice.

"It's not that which distresses me," Meghbaran spoke slowly as if, his words concealed a mystery.

"What is it?" Rajib asked in a low voice.

"I'll tell you," Meghbaran grew pensive.

Rajib did not urge him any further for the moment. There were people all around them. Though they were busy with their own affairs he changed the subject.

"How much longer are you going to be in Calcutta?" he asked.

"My visa is running out," Meghbaran answered',' and I have my workshop over there. Who is to look after it? We've spent all this time talking about the way things are breaking up. The family-the country. The Padma river breaks down its own banks when it's in flood. It's like that. As one bank disappears another rises. I have taken upon myself the onus of building the new bank. The old one is crumbling faster than the new is rising, that's all. I feel a kind of elation, a kind of hunger, for it, Bablu,"

"Hunger?" Rajib was astonished.

"A little while ago you said that when I was young I was hungry to learn, to know. I still have appetite at this age. I'm hungry to build, to build something which will not be for my own children. Of course I have no son but those I work with are like sons to me. They are the future. They are the inheritors. I have a tremendous appetite for work. What we are building is being built by labour. My labour and theirs, joined together. How proud it makes me feel!"

Meghbaran sat up straight.

"Really, Santu," Rajib was enthusiastic, "let me congratulate you." He stretched his hand across the table to shake the hand of his friend.

"Some day Pirnagar will be an industrial centre. The outlook for the place is bright even though

It did not open when he knocked on it or when he struck it a blow.

the House of Pirnagar is disintegrating. It's just another flood. I'm not going to lament the passing of a class or family just because it happens to be my own, Bablu. I am with those who are coming up from the bottom, who are transforming nature by their labour. Their triumph is my triumph." Meghbaran was radiant.

Meghbaran, always a light eater, now at less than ever. After dinner they carried their cups of coffee back to the verandah and sat down.

The sky had filled with stars. The two friends went down into the garden and walked about for a while. Then they came back to their chairs.

"We've got to keep ourselves awake," Meghbaran had a formula, "We'll walk when we feel sleepy and rest when we don't. Rest comes after work, work after rest."

Their converse became more intimate as the night deepened. Meghbaran began to speak.

"I read a story when I was a boy. Perhaps it was in the Arabian Nights. There was a prince. He was born and brought up in a great palace, a palace with a thousand doors. Every door he touched opened to him. He entered room after room and found each of them filled with treasure. There were gems and precious stones and jewels of all kinds. There were articles of luxury and everything that can be enjoyed. Musical instruments and the appurtenances of knowledge.

"Nothing a man could desire was lacking. Everything he could think of was there, everything he could seek. The prince was dazzled. It would take a lifetime to look at all the precious things in a single room. He tore himself away by force. Life does not last forever. He wanted to see what was in all the rooms.

His mother answered 'there is danger there'.

"One day he came upon a door that did not open at his touch. It did not open when he knocked on it or when he struck it a blow. Nine hundred and ninety-nine doors in the palace opened to him but one remained closed. He could not understand why. It astounded him. He asked his mother the reason. His mother said, 'Nine hundred and ninety-nine doors open to you. Isn't that enough? Why do you want to see what is in that room?'

"I am not the vizier of this kingdom nor a ministerial officer. Nor am I a servant or a beggar. I am the son of the rightful ruler. The prince. The whole palace will belong to me some day. Shall I not take a look at my possessions? Or is this room excluded from my sovereignty, my rights curtailed?'

" 'Nobody has ever entered that room,' his mother answered, 'there is danger there.'

"Everyone else said the same thing. There is danger in that room. No one had ever opened the door to find out what the danger was. Not a single prince! Why should anyone deliberately seek danger? For the sake of what? Did the palace lack anything? All a man could desire was there in the nine hundred and ninety-nine rooms. In abundance. No robber could steal it all. Why then should he knock at the closed door? When the prince tried to answer them people laughed. Had anybody ever heard of such a thing? That door had always been closed, from the beginning of time.

"Little by little the prince became convinced that the world beyond the closed door was the real world, the free world. The door was like the door to the inner apartments of the palace and it was locked from the other side. The people on this side were not aware that they were locked in. They could eat, drink and be merry but they should not try to get out! Anybody who succeeded in getting out would no longer be a prisoner. The whole of the outer world was shut out by a single door. The prince felt it. Until that door was opened all the other nine hundred and ninety-nine doors were, in a way, also closed though they were not locked.

"The prince became deeply absorbed in meditating ways to open the closed door. He paid no attention to the other nine-hundred and ninety-nine. How was he to cross that forbidding, iron-like, portal? How could he get to the other side of it? He was of course aware that the attractions on this side were far from negligible. It was on this side that he would one day find his kingdom, his queen, his bed of gold, his golden dishes. Such an enchanting prospect was not easy to ignore. Yet he had to find out what was on the other side of the closed door. He was not afraid of danger! The door must be opened. He was determined to do it and he was prepared to pay the price.

"The prince had been born in a palace of a thousand doors. He was going to open every one of them. Why should he content himself with nine hundred and ninety-nine? If his father, the king, owned the whole of the palace, he, as prince, would own it too some day. He had the right to see the whole. Why should he forego any part of his royal prerogative?

"No one had taken it away from him, no enemy, no invader. The obstacles were all on this side. The prince grew more and more determined. He gathered courage. Then one day he assaulted the closed door.

"And the door appeared to have been waiting for him. It yielded at once, opening to his touch. The prince passed through. On the other side he found a winged horse. The horse said, 'Come, my prince, come. I'm waiting for you'.

"The prince mounted the horse and the horse at once spread his wings, lifted his feet and, rising into the blue of the heavens, disappeared with his rider.

"Winged steed! Winged steed! cried the prince, "Where are you taking me?"

"To see your kingdom. We shall make a circuit of its boundaries."

"More glorious than all the splendour of the other nine hundred and ninety-nine rooms was the treasure in this one. But it also had its limits. The prince at last returned to the place from which he had set out. 'Bravo!' he exclaimed, dismounting. The door closed after him as he passed through. All was the same as before."

Meghbaran had finished his story. Rajib broke his silence. Putting his coffe cup down he said,

"Winged Steed, cried the Prince, where are you taking me ?

"That's not in the Arabian Nights. Where did you get it?"

"From life. Life is a tale of a thousand and one nights. Anyone with a sense of the mysterious knows it without being told. Life is an Arabian night's tale." Meghbran spoke pensively.

"The palace of Pirnagar," he continued, "does not have a thousand doors and we are not as rich as the nabobs of Murshidabad. There are, however, quite a lot of doors in it. We had, when our family was flourishing, our own theatre, cinema, power house and even a press. There were horses in our

I will see to them myself.

stables and elephants in the sheds. We had a private zoo. That was before our fortunes began to decline."

Rajib knew all that. "Your father even wrote plays, didn't he?" he said sympathetically, "and he maintained his own troupe of players." He carefully avoided making a reference to the actress that had been in the troupe.

"Our fortunes began to decline about the time I went to England," Meghbaran went on, "Perhaps earlier. Father didn't allow anybody to know. A great deal of his money was tied up in a Loan Company. The jute market was dull. The cultivators could not repay the money advanced to them, nor was it any longer possible to recover it forcibly. The vote had come. Political parties were on their way. Both the vote and the parties later became communal even though our family has always been non-sectarian in religious matters."

"You came from Rajputana with the great Man Singh, didn't you? That's what I've heard." Rajib knew that much, "There weren't any Kshatriyas in this part of the country so you merged with the Kayasthas."

"Yes, we are Singhs. Lions from Rajputana. Bengal has turned us into deer. No, not wholly deer. We're lion-deer!" Meghbaran pretended to laugh.

"Bah! What nonsense you talk!" Rajib suppressed a smile, "Tigers and cattle drank water side by side at the watering places on the estates of the powerful Pirnagar lions."

"And at the crack of the British ringmaster's whip the lions stood up on their hind legs and sat down like circus beasts!" Meghbaran burned with anger. "The rogues seldom showed the iron hand in their velvet glove but it was there all right. When our cousin the Kumar Bahadur wanted to become chairman of the District Board he promised a bag of money to those who voted for him and threatened to shoot those who didn't. He forgot that though the revolver was his own the licence which permitted him to possess it was in the hands of somebody else. The Magistrate sent for him.

"Let me have a look at your revolver," the Englishman said. He shook his head after examining it. "It's dangerous in this condition. Repairs are essential before it can be used. I'll see to them myself."

.....

"The Kumar Bahadur looked foolish. He was indisposed on the day of the election, in Calcutta for medical treatment. Who was going to vote for him? A few months later the Magistrate dusted the revolver and returned it to him."

Rajib repressed his laughter and declared in mock indignation, "The fellows were really rascals. Our bones have begun to cool off since they've left."

"But we have been liquidated with them!" Meghbaran lamented.

"I've strayed from what I wanted to tell you," he changed the subject, "The palace at Pirnagar was, for me when I was a boy, a palace with a thousand doors. Father used to say, 'What do you lack here? Why must any of you leave the zemindary? Who will obey you any where else as the people here obey you? In Calcutta it is the people who spend the most money that are the most respected. And the peasants on their estates starve to provide the money. And will those who honour you in Calcutta do anything for you?' Father himself went nowhere. When sahibs and others came to visit he did only as much for them as was necessary. 'These petty deities have to be kept in good humour,' he would say, 'like Manasa, the goddess of snakes, and Sitala, the goddess of smallpox, but I'm not going to bow down to them.' He was an agnostic."

"I've heard he helped terrorists," Rajib remembered.

...

"I won't say that what you've heard is wrong. He did it very secretly." Meghbaran admitted, "Do you know why the terrorists failed? Because there was no way of knowing who could be trusted and who couldn't. A man might be helped because he seemed to be a brave and heroic fellow and yet it would be that man who gave information to the police and even perhaps named my father. He might even turn out to be a police spy. The Government warned my father, threatening to deprive him of his gun and pistol. The lion became a deer."

Rajib was not amused this time. He was sympathetic.

...

"I am digressing again," Meghbaran corrected himself, "There was everything a man could desire in my palace. Nothing was lacking. Even heavenly nymphs were available."

"Oh," Rajib was agog, "That's why there was a theatre."

"Oh, *no*. The stage was there to be acted upon, Meghbaran insisted, "we never sullied art."

Rajib did not press the point. He listened.

"As I was saying. I found everything I wanted in the palace of a thousand doors. Still it seemed to me that one door was closed. Father did not want me to open it."

"What was it?" Rajib was interested.

"Truth." Meghbaran gave him a surprise. It was wholly unexpected. Rajib was struck with wonder.

"Truth? What do you mean, Santu?"

"I won't be able to explain to you, Bablu. The meaning is very difficult to understand. The day when, at the age of twelve or thirteen, a hunger for the truth was born in me, I also wanted to know what is meant by the truth. One book remains after all the other nine hundred and ninety-nine. The thousandth book. Nobody knows what is written in it. No one can tell. That is why I want to read it. Father said I would waste my time. 'Study the other nine hundred and ninety-nine,' he said, 'it won't take you long discover the relative truth. We have to deal with the relative truth. Find out as much about it as you can.' I answered, 'I'm learning'. But I'm thirsty for the truth that lies beyond the relative truth. I'm hungry for it'."

Meghbaran attended college in Calcutta after finishing the High School at Pirnagar. His father had not been pleased. It is possible to study at home. Professors can be engaged as tutors. Meghbaran chose to study science for that reason. A laboratory is required. There was no laboratory at Pirnagar. His father could not provide one for him. He went to Calcutta to study science but he was not really interested in it. He changed to arts, knocking at one door after another.

"My life has been like that," he said, "I knock and knock. The doors open, one after another. After a time I realise I've had enough. No more for me. I come out. I cannot forget that there is a door that will not open, the door after the nine hundred and ninety-ninth. It must be opened but I haven't the courage. It is foolhardy to seek the truth." Meghbaran sighed.

"And then?" Rajib's voice was weary, "Is that door still closed?"

"The answer is yes and no," Meghbaran said as though posing a riddle, "if I live a while longer perhaps I'll be able to give you a plainer answer some day".

It was late. Both of them were sleepy. They struggled with their drowsiness. Rajib said, "Why only a while, Santu? You'll live a long time yet."

"Who knows?" Meghbaran was melancholy, "the older I grow the less courageous I become. And courage is required. Without courage the door cannot be opened. Without courage no one can mount the winged horse and ride on his back to see the three dimensions of his kingdom. What if the horse doesn't bring me back?"

"He will. He will." Rajib assured him, "just as in the story. Can a story be untrue?"

Meghbaran laughed, "That's what a story-writer would say!"

"And what if the winged horse does bring me back?" he was suddenly serious, "Unless he brings me back in time I'll have no taste even for ruling. Timeliness is the thing. Even heaven loses its charms when the right moment is past."

"Is this what troubles you then?" Rajib did not seem to understand what he said fully, "not the breaking up of your family or of your country?"

"Oh, I grieve for that too. It is no pleasure to see my family and my country break up. But when a grief is shared with others its burden is lighter." Meghbaran philosophised.

"And the grief that is one's alone?" Rajib knew the answer. Still he asked.

"It hangs around one's neck like a stone," Meghbaran's voice was weary.

"How much is left to me?" he was preoccupied and spoke in a low voice, "My time is almost up and my life has not yet reached its consummation."

Rajib almost sprang to his feet. "What do you mean, Santu? You're the father of a child!" This was unbelievable.

"What did you hear? Why didn't you listen to what I said?" Meghbaran checked his laughter, "I did not say the consummation of marriage. I said the consummation of life."

Rajib smiled lamely, "Why didn't you say so plainly?"

"Do you understand now or must I be more explicit?" Meghbaran demanded.

"I understand." Rajib started to declaim: *Ogo amar ei jivaner shesh paripurnata*—(O Death, the last fulfilment of this life!)

Meghbaran interrupted him. "You've understood nothing! Should a person grieve because he has not died, if death be the consummation of life? Am I as old as all that? Fifty-seven is nothing nowadays."

"Of course not!" Rajib admitted his mistake, "not death certainly. But what?"

"To ride away through the heavens on the back of a winged horse! Like an astronaut in a rocket". Meghbaran seemed to hint at some occult doctrine which he did not enlarge upon.

Rajib was on the point of saying something but Meghbaran took the words out of his mouth, "No, I'm not the father of only one child! I'm the father of two! I had another child as well. A son. My life would have been very different if the boy had not died. Bisakha's heart was broken. I couldn't save him. She refused to bear any more children. She became afraid of Pirnagar. She moved to Calcutta in order that the remaining child could be given proper care."

Rajib was listening with hushed attention. Meghbaran spoke as though talking to himself.

"She went where I could not get at her. I didn't run after her. Or after any other woman. If I cannot save a child's life why should I bring a child into the world? Am I only a propagator? Am I not a father? Shall I not cherish my children and provide for them? But could I do it for Jhuntu? What a torpor of the spirit bound me hand and foot during his last illness!"

"How long ago was it, Santu?" Rajib asked. There was pain and surprise in his voice.

"Not very long. Twenty or twenty-one years ago." Meghbaran was in another world. "Aha," he said, "if the boy had lived he would be a stalwart young man of twenty-five or six now. He may even have taken a journey in space! I could have bequeathed to him my dream of a flying horse. To whom am I to give it now? Who will open the closed door?"

Rajib put his hand into the hand of his friend with the greatest solicitude. He had not known that Meghbaran had been burnt in the forest fire of bereavement of a son. Like a lion. Like a deer.

What is there equal to friendship?" Meghbaran said suddenly, with enthusiasm. "You and I are

(Continued on page 138)

OUR EDUCATION

Dr. U. P. BASU

EDUCATION is the manifestation of the perfection attained by man. No one can be really taught; a teacher can only offer certain suggestions to rouse the curiosity and interest already in one's mind, and thereby, help in making 'things clearer by one's own perception and thought. Education, however, needs always an orientation consistent with the country's national ideals, the changed status, and the requisities of the particular age in which the people live. While no one will disagree with this concept, difficulties may have to be encountered in implementation of a uniform system throughout the country due to poor economy, want of a liberal and flexible approach, or shortage of teachers with missionary spirit. Problem is more complex in our country as we are to impart education to over 52 million boys 'and girls, increasing each year by a million, with resources at our disposal. Education of individuals would depend on the roles played by the parents, teachers and the Government. Education is not the amount of information only that one may collect; nor it is a means of securing a suitable job in future. It is something more.

NEED OF TEACHERS

Education should aim at the building of a society with material well-being for all. In our country it will be found mostly for the needs of individuals. If the policy be once settled, teachers may alter the outlook of the aspirants to a considerable extent. The question arises how this can be achieved Will it be possible by imparting knowledge and information the teachers possess to the empty and malleable mind of the young students who are generally of diverse nature and character? Or, should the teachers cultivate the body and mind of young boys and girls just like a gardener who helps in growing plants of different types in the same garden? The latter approach may be more justified; but this would atonce demand sufficient supply of nourishment for proper growth. For want of monetary resources this has been mostly ignored. Remedies may still be found to an extent if we remember that watering the base is better than dressing the top as is being found from our expenditure for higher training centres in comparison with what is being allotted for primary training courses. The main problem lies in treating young students of diverse mental quality often met within schools. And solution lies with the teachers who may remember the words of Swami Vivekananda that education is not the amount of information that is just put into brain and runs riot there. Each is to be imbibed with life-building, man-making and character-forming ideas. These can be possible if the teachers themselves set right examples. They are to be stern in the class room but humane outside. They must themselves uphold the highest morals, when they will be in a better position to command respect and infuse a spirit in their pupil.

NO POLITICS IN EDUCATION

Education is to be considered always as a non-politiacl issue. The Government have been planning to bring education under their unitary control. Centralisation will facilitate attainment of a uniformity in pattern and standard. But the process is fraught with very great danger too, particularly if free expression of thought and ideas be restricted. This is more in India as it is a country of unity in diversity. Here any problem of education at once raises a host of complexities. This has happened with our language too. There are 460 million people and 87 per cent of this population would be found to speak one or other of the 14 languages that have been mentioned in the Eighth Schedule of our constitution. Less than 7% of Indian population would be found to know an Indian language other than their mother-tongue. The number of persons knowing English is a little more than 11 million. The country needs a link language. Politicians insist that the medium of instruction in universities must be the regional language, while the academic opinion is strongly opposed to it. Language-wise percentage distribution of the population would come to 30.4 in Hindi, 8.6 in Telegu, 7.7 (Bengali), 7.6 (Marathi), 7.0 (Tamil), 5.3 (Urdu), 4.6 (Gujrati), 4.0 (Kannada), 3.9 (Malayalam), 2.6 (Punjabi), 1.6 (Assamese), 1.1 (Oriya) and 0.49 in Kashmiri

This is a scientific age and in order to keep pace with technological development we will have to remain acquainted with latest information and publications. About 800 journals coming to our country from abroad would be found to be in English language. Of over 55000 scientific periodicals published all over the world 44% are published in English, 14% in German and 13% in French. We are spending crores of rupees in developing our Indian language. No translation bureau set-up would be able to keep pace with the march of new knowledge that is being added year by year to the already existing volumes. Complexity is more for the fact that in India about 68% of her scientific and technological personnel will have to migrate from one 'to another

state having different mother language. It is for this a modern language is to be preferred as the common language for the development of the country as well as for the maintenance of national integration. Any deviation will create linguistic barriers between one State and the other, and convert our National laboratories as zonal laboratories.

While the young boys and girls may be initially taught in their mother tongue, higher education must, in the interest of progress as well as national integration, be on one and the same language. And this at the present age should be English. It is being reported that the substitution of English by regional languages as media of instruction has already weakened the country to an alarming extent. This is not surprising; the university and other higher training centres which are considered to be a unifying force, must also teach in one and the same language. There should be no politics in education. In the ancient past there was no political control of education. The powerful monarchs also are known to have bowed their heads before the learned "Brahmins" — the teachers. This we may remember still.

HOME AND THE SOCIETY

Education cannot be imparted. It is to be received. And this may come from reading of learned books, from travel in places of interest, and from discussions with educated people of different disciplines. In any such endeavour the State, teachers and the society including one's own home, will play their respective role. Social and economic disturbances created partly by partition and partly by glamour of the developed countries have destroyed the whole fabric. Every one has fundamental rights, but there is no one to raise even a feeble voice when any one is found to do some anti-social work, or, even when a young boy or girl in a locality does not behave in the proper way in the interest of his or her society, family and community.

Young mind is elastic, its performance can be improved to a degree if proper guidance be forthcoming. Here we need teachers and that again not only in our schools and colleges, but in our societies and in environments. Parents, guardians, public and the State must come forward to help in the mission of professional teachers by lessening their burden and decreasing the stress on their patience. Even in their normal functioning they may find that while they are training in one way, the students gather experience of opposite nature in their home or environments. School authorities insist on the regularity in attendance, but no such regularity is enforced in the home when boys and girls go to bed and wake up in the morning. The school infuses a spirit of co-existence, but in the home, corporations, universities and legislatures there is disruption. All these divergencies put the teachers into difficulty in training their boys and girls under their care.

CHANGE IN THE CONCEPT

Education itself being a long-term process, will be judged by the fruits to be delivered by the respective aspirants in the course of their life. They are to be specially taught and trained in order to adjust themselves in the environmental conditions of their own country. This sort of training may necessitate establishment of some institutions where emphasis is to be given even on outside activities. Students should be given some responsibility to take part even in the running of the schools and thereby, to acquire self-reliance and ability for the right thinking. When in course of time they enter the university or other technological institute to obtain a higher degree or diploma, they would be in a better position to develop their latent faculties, and thereby, be able to improve their own profession. They will thus have a desire and determination to work for the improvement of the social, economic and cultural conditions of the country. Success, however, lies in having a band of teachers and trainers who can kindle a fire amongst the pupil by their own deed, work and performance. The shortcoming, if any, is in our whole system, and one of the main drawbacks is in the words of Rabindranath "the belief that we have nothing original. Everything is to be borrowed from abroad as if we have no inherent speciality to contribute." This concept is to be changed. For a right kind of education we need close co-operation amongst teachers, parents and the Government. We are to remember that children of the soil in their own right need an education and that again in a way for their full development just as they are in need of adequate food and proper shelter. A thinking on the line from all quarters can set the whole system in right order.

CONCLUSION

Education is necessary for the masses in India for economic revival. This education should be not for accumulation of knowledge only, but for development of their individuality in consonance with the growth of the nation. There are many sayings and records in our own literature which if reproduced in plain and regional language for assimilation by the young aspirants, will give a lead for working out their own salvation even in this modern age. Teachers are to show examples and teach boys and girls in their mother-tongue at the primary stage. And in order to keep pace with the modern development subsequently a common modern language would be essential during higher training and professional life. English has been a great bond of India's political unity. If in the academic, scientific, and technological field, it ceases to be the instrument of common knowledge and exchange of thought, the present collaboration of workers and thinkers all over the country in economic, political and commercial field will soon be a thing of the past. Success in advancement of education as a whole would lie more in creating self-confidence amongst the young boys and girls. For this they must be provided with better food for maintaining a buoyant health and with necessary facilities for adequate training from the basic stage.

THE PALACE OF A THOUSAND DOORS

(Continued from page 136)

just the same, Bablu. We're still sitting beside the Gol Dighi."

"So we are. Does friendship languish because friends cannot meet?" Rajib gave his hand a gentle sqeeze, "I'm delighted that you come. Come again."

"And it's given me the deepest satisfaction," Meghbaran returned the pressure, "I will come again."

There was still some time left before the train was due. They walked in the garden to keep themselves awake. Meghbaran said, "I've told you about my grief. I haven't told you about my triumph."

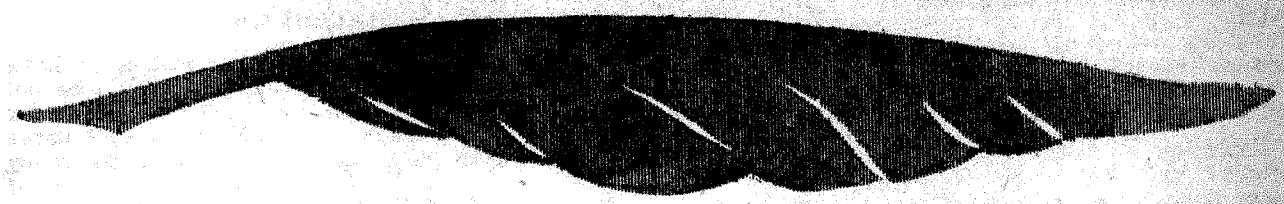
"Tell me. Tell me." Rajib was as eager as a young man.

"I think," Meghbaran gazed up at the sky and spoke like an astronomer, "I can see some distance ahead now even though the door is closed. My eyes are opening though the door isn't. They'll open wider yet. I'll see more and more. If I live a little while longer . . . . ."

"You'll live. You'll live." Rajib assured him earnestly, "You'll live a long time yet."

(Translated from the Bengali by Lila Ray)

Getting to know AUSTRALIAN WRITERS



by WILLIAM WALKER

JUST before his recent departure from New Delhi, the then Australian High Commissioner, Sir James Plimsoll said that the reading of Australian literature would help Indians to understand Australia. The assumption, of course, being that Australia does have a distinctive literature.

In the last two decades, Australia has been able to convey her sense of being a nation with distinguished writers, notably poets, but less notably in dramatists. Several dramatists have been successful enough in having their plays produced in overseas theatres.

Indeed the bibliography of Australian literature is fat and healthy, with reference books, poetry, novels, short stories, plays and theatre, essays and literary biographies, and comparative studies of Australian writers and their work.

For a young nation, often criticised for her high interest in material things and less interest in the arts (or matters of the mind), Australia has a fine list of magazines concentrating on good writing, and most talented contributors. The best of these are Australian Letters, a quarterly containing verse, short stories and literary criticism; Australian Literary Studies, a half yearly publication of scholarly historical and critical studies; The Bulletin, a weekly of politics, society, the Arts and business; Meanjin Quarterly, verse, short stories, criticism, and cultivating overseas contributions; Southerly, a quarterly of verse, short stories and criticism; and Westerly, a quarterly published by the Arts Union of the University of Western Australia, containing verse, short stories, criticism.

The question is: "Why should Indians have an interest in Australian writing and be moved to read some of it?" It is possible, indeed a certainty that the Indian reader will find works of Australian literature that will help him or her to know a social or political situation better, to broaden his comprehension of relationships between human beings. As distinct from English and American writing, some Australian writing has special relevance to Indians, because it is tackling problems which Indians find relevant, sometimes in contrast rather than in similarity to Indian problems.

Take for instance, the compelling novel, The Tree of Man, by Patrick White, whom I regard as Australia's best writer. The Indian farmer battles with flood and drought. So does the Australian farmer. The vagaries and tyranny of the weather are as dominant over the Indian farmer as the Australian, and Patrick White makes the farmer's struggle against the elements the chief theme of a novel which has been widely accepted as distinctively Australian literature.

Fortunately for Australia, the best of her writers, including her poets, write forthrightly on the strengths and weaknesses of Australian writing, and have become absorbed in the all-important question: Is there a genuine Australian piece of writing, in thought, and phrasing which without doubt conveys the writer as distinctively Australian, although the medium of expression is the English language?

It is not a question easy to answer, and can only be answered through a study of Australian writing in the past two decades, when, fortunately for Australian writers, there was a slackening of the eagerness to write with emphatic idiom considered to be original Australian but which in fact was originally English. There is less tendency in Australia nowadays to dwell on the pioneering difficulties of Australia, the loneliness and isolation of many Australians, or the lack of culture or need to establish a fresh culture in the developing continent. Australian writers are now beginning to express THEMSELVES, without any inhibitions as to their Australian or English forebears, and the results have been astonishingly good literature.

The University of Mysore, through its professor of English, C. D. Narasimhaiah, has placed the accolade on Australian writing by proposing Australian writers such as Patrick White, Randolph Stow, Judith Wright (outstanding poet) A. D. Hope and James McAuley in the same bracket as Racine, Ibsen, Chekov, Pirandello, O'Neill and Hemingway in the university's study promotion.

Australian poetry certainly is well represented by Judith Wright, A.D. Hope (Professor of English, at Canberra National University) and James

McAuley (Professor of English, University of Tasmania).

Judith Wright has written a thoughtful piece of prose on what she terms Australia's double aspect. She deals strongly with the "literature of exile", the type of writing which was dominated by the early struggles of the pioneers and settlers whose weapons were endurance, persistence, home-made ingenuity and a sardonic attitude to the failures and reverses that they soon learned to expect. The struggle that developed these qualities necessarily took away, at the same time, the more specifically European virtue that novelist D. H. Lawrence called "alert consciousness", and much went with it also (Lawrence lived in Australia for a brief period and wrote a novel, Kangaroo, based on his Australian experiences and impressions. It captures aspects of Australian life at that time admirably).

Judith Wright agrees with the Lawrence diagnosis that something had left the Australian, something had "died by torture in the country of the mind". She recalls Patrick White's assertion that this was one way at least to true knowledge—to die is also to be reborn.

In recent years, Australian poet James McAuley wrote of his countrymen: "The people are hard-eyed, kindly, with nothing inside them; the men are independent, but you could not call them free". Judith Wright goes on to say: "Perhaps we have reached the point of equilibrium at which we can feel that this country is truly ours by right of understanding and acceptance, and from which we can begin to grow again".

It can be conceded that the process of "growing again" is manifest in Australian literature, particularly through Australian poets. Australians are becoming identified with their country. They are beginning to write, no longer as transplanted Europeans, nor as rootless men who reject the past and put their hopes only in the future, but as men with a present to be lived in and a past to nourish them.

This searching for an Australian identity has become an intriguing theme, and Australian intellectuals increasingly debate it. It has even been stated that Australian painters (again Australia can claim distinction in this arts field) have become cross-fertilised by the literary preoccupation with identity.

Here Vincent Buckley, lecturer in English, Melbourne University, comes into the fray, gaining respect for his views at all times because of his powerful contributions to Australian literary criticism. (Readers will have perhaps noticed how active the university professors of English are in the literary criticism field, and in the case of A. D. Hope, a top bracket poet, who is a phenomenon in Australian writing: a savage and witty satirist, an incisive and urbane stylist, a courageous and startling explorer of the erotic, and in his gentler moments, the writer of some most exquisite poems of love. It is a pleasure to include some examples of his verse in this article—see below: His work has been compared with the urbane ease and fluency of Byron in Don Juan).

Buckley asserts, rightly, I feel, that Australian writers have gone beyond the "Australian identity" stage. No Australian artist of any stature now feels that he has to show himself either for or against Australia; if his commitment is in question, its quality will be judged rather by whether he is for or against human life and respectful of its mystery (which is to say, respectful of his own art).

Buckley refers to Patrick White's work as a case in point. White left Australia for Cambridge, lived in Britain for some years and had novels published there. On his return to Australia he found himself hostile to the Australian society, and shows this in his works. In an article on his own work, "The Prodigal Son", he said: "Returning sentimentally to a country I had left in my youth, what had I really found?....In all directions stretched the great Australian Emptiness, in which the mind is the least of possessions, in which the rich man is the important man, in which the schoolmaster and the journalist rule what intellectual roost there is, in which beautiful youths and girls stare at life through blind eyes.....".

But, to White's credit and as evidence of his integrity, he did not escape this horror by a second migration. His response was to create a work in which the conditions that appalled him would not be merely analysed but transcended. He conceived another novel to discover the extra-ordinary behind the ordinary, the mystery and the poetry which alone could make bearable the lives of such people, and incidentally, his own life since return. White's response was the novel, The Tree of Man, possibly the best Australian novel ever written.

Similarly A. D. Hope (many would rate him Australia's leading poet) is savagely critical of the Australian mores. Is there anything more scathing than, "Where second-hand Europeans pullulate timidly on the edge of alien shores". But in his finest poetry he aims at striking to the core of human experience without raising the question of a national identity at all and what he celebrates is a radically HUMAN aspiration:

"Now the heart sings with all its thousand voices
To hear this city of cells, my body, sing".

James McAuley's approach is similar. His constant concern has been to express the true form of man. In his short poem, To Any Poet, McAuley writes:

Move like the sable swan
on the luminous expanse;
in sight but out of range
Of barking ignorance.

Judith Wright, whose work is such a pleasure to quote, is regarded as a poet who has shown stronger feeling for the land and its traditions than any other Australian poet, past or present. She has written a number of "ghostly" poems, one of the many supremely beautiful poems in her published works. It is "The Graves at Mill Point", and the first two verses are:

Alf Watt is in his grave
those eighty years.
From his bones a bloodwood grows
with long leaves like tears.
His girl grew weary long ago;
she's long lost the pain
of crying to the empty air
to hold her boy again".

To conclude, appropriately, I feel, with the first verse of a poem of love by A. D. Hope, who like many famous writers seems to be coming into his full powers in his fifties:

You are that vessel full of holy oil:
Wisdom, unstirring in its liquid sleep,
Hoarded and cool, lucid and golden green,
fills the pure tanks of the containing stone;
Here darkness mellows what the sunlit soil
To purposes unknown, for ends unseen,
produced, and labour of unnumbered men.
All the unthinking earth with fret or toil
Reared, ripened, buried in the earth again,
Here lives, and waiting, waits; this source alone
Distils those fruitful tears the Muses weep.

William Butler Yeats

by

R. K. Dasgupta

IN one of Yeats's early poems a happy shepherd says: 'For words alone are certain good: 'Sing, then, for this is also sooth'. Yeats himself knew that his own deliverance was in the power of his words, the relief of timely utterance which could be the only bliss for a poet of the tragic generation. That utterance is the greatest poetry written in the English language in this century. If in the quarter of a century since the death of Yeats we have failed to realise that his greatness as a poet is a wonder of modern literature it has been a major failure of our academic criticism.

The academic critic has indeed dimmed the uniqueness of Yeats's achievement as a poet by linkking it with the aestheticism of the nineties, the imagist and the symbolist movements and the Celtic Renaissance. To the literary historian the links are obvious and it is an exciting critical game to illustrate them. It may seem tremendously important that Yeats founded the Rhymers' Club in 1891 and that amongst its members who met in the Cheshire Cheese in Fleet Street were Lionel Johnson and Edward Dowson. And those who believe that Yeats shed his romantic Celticism and became a modern poet when Ezra Pound came to him in 1908 love to affiliate his poetry to the imagist movement. In his use of symbols the scholar is inclined to discover an illustration of Mallarme's dictum that 'to name is to destroy, to suggest is to create' and the kinship with the French symbolists seems to be confirmed by the fact that in his first visit to Paris in 1894 he met Verlaine and met him in the company of Arthur Symons. And who can be a greater and more passionate exponent of the Irish Literary Movement than the man who asked in an article in **United Ireland** in 1892: 'Is there, then, no hope for the de-Anglicizing of our people? Can we not build up a national tradition, a national literature, which shall be none the less Irish in spirit from being English in language'?

And even this is not all the complexities of criticism one must encounter in his approach to Yeats. How much of Shelley do you find in him, and how much of Blake or of William Morriss ? Add to this the academically respectable question of the profound oriental influence on his poetry. He read Sinnett's **Esoteric Buddhism,** spoke at the Hermetic Society established in Dublin to promote oriental religions and theosophy, knew Madame Blavatsky, was initiated in a society of Christian Cablists called the Golden Dawn and took lessons in Indian philosophy from Mohini Chatterji and Purohit Swami. To salvage the real Yeats from this enormous critical tangle is the common reader's first task and if he can do this he will see more in the man and his work than the critic can tell. He will see the greatest poet of the age in the uniqueness of his being, a Shakespeare of his own soul telling the story of his life 'which must take the ear strangely'. He will see what great poetry can still be made of 'bitter furies of complexity,/Those images that yet/ Fresh images beget,/That dolphin-torn, that gong-tormented sea.'

If there is a critical duty for the reader of Yeats of today it is to establish the truth of what T. S. Eliot said after the poet's death: 'he is the greatest poet of our time—certainly the greatest in his language, and so far as I can judge in any language'. The duty must be something more than a mere exercise in comparison for nothing can be gained by affirming the superiority of Yeats to his contemporaries or his immediates predecessors. But it is important to realize that Yeats was the only poet of his age who wrote in a great way and that he wrote in a great way in an age which seemed incapable of producing great poetry. Yeats wrote the only kind of great poetry which that age could produce. Did he speak of his own poetry when he said : 'Though the great song return no more/ There's keen delight in what we have:/The rattle of pebbles on the shore|Under the receding wave.' Then his rattle is the richest poetry of the age.

Yeats made two significant confessions about his manner of writing poetry and it is important to bear them in mind when we try to seize the uniqueness of his genius. When Louise Morgan asked him what actually inspired him to write a poem he told her: 'Some situation in life — a sudden emotion. My poems all originate like that. The idea for a poem comes in moments of personal excitement'. This personal excitement is the stuff of his poetry and gives it its power. It gives his reader his sense of the reality of his passion. It saves him from the rebuke that he has substituted 'rimed rebus for poetry' even when he uses an intricate scheme of symbolism. In the other confession he says: 'The more a poet rids his verses of heterogeneous knowledge and irrelevant analysis, and purifies his mind

with elaborate art, the more does the little ritual of his verse resemble the great ritual of Nature, and become mysterious and inscrutable. He becomes, as all the great mystics have believed, a vessel of the creative power of God'. There is indeed a mysterious power about the words of Yeats to make us wonder if those strange words of Socrates in Plato's dialogue really do not give out the secret of poetic creation: 'I soon found that it is not by wisdom that the poets create their works, but by some natural power and by inspiration, like soothsayers and prophets, who say many fine things, but who understand nothing of what they say.'

THE POET'S MIND

The mind of Yeats, then, is more important for his reader than his links with the Celtic, Anglo-Saxon or the European poetic traditions. His distinctive quality of mind makes him the poet of the modern man: it makes him Ireland's first great European and world man. Yeats himself desired that his poetry should be different from the poetry of Verlaine or of Swinburne and the desire was not produced by any form of literary *swadeshi*. In the early nineties he said: 'The influence of France is every year more completely pervading English literary life. The influence of that school which calls itself, in the words of its leader, Verlaine, a school of the sunset, or by the term....Decadents, is now the dominating thing in many lives. Poetry is an end in itself; it has nothing to do with life, nothing to do with anything but the music of cadences, and beauty of phrase'. Yeats felt the tragedy of decadence too deeply to make of it a school of poetry.

Nor did Yeats admire the poetry of the Victorian age as the kind of poetry which could be sufficient for the modern man. 'I saw' he wrote in his *Autobiographies* 'that Swinburne in one way, Browning in another, and Tennyson in a third, had filled their work with what I called "impurities", curiosities about politics, about science, about history, about religion, and that we must create once more the pure work'. But how to reconcile his rebuke for those who value poetry as an end in itself with this idea of a pure poetry? He was never very tidy in stating his ideas on poetry and never loved to display any dialectical prowess in criticism. Nevertheless he is saved by his truth of experience as the most learned of academic critics is not. By pure poetry he meant not poetry divorced from life but poetry that is not dependent on anything but what is experienced in the soul. His idea is closer to Henri Bremond's theory of pure poetry as mysticism than to Paul Valery's theory of poetry as verbal music.

Perhaps more meaningful than this is Yeats's tragic view of poetry in the modern age, his Spenglerian doubt as to the possibility of poetry at this time of modern history. There is a triplet in *The Winding Stair and Other Poems* which is perhaps his profoundest comment on modern poetry: 'Shakespearean fish swam the sea, far away from land; Romantic fish swam in nets coming to the hands; What are all those fish lie gasping on the strand?' One of these gasping fish 'sailed the seas' and came 'to the Holy city of Byzantium' to invoke the 'singing-masters' of his soul. His salvation was in being gathered into 'the artifice of eternity' or metamorphosed into a bird made of hammered gold made by some Grecian goldsmith singing of 'what is past, or passing, or to come'. The golden bird had a golden throat and sang like a living thrush.

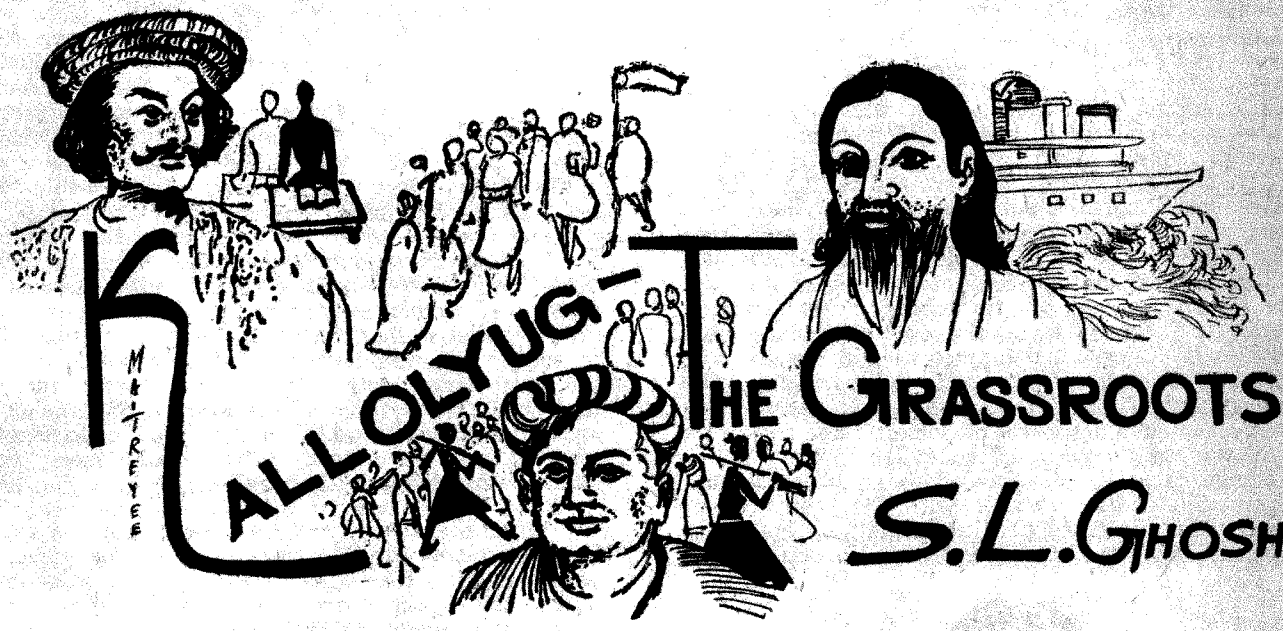
But has Yeats sung of 'what is past, or passing, or to come'? What is the great matter of his poetry? T. S. Eliot answered the question when he said that Yeats 'was one of the few whose history is the history of our own time, who are a part of the consciousness of their age, which cannot be understood without them.' To be this through one's work as a poet was a supreme intellectual achievement. To be this without producing one large comprehensive work like *The Divine Comedy*, *The Faust* is a wonder of modern literature. Yeats's Maud Gonne is not a Beatrice leading him to his beatitude nor is she a Helena representing the classical ideal. She remains an earthly woman of great beauty and refinement to whom the poet had twice proposed in vain and the chances of her deification became extremely thin when he married in 1917 a wife who not only made his 'life serene and full of order' but who also initiated that automatic writing which led to the work called *A Vision*. But Maud Gonne's life is, nevertheless, a part of the poetic life of Yeats. Perhaps no disappointment in love has been poetically so fruitful. Yeats happily married to Maud Gonne in 1891 could have produced *The Countess of Kathleen* in which the lady is symbolised as the heroine and he as Kevin: he would not have produced *The Wild Swans at Coole* and *The Tower*.

INTELLECTUAL ACHIEVEMENT

Obviously these works have not the unity of vision and design of *The Divine Comedy* and *The Faust*. In the *Autobiographies* Yeats confessed that 'the dream of my early manhood that a modern nation can return to Unity of Culture is false'. And he thought that there was no Unity of Being without Unity of Culture: The fascination of what is difficult|Has dried the sap out of my veins, and rent|Spontaneous joy and natural content|Out of my heart'. But there is this unity about the entire work of Yeats that it is the profoundest expression in poetry of the modern man's sense of a tragic disintegration of life, the epic of his quest of bliss in a disjointed world. There is an extraordinary heroism of the spirit in its intensest lyrical moods, a Sophoclean endurance of the soul which saves man's dignity in his hour of defeat.

Perhaps the finest estimate of the achievement of Yeats is in Auden's verse-tribute to the poet: 'Follow, poet, follow right|To the bottom of the night,|With your unconstraining voice|Still persuade us to rejoice;| With the farming of a verse| Make a vineyard of the curse,|Sing of human unsuccess|In a rapture of distress.' This rapture of distress has given the age its greatest poetry.

Yeats did not make this distress a point of fashionable poetical despair. How he longed for a life of quiet contentment and joy of the spirit he says in his introduction to Rabindranath's English *Gitanjali* the manuscript of which he carried about with him 'for days, reading it in railway trains, or on the top of omnibuses and in restaurants! He often had to close it, he says' lest some stranger would see how much it moved me'. But his own Muse took him to other experiences and made him their greatest poetic interpreter. He did not claim this greatness for himself the epitaph on his tomb in Drumcliff Churchyard in Sligo is his own composition 'Cast a cold eye|On life, on death,|Horseman, pass by'.



THE First World War ending in November 1918 was not fought anywhere near the Indian frontier, yet it made a profound impact on the Bengali mind, particularly on that of the rising generation. It was not so much the fortunes of the war itself or the immediate economic consequences on India that caused the impact. New world forces, ideas and developments were emerging from the throes of the War. In the Indian sub-continent, too, new horizons were coming up through the interaction of indigenous and world factors. In their totality these acted as ashes and sparks to kindle thought and imagination and opened new vistas that were soon to be reflected in Bengali literature of the twenties, when a new school of writers emerged. To their pioneering years was given the name "Kallol Yug" or the Kallol Era, so named after the literary journal "Kallol" which spearheaded the new movement. The very name (of which the literal meaning is "a multitudinous din") appropriately connotes the complex quality of the broadbased phenomenon which owed its grass-roots to the developing factors in the country's social, political and intellectual life. The following lines are an attempt at a brief survey of these factors.

[I]

For nearly three quarters of a century the social structure in Bengal had been undergoing a slow but inevitable process of disintegration. During nearly seven centuries before that period Bengali society, like that all over India, had been consolidated on the basis of a rural economy, the caste system and the joint family. While the institution of joint family served as a kind of family insurance by pooling the entire resources, consisting mainly of sizeable landed property, belonging to a large patrilineal family group the caste system provided a larger circle of social relationships, and the rural economy formed a still larger circle by providing basic self-sufficiency in respect of the modest needs of a group of villages. This was possible, and indeed promoted, in large measure on account of immobility of population. Sir Charles Metcalfe, an acting Governor-General of India, had correctly observed in 1830 that "the village communities are little republics, having nearly everything that they want within themselves, and almost independently of any foreign relations.....Dynasty after dynasty tumbles down; revolution succeeds to revolution ; Hindu, Pathan, Moghul, Maratha, Sikh, English are masters in turn; but the village communities, each one forming a separate state in itself, has, I conceive, contributed more than any other cause to the preservation of the people of India through all revolutions and changes which they have suffered....."

Under such conditions of insularity life and thought were intensely parochial, and almost completely impervious to any sense of integration with others living beyond the circumscribed socio-economic boundaries. The individual was tied to the family, the family was tied to the caste group functioning within the economic circle, to which several different caste groups were tied in their turn. There could be no straying from the herd either in action or in expressed thought. Society was unto itself a more powerful lawgiver than the administrative authorities. Women of respectable castes, whether Hindu or Muslim, were completely segregated. Child marriage was the order of the day among all classes, and polygamy was a token of high birth within the caste group and of solvency and social leadership. Literacy was very low—especially among women—and education imparted by word of mouth inculcated among the masses the inalienable sanctity and inviolability of orthodox traditions, customs and conventions—many of them of local origin. By the seventeenth century religion had ceased to be a living force promoting intellectual curiosity or social readjustment, and had become a mass of irrational, mostly superstitious, precepts for the individual's social behaviour. Disobedience of these precepts was the greatest imaginable social offence.

The arrival of the early European traders did not shake this firmly entrenched structure, for they were

studiously isolated from the local society which did not want to have anything to do with foreigners, except in the limited sphere of business. This was not very difficult, for Hindus and Muslims had already evolved a working system of mutual apartheid by sufferance, and each caste group had its own enclosed area of social existence. It was when the English became the rulers of Bengal and developed the city of Calcutta that a slight wind of change started blowing. They created a landed aristocracy and a commercial middle class with which they shared the spoils of rulership and monopoly trade. Calcutta rapidly grew, in size, wealth and political power, into something neither the capital city of Murshidabad nor the subsidiary city of Dacca had ever become. The first inroads of the West into Bengal's cultural life were evident in the "colonial" architecture of the mansions of the new aristocracy, the Ionian facades, the furnishing of the drawing rooms in European style, the use of horse-drawn vehicles of European manufacture and design, consumption of foreign liquors at festive parties and the employment of English brass bands at native ceremonies. But in the spheres of domestic and social life there was no change until education in the English language came to be regarded as an urban accomplishment and acquaintance with the positivism of English thought developed into something approaching conversion to non-conformism. No doubt much of this non-conformism lacked a rational basis and was mainly a sentimental revolt unreflected in the private life of the rebels; there was, however, a small hard core of genuine rebellion. Organised public opinion, expressed in civic and political activity and agitation, acquired a distinctly English idiom. In the sphere of arts also this influence was evident, and the Bengali theatre was born in emulation of the English stage.

Raja Rammohun Roy's crusade for social reform and a new look into the spiritual-philosophical heritage of India led, among other things, to the birth of the Brahmo Samaj and a progressive group labelled "reformed Hindus". In its religious aspects the Brahmo Samaj adapted the monotheistic doctrine of the Upanishads, an ancient heritage; it was its social platform, including abolition of child marriage, emancipation of women and, more than these, rejecton of the caste system that roused the Bengali intelligentsia to support or repudiate it. Bitter opposition from the much larger orthodox section notwithstanding, the social reform ideas of the Brahmo Samaj slowly started gaining ground, and received considerable impetus from the dynamic activities of Swami Vivekananda and Keshub Chandra Sen.

While the necessity of a socio-cultural reorientation was felt by the majority of the English-educated people in the urban areas the Bengali intelligentsia during the closing years of the last century were seized by an agony of conflict between the inherited culture and the culture acquired through education. Even a great intellect like Bankim Chandra, while accepting the rationalism of the West, was opposed to social reforms like abolition of the caste system and remarriage of widows. This conflict has indeed been a long process, still unresolved, and continues to be reflected in social behaviour as well as literature.

Other powerful factors also contributed to the acceleration of the pace of social disintegration. With the normal increase in population the yield from the joint property held by joint families became less and less adequate for the basic needs of the members, and they had to move out in search of a livelihood to Calcutta or the new towns that were fast springing up. But soon the number of job-seekers outstripped that of available jobs, and unemployment created a growing discontent within the educated middle class. Mobility loosened the ties of the joint family; in urban areas ritualistic discipline, strictly observed in rural society, became more liberal and less parochial through wider contacts. Moreover, the rural economy suffered grievous blows from competition with imported mass-produced goods and rapidly lost its self-sufficient character.

On the intellectual level, the search for a synthetic social philosophy came to acquire moral sanction through the teachings mainly of Vivekananda, Keshub Chandra and Rabindranath Tagore. True, at the turn of the century the winds of change agitated only the educated minority at the top of the social hierarchy, and double-think continued to hold sway. Unwillingness to give up the privileges and power the caste system and the traditional structure of society conferred on the upper castes forming the landowning middle class, which initially took to westernised education, contributed to this double think and sometimes to a highly laboured defence of traditional social values. All the same, the foundations of the old order, which had continued to rule the life and behaviour of the people more effectively than the State apparatus, were being steadily eroded under pressure of superven-

ing circumstances. By 1920 the change assumed evident proportions which the orthodox section recognised as really dangerous. On account of the still persisting schism between thought and behaviour, the former found its most powerful expression in literature and journalism, while behaviour continued, by and large, to be discontentedly conformist. As in politics, this discontent became increasingly vocal in an amazingly short time. But there was no corresponding tempo of radical action, and it must be added that public agitation carried on in the press and platform was largely devoted to promoting the interests of the middle class. Mention must, however, be made of the strong advocacy of the peasants' case during the sixties and seventies which produced such literary masterpieces as Dinabandhu Mitra's drama *Nil Darpan* and Bankim Chandra's memorable essay *Banglar Krishak*, also Ramesh Dutta's pioneering masterpiece in English, *The Economic History of India*.

[II]

At the time the War started in 1914, the vocal political demand in India was moderate in character, but a strong undercurrent of revolutionary extremism flowed in many parts of India, particularly in Bengal where the partition of 1905 had built up an activist philosophy of struggle against foreign rule. Already before the start of the War emissaries of the Indian revolutionary organisation had effected contact with foreign countries, especially with the German Government, and had been assured of assistance in the event of an Indian uprising during the hostilities that were correctly anticipated by them. When the War came most of the British troops normally stationed in India to guard the empire were deployed in the Middle Eastern theatre of war, where they met with early reverses. This opened up an opportunity—a very risky one indeed—for an attempt at a revolutionary seizure of power from the British. The plans were, however, betrayed; a wide dragnet of arrests and detentions without trial was spread, and everyone suspected of being concerned with the revolutionaries was herded into imprisonment. Their high exploits, however, became a saga carried from mouth to mouth, and the secret movement acquired sanctity in the estimation of the youth of Bengal. In spite of

the heavily repressive measures of the British Government, at the end of the War there was hardly any student in Bengal who was not associated in some measure with the underground movement or who did not, at least, hero-worship the revolutionaries. The students were not only strongly nationalistic but took pains to acquaint themselves with the revolutionary strategy of other subject peoples. Although such literature was strictly proscribed by the Government it had a brisk underground circulation as did the revolutionaries' secret circulars and pamphlets. The exploits of the Irish revolutionaries were keenly pursued. Biographies of Mazzini and Garibaldi (already available in Bengali) were eagerly studied. The story of the Russian Revolution, which filtered through in driblets for several years, sparked the imagination of the youth, and revived a number of intellectual interests: a close study of the ideas and ideals of the French and Russian revolutions and a renewed acquaintance with Russian literature which mainly centred round a new star, namely Maxim Gorki, with whose revolutionary humanism these youths' impatience with foreign domination and with domestic forces of conservatism prospering on and aiding this domination discovered a common ground of affinity. To this fine impatience the writings of Tagore gave an intellectual foundation. There was also a revival of interest in the philosophy of patriotism bequeathed by Sri Aurobindo during the earlier Swadeshi movement. Very soon this incubating unrest was to hatch out in a tremendous upsurge of nationalist emotion that took in everything in a gigantic deluge and left a rich, fertile revolutionary alluvium on the soil of the Indian mind. To the already sensitised Bengali mind it

came as a mighty release into boundless fields of thought.

The immediate cause of this upsurge was the inhuman brutality of some British officials at Jallianawalla Bagh, in Amritsar city of the province of Punjab, in April 1919. The defence of mass killing of an unarmed mob by the ruling authority in India and Whitehall finally tore the mask of benevolence off the face of British imperialism, and a deeply hurt, humiliated India quickly accepted the Gandhian plan of non-violent non-co-operation. Now, non-violence has been a recognised creed of personal conduct in India for upwards of twenty centuries, with religious and spiritual sanction from Jainism, Buddhism and Vaishnabism. But it was the first time that it was proposed to be used as a weapon of mass political struggle for the securing of freedom from foreign rule and, on a broader scale, for the redress of public injustices and

wrongs without reference to the participants' religious views. Hitherto the use of force against an oppressing force was considered to be the historic and sole instrument of revolution. Non-violence, with passive resistance to state coercion and disobedience of unjust laws as its operative features, was an unfamiliar doctrine in politics and public life, although its theoretical ground existed before Gandhi in the published thoughts of Tolstoi and Thoreau—one a Russian and the other an American. Gandhi's call came, however, as the answer to the nation's prayer: and sanction for the new strategy was readily discovered in traditional Indian philosophy. Gandhi never gave his strategy an exclusively political content: he gave it a broad moral content and called at *satyagraha*, that is "holding on to truth." He wanted this to be a complete way of life.

The question thus arose in every thinking mind, what is truth? And unlike Jesting Pilate, the question stuck and led to enquiries into diverse fields of life and to diverse answers. Not only political problems but social and ethical traditions and usages as well as the more basic values of life figured in the enquiry while the struggle for freedom gathered more and more force. Intellectual activity was feverish; the Gandhian ideology was debated in extenso. One early result was a noticeable relaxation in the rigours of caste observance. This owed to an acceptance, on a wider basis, of humanistic values set out earlier by Vivekananda and Tagore among others. Thus with the political objective of national freedom were associated social objectives and a general recognition of the desirability of a democratic Indian society based on humanistic equality. While, however, non-violence was very widely adopted as a modus operandi, its claim to be a total way of life continued to be entertained with a lot of reserve. But indubitably it had opened the floodgate to fundamental thinking on Indian life and traditional ideals.

Gandhi's programme of non-co-operation was still under debate in the National Congress Party when the revolutionaries were released from their long detention and the Montague-Chelmsford constitutional reforms for the governance of India were introduced. These men had profitably utilised their enforced leisure by study, thought and discussions, and now they threw themselves into the thick of the open conspiracy. Their objective had broadened from the mere overthrow of a foreign rulership to the foundation of a free society; and while they accepted the Gandhian technique as an effective political tactic, they had their own ideas of social reconstruction. The young generation turned to them, in a spirit of hero-worship, for inspiration and guidance, and while obsessed by a search for an Indian idiom in fundamental thinking, went in for an examination of prevalent social philosophies and world conditions. Naturally a great deal of attention was paid to the Russian enterprise. But so unfamiliar to Indian traditions was communism that its first impact was not apparently great. Besides, the country was at this moment seized by the emotional upheaval of non-co-operation and preoccupied by the great happenings at home. But Marxist thought made slow but sure headway, and in a few years the ground for the founding of an Indian Communist Party was laid. But more significant than this was the acceptance of Marxist dialectics as a scientific method of reasoning.

At this time took place the Turkish Revolution, putting an end to the Islamic Ottoman Empire and and setting up the first secular democracy in a Muslim country. This was a great shock to many Indian Muslims, who detected the British hand in the abolition of the Holy Caliphate; and, curiously enough, the Congress party led by Gandhi made accommodation with them in a manifestly undemocratic cause. But Bengali Muslim opinion was lukewarm and romantically oriented. Kamal Ataturk was hailed by young Muslims as well as Hindus as a model of a national liberator. At the same time the high brigandage of the emigrant Turkish General Enver Pasha in Soviet Turkestan was as well applauded as was the brief but energetic reform activity of King Amanullah of Afghanistan. The intelligentsia and the youthful generation were faced with the difficulties of grappling with unfamiliar social and moral problems, ideas and ideologies. Reasonings from the new standpoints, even from that of religion-based humanism, pointed a course sharply diverging from the traditional values of social and individual life. The intellectual approach was, therefore, much slower than the emotional, and this was the cause of much personal conflict, unhappiness and unsteadiness of behaviour. In the public sphere a high spate of journalistic activity ensued immediately, and the cause of national freedom was vigorously propagated from

press and platform. Much of this was, of course, emotionally seized and sentiment prevailed over logic; but undoubtedly there was a hard core of rational thinking in the confusing tumult.

[III]

The modern era in Bengali literature dates from the mid-nineteenth century when Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar created a standard prose style, Michael Madhusudan Dutta developed epic poetry, the tragic drama and the drama of social satire, and Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyaya developed the Bengali novel and the critical essay. For his literary work Vidyasagar drew largely from Sanskrit classics but did not altogether neglect the English source (vide his adaptation of Shakespeare's *Comedy of Errors*). His threefold style — chaste, simple and polemical to suit different occasions— indicated the potentialities of Bengali prose writing. Madhusudan's epic poetry in blank verse, which was destined to have quite a large train of followers soon—had an obvious European inspiration like his sonnets. His tragic plays were modelled on the full-blooded Elizabethan drama, which remained the prototype for the Bengali theatre for nearly half a century. Bankim Chandra started writing his novels unmistakably under the inspiration of English novelists of the romantic school. Significantly, these three makers of modern Bengali literature adopted the form and technique of English writers but took their subject matter from Indian life and lore and informed it with Indian values. This practice of filling up with indigenous flesh and blood the broad framework imported from outside has remained a persistent feature that runs like a thread through subsequent Bengali literatary output down to the present day, the notable exception being the institution called Rabindranath Tagore, whose genius created its own special domain without being completely free from the influence of European literary forms. It reflects fully a broad characteristic of the nineteenth century Renaissance in India (predominantly centering in Bengal for historical reasons), namely that of seeking a synthesis of Indian values of life with those of the West; this was, in the main, a discriminating, nationalistically oriented approach towards values that had proved their mundane superiority to traditional Indian values. The excellence of Indian moral and spiritual values was, however, hardly ever brought into question.

On the whole, the tradition set by Bankim Chandra of justifying Indian values through literary creation and criticism was largely followed till the first decade of the present century. In the literary field it was mainly Tagore whose journalistic writings questioned the validity of some of these values; but he as well as other reformists preached other and more abiding Indian values. The popular writers idolised and extolled the beauty and the virtues of the traditional culture. It was backed by a powerful press devoted to the protection of the traditional culture against the continuous encroachment of the reformists. The orthodox school was neither ignorant nor stupid, but it was genuinely afraid that any considerable change in the social structure would spell the doom of Hinduism, and that adaptations of Western thought and consequent changes in social customs would entail gradual loss of the Hindu identity. Thus the trend towards rational thinking and behaviour, whether exhibited by the "reformed Hindus" or the Brahmo Samaj, became the target of strong attacks. Increasing urbanisation and English education, however, somewhat blunted the edge of orthodox criticism. While, again, the Brahmo Samaj was puritan in temper and predominantly intellectual in character the reformed Hindus freely indulged an epicurean interest in European literature and were powerfully drawn to the Romantic movement of the West. This is evident in the translations and adaptations from English and French literature, of which there was a mild spate at the turn of the century. That these ranged from Shakespeare, Scott and Victor Hugo to Reynold's *Mysteries of the Court of London* goes to show that the interest in borrowings from Western literature was not a discriminating one. Within a short time, however, the interest of the Bengali literati spread to the more modern European writers like Tolstoi, Ibsen, Maeterlinck, Turgenev, Dostoievsky, Maupassant, Daudet and others—an assorted variety that bore evidence of a wide, if dilettante, intellectual curiosity. Under the assimilative genius of Tagore and the adaptative competence of Prabhat Kumar Mukhopadhyaya the Bengali short story grew up and flourished. A literature of patriotism grew, of which historical and other plays built on the Elizabethan model formed a significant part. The nationalist upsurge of the first decade of the century did, of course, contribute a renewed emphasis on Indian values while developing political and public life on the English pattern; but this emphasis was qualitatively different from that of the earlier decades in that, among other things it preached an activist social philosophy, and its principal stress was not on conservatism but a reorientation of Indian philosophical values in an increasing awareness of changes occurring and changes sought in the body political. Significantly, interest in foreign literature and progressive thought increased apace as reliance on foreign goods declined.

The role of journalism vis-a-vis creative literary output needs to be noted at this period. Most of the journals, even the literary ones, were pronouncedly nationalistic in bias, but were culturally conservative, exhibiting the duality that was manifest in Bengali society. Creative literature was on the whole an ally of this conservatism. But breaches in the literary flanks were already in progress. Tagore with his powerful journalistic output and his early literary work was in the vanguard of the non-conformists. He was the main butt of conservatives' criticism which reached a peak of virulence almost to the point of character-killing. But Tagore went on undeterred, and by the end of the first decade of the century had scored a direct hit with his novel *Ghare Baire*, followed by more novels like *Chokher Bali*, *Nashta Nidh*, and *Chaturanga*, all dealing with the forbidden theme of love out of bounds, followed by the remarkable short story *Strir Patra*, a forceful plea for woman's right to a free existence. The vigour of orthodox criticism dropped, however, after he had been awarded the Nobel Prize in 1913: he had become too big a national prize to be derided. Also in the meantime controversy had become more evenly two-sided; changes in social trends and in literary vogue as a result of wider acquaintance with European literature were manifesting themselves. Tagore gathered an increasing following among young writers and readers. The new trend in literature had its principal spokesman in *Sabuj Patra* under the editorship of Pramatha Chaudhuri, an accomplished writer of polemical prose whose acquaintance with English and French literature and culture was deep and extensive. Another prominent spokesman was the journal *Prabasi* edited by Ramananda Chatterjee, an intellectual giant and fearless critic of public life ,society and literature. The opposition, led by the journals *Sahitya* and *Manasi*, however, led a doughty attack on the new trends, which it thought had a destructive effect on the morals of youth,

(Continued on page 150)

ASP/GM/K-10 A

-Ah... Kolynos

fresh and clean...

the taste of Kolynos!
tongue-tingling, minty
the foam of Kolynos!
makes brushing easier, cleanses thoroughly
the sweet breath that Kolynos gives!
(you, and others, will appreciate this)

A friendly tip to the fifth woman: use Kolynos and smile, like the others! Brush your teeth with Kolynos Dental Cream every night...and every morning, of course. More confidence in company...more fun!

Smile with confidence...smile with Kolynos

Registered user: GEOFFREY-MANNERS AND COMPANY LIMITED

Transport on the way

By BIREN DAS

EARLY in the morning we got down at station 'Y' with our camera and Sound equipment and luggages after spending three nights in the train. It was a tiring journey as we had to change trains twice on our way to 'Y'. All the four members of the film-unit were tired and exhausted. So the very sight of the station brought joy and hope to all of us. The purpose of our visit to 'Y' was to shoot a documentary film for the Government of 'X'.

As it was difficult to get public transport at a place like 'Y' with reasonable charges, the sponsers of the film, Government of 'X' agreed to provide us with transport. A shooting schedule was drawn in consultation with the Liaison Officer and finally green light was given. The Liaison Officer (in this case a District Magistrate) intimated us that as per schedule a jeep and a station-wagon would pick up the film-unit from 'Y' railway station to circuit house at the appointed time.

So on alighting from the train we strained our eyes all around in search of the jeep and the station-wagon. But we could not see anything. The yard and the road facing the station was bare and desolate like the winter-sky. We inquired the T.C. on duty about taxies. We were told that taxi-drivers were on strike for the last 3 days due to some dispute over charges in fare-structure with the State Government. But what about the State transport? After waiting for a few minutes, I tried to get in touch with the Liaison Officer. I rang him up. I was told that he had gone out. P.A. Sahab who took his place would do the work. So I had better ring up "P.A. Sahab at 56."

I did what I had been told to do and asked "Is that P.A. Sahab?" "What do you want?" was the reply. I then enquired about the transport. " Hold on, will you? I am afraid two cars have left for the station to pick up the film-unit from Bombay. He replied.

'Very Good!' said my cameraman friend when I told it to him. "Let us wait." We waited for half-an-hour. The distance between the station and the town was hardly five miles and it would take a jeep half-an-hour to cover the distance. So there must be something wrong somewhere, I thought. I rang up the P.A. "P.A. Sahab is having his hair cut, he can't come to the phone," said a matron and asked "What's the matter?"

"It is about the cars." I said.

"They are on the way. You may ring up P.A. Sahab after half-an-hour in case they do not reach the station fairly shortly.

"I have heard that in this part of the country things move at a snail's space. It sounds strange that a Government jeep will take an hour to travel

five miles," muttered my friend the Sound Recordist.

"Well, I am not so sure that it will get to the station even after an hour" said the Assistant Director.

A lonely crow cawed from the telegraph pole—as if in support to the Assistant Director. But we had only one choice left, that was to exercise our patience. "Is that P.A. Sahab speaking?" I said on the phone after half-an-hour.

"What do you want?"

"This is so and so from the railway station. Not a single transport has arrived so far."

"Wait some time more."

"Could I talk to P.A. Sahab."

"I am sorry, no. He is taking his bath. However if you have any difficulty, ring him up after half-an-hour." My companions were disappointed. After all how long could one wait like that?

Another half-an-hour. I rang up P.A. Sahab's residence. The voice on the other end of the telephone informed me that P.A. Sahab was performing his puja and so he would not be available on the phone for another half-an-hour.

"What about the cars?"

"They are coming."

We arrived at 'Y' at 6-15 A.M. It was past ten. Nearly four hours passed. As there was no restaurant at the station, we could not get anything to eat. It is hightime now that some of us should walk down to town and arrange for some private car or something. But before that, I must try to speak to P.A. Sahab for the last time. So I rang up. This time I was told that the P.A. was at dinner and so he would not come to the phone. I told that a pretty kettle of fish we were in. We had been waiting for four hours. We would be beholden to him if would do us the favour by ringing back.

I rang up again and to make quite I asked "Is that P.A. Sahab speaking?"

"Yes, Yes, who are you and what do you want. And please be brief I have no time."

So I repeated again what I told nearly half-a-dozen times since morning to the voices on the phone—and added that I had got the original copy of the telegram from the District Magistrate with me wherein it was stated that Government transport would pick up the film-unit from 'Y' station etc.

"Transport! What transport?" I heard the voice of the P.A. Sahab on the phone.

"Any Officer who happens to pass the town wants a transport from us. As if we are running a transport agency. But if no spare transport available what can I do about it?"

"But you said in the morning that two cars had left for the station?"

"Did I say that! Then what happened to them, somebody should find this out. Any way you see me at my office after twelve-thirty, and I will see that you get a transport" "But P.A. Sahab, how could I possibly come to your office?. . . ." P.A. Sahab by the time disconnected the line.

To cut the long story short, dear reader, I was rather fortunate that my Liaison Officer, the District Magistrate of 'Y' returned on the same afternoon and provided us with transport and accommodation after profuse apology for the inconvenience caused to us. But what about the P.A. Sahab, you might wonder. So do I.

KALLOLYUG—THE GRASSROOTS

(Continued from page 147)

until it was swamped by the tidal wave of the twenties.

Meanwhile another figure had unobtrusively entered the literary stage to shake the conservatives still further. This was Sarat Chandra Chatterjee, whose early stories of Bengali middle-class life had made him the darling of the reading public. But soon afterwards he broke into forbidden ground by entering a human plea for the fallen woman in *Charitraheen* and *Grihadaha* and, finally, in *Srikanta*. The more popular he became the louder was the conservative outcry against him, for they saw in him, as they had earlier seen in Tagore, another force of continuous erosion of the walls of "good" taste and morality which, according to them, stood between society and an undefined, therefore dreaded, chaos. But very soon disobedience was in the air and that of the ruling authority was established as a virtue and a mark of distinction in social life. If defiance of Caesar was a virtue, defiance of socio-religious authority and moralistic canons of literary activity did not take long to be regarded as one. This feeling of liberation was like a heady wine, and the exhilaration it brought about was reflected in a multitudinous din: in political behaviour, social outlook and, lastly, in literature.

Such was the hour when a band of young writers appeared on Bengal's literary horizon. They were as much a part of the overall movement as the new generation of journalists and political workers. In fact, without being monolithic, they were interwoven together in the general fabric of the movement. The young writers' enthusiasm was fired by the revolutionary substance of the emerging freedom movement, the expanding humanistic tradition of the best of Bengal's thought, the search in war-ravaged Europe for new ways and values of life and the sympathetic naturalism of foreign writers with such diverse backgrounds as Maxim Gorki and O. Henry. Their forbears in their search for form had emulated the manner of the Romantic and the Victorian schools of English literature; these young people took their cue from contemporary writers who had defied tradition in order to be able to write truthfully about the life of that vast multitude of little people who were unsung in literature so far. True, the Kallol group never possessed any ideological cohesion or programmatic unity, what it possessed in common was a determination to be truthful in their observation and experience of life. Like the political movement that blazed a new trail in a spirit of high adventure the newborn literary movement launched out on a voyage on uncharted seas. What the writers lacked in experience and ripeness of outlook they sought to make up for by youthful energy and a resolute pursuit of what they considered to be a sacred duty to the people around them and to themselves.

All over again

By T. C. GHOSH

ASTROLOGY or Palmistry or for that matter anything connected with clairvoyance always fascinated me. Not that I believed everything I heard but then the very fact that somebody was trying to do something beyond the normal conception of human knowledge of science had an irresistable attraction for me. I even went to the extent of studying Cheiro's book on palmistry or the latest articles on Para-psychology. Unfortunately I did not know any Sanskrit otherwise I would also have studied the Indian system of Astrology. The argument for or against astrology had no effect on my interest. The claim that astrology was essentially based on astronomy and as such it was a science by itself did not make me believe everything they said. On the other hand the opinion of the opposite school of thought that it was the greatest hoax did not deter me from seeking astrologers. I was so fascinated by the subject that I had taken it up as my hobby and source of entertainment. When others spent five or ten rupees in watching a play or hearing a musical concert I spent the same amount of money on astrologers and palmists. I used to get elated when I was told that my past was miserable, my present not at all bright, and my future completely bleak unless of course I was prepared to spend a considerable amount of money to please those evil influenc ng planets. Unfortunately I never had enough money to spend on such a quick and easy method of success. My interest was well known among my friends and I had also to suffer many jibes from them.

I was then posted in Meerut when one Sunday morning my old friend Debu came to my home much earlier than a gentleman is expected to call. In a peevish mood I put on my dressing gown and in this deshabille state entered the drawing room to meet this early bird. Debu took one look at me and realising what was going on in my mind, without much introduction came straight to the point.

"I'm sorry to disturb you at this hour but I purposely came early to catch you before you go out for your infernal bridge".

"Well, you caught me at the wrong end. I have just returned from a whole night session."

"Honestly, it is the limit ! Why does your wife suffer you so much ?"

"Ask her. Anyway tell me what's up."

"You see, there is a famous palmist coming to our house at about ten o'clock. Knowing your weakness I thought I had better tell you about this."

"What's his name ?"

"You would not know him. He is not a professional palmist. He is a Sadhu (monk) and an honest one too. Palmistry is his hobby."

"Oh," I drawled in partial disbelief.

"No, no. Don't take it lightly. I have known him for a long time. I think he has some supernatural power and can see clearly the past, present and future. He says things not so much from his knowledge of palmistry but mostly from his power attained by years and years of meditation."

"Don't be upset Debu. I didn't mean to hurt you. I shall be there to meet him." I nearly said 'to meet this queer character' but I did not.

I would have very much liked to return to my bed but when I looked at the clock on the wall, I realised that there was not even time to regret for accepting the invitation. I went through the morning requirements of dressing up. My wife was surprised to see me getting ready so early and wanted to know the reason. When I explained about my proposed visit to Debu she did not seem to believe it. She quietly commented, "I sincerely hope you aren't starting an early session of bridge again."

There was no point in trying to make an unbelieving wife see reason so I left the matter there.

When I arrived at Debu's place it was a little after ten o'clock. There were already nine or ten people waiting to meet the Sadhuji. I did not know why all these were Bengalees. It might be because the Sadhuji was a Bengalee himself or possibly the Bengalees by nature were more curious than others for any supernatural phenomenon. I knew all of them. They were the old residents of Meerut. One thing I noticed that there were no young people among them. Possibly the frustation of old age had brought them for some solace.

As soon as I entered all of them welcomed me with loud shouts. We exchanged a few social greetings and then settled down to our local politics. The latest quarrel was between the Bengalees of Meerut City and those of the cantonment on the selection of site for the next Durga puja. Both parties were adament on their respective selection of site. It seemed that unless a compromise could be made there would be two separate Durga Pujas, which meant the subscription would be divided and neither of the Pujas would be very successful. Even though I always tried to remain out of these parochial politics I was drawn in. Suddenly members of both the parties present in Debu's house called upon me to give my opinion on this issue. I was in a fix. I could not possibly give an opinion without offending one party or the other, and most probably in trying to avoid giving an opinion, I would end up in offending both. While I was thus trying to avoid giving an opinion, Sadhuji entered and came to my rescue. Everybody forgot their petty quarrel in the presence of this reverent person. He had already helped me in worldly affairs if not in divine matters.

We all showed our respect to him in different fashions. The ladies touched his feet, some bent down and with their heads touched the ground in front of him. I myself folded my hands and slightly bowed my head. He raised his hand and blessed all of us. Then he took his place on the special chair on which the deer skin was spread. He started asking questions on personal affairs of certain people whom he knew. It seemed that I was the only one whom he did not meet before. Debu at this stage entered the room and introduced me.

"Maharaj (Your Holiness), this is Montu my childhood friend of whom I spoke to you before."

"Oh, I see. I have heard a lot about you. Debu and his wife often talked about your interest in divine matters."

Before I could say something, Debu butted in, "He is absolutely crazy about palmistry. I always thought that if he were ever posted to Meerut I would get him to show you his hand. Maharaj, you must see his hand to-day."

At this stage Sadhuji's attitude changed. He gravely said "You know Debu I am out of touch with this for a long time now. I have only come to collect some donation for my little hospital."

"Yes, yes, Maharaj. We shall donate whatever we can but now you must oblige us by reading our palms."

Sadhuji was in a half conceded mood and seeing his indecision, one lady stretched out her hand and spread out her palm in front of him. He held the hand, adjusted his spectacles and then started reading the lines of the palm.

As he was busy in his study I observed him carefully. He would be just over fifty, a thin, tall person with sharp features. He was clean shaven and completely bald. Whatever hair he still possessed had also been shaven. He seemed to me rather tired and weary of life. His cheeks were hollow with high check bones. Some of his front teeth were missing and when he talked the tip of his tongue would slip out a bit through the gap created by the missing teeth. The only thing that attracted me was something special about his eyes. They were deep set and dreamy, but when he gazed straight at somebody they became bright and penetrating. He was wearing a saffron coloured shirt with half sleeves and a cotton lungi of the same colour.

While I was thus observing Sadhuji and taking note of his appearance, I was oblivious of what he was saying in an undertone to the lady. Suddenly she got up, touched his feet and said,

"Maharaj, you are a great saint. You have predicted so correctly you must be having complete vision of the future."

I nearly said that the future was yet to come so how was she so sure of his prediction ? Debu called me to stretch out my hand but before I could do so, another gentleman had already spread out his palm in front of the Sadhuji. Debu look disappointed and displeased but he kept his irritation under control. He asked me to come forward next for my chance.

Sadhuji concentrated on the lines of the palm for barely a couple of minutes and then said,

"You are at present worried about something."

"Yes yes, Maharaj. You are quite right. I am due for promotion but the authorities have held it back."

"Don't worry, it will come but it will be delayed a little."

"So it will come," he turned towards his wife and remarked, Didn't I tell you that they can't hold it back? Now Maharaj, what about my daughter's marriage. Will the present negotiation be successful? Has the prospective bridegroom got a bright future?"

His barrage of questions would possibly have continued if Sadhuji had not cut him short.

"Well, there will be difference of opinion and the success or the failure will depend on your own deeds. It's very difficult to predict the future of something which depends on your personal work."

"Maharaj, you are again very correct. They are demanding too much. Do you think it is worthwhile spending so much money on this match? How is his future?"

Sadhuji laughed and added, "I can't tell you that from your hand. I shall have to see your daughter's hand. But I can tell you this much that wherever she is married she would be reasonably happy."

One of the gentlemen grumbled, "Enough Sir, we must get our chance also." The person who was showing his hand withdrew contended, and I came before the Sadhuji.

I spread out my palm and instead of looking at my own palm, I fixed eyes on his face. He looked up and I saw those piercing eyes again. Since I did not say a single word I felt that he was rather uneasy. He had a glance on the lines of my hand and whispered.

"This is your line of fate, and it has started from Venus going towards the Sun. It indicates that you will earn a lot of money but you will never be able to save any. Your want will never finish."

Then he explained a number of lines and their results.

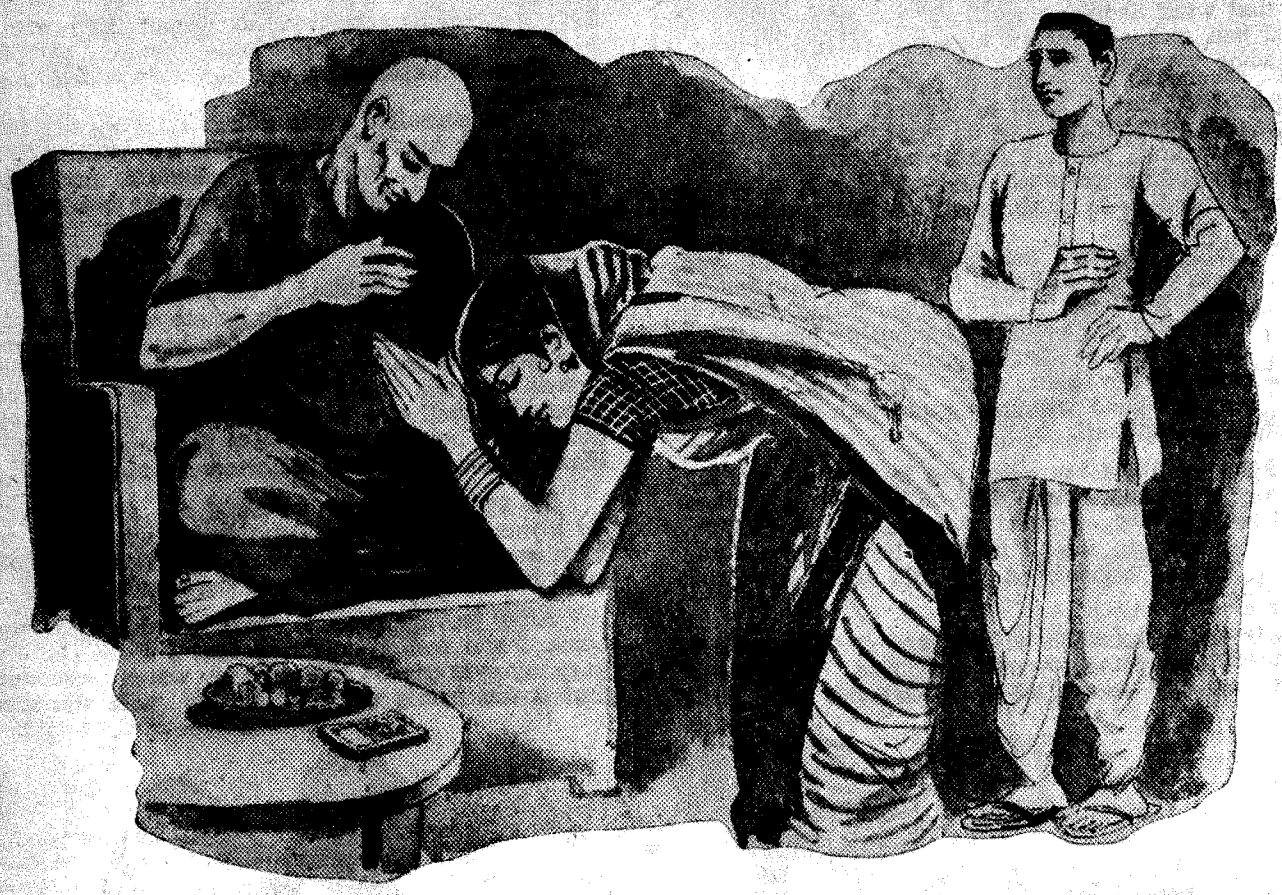
I had consulted many palmists in my life so I had a rough idea of the methods by which they analysed a hand. I was taken aback to find that Sadhuji not only said everything wrong but he had no clue about palmistry. I became rather curious about him.

After he had finished I thanked him and apologised that I had no cash to donate to his hospital. Then I implored him to visit our home. In the end I added, "Maharaj, my wife is a very religious woman and she would be delighted to get your blessing. I shall also be fortunate then to be able to donate my humble contribution for your hospital. Please promise to come tomorrow evening."

He agreed and we arranged an appointment. As I was leaving I told Debu that I was sorry to rush away like that because of a previous appointment but I would meet him in the evening.

After leaving them I went straight to my home. I was feeling so sleepy that I could hardly keep my eyes open. I consulted my watch and found that it was nearly one o'clock. My wife was sur-

Before I could do so, another gentleman had already spread out his palm in front of the Sadhuji.



He seemed to have been pleased with Mita's devotion and more possibly by the amount of her donation.

prised to see me return for lunch. She had been convinced that as usual I would be playing bridge somewhere. After a quick lunch as I lay in bed I was thinking about this strange Sadhu. Obviously he did not have the slightest knowledge about palmistry but I wondered at his courage and audacity to be able to face the public under such a false pretence. If he was a person who had really renounced the world, then why did he come for donations ? Why was he so pretentious ? There were a hundred and one questions crowding in my brain but before I could analyse them, I fell asleep.

When I woke up in the evening I found a cup of hot tea awaiting me. It had such a welcoming fragrance that I jumped out of bed. I do not know what I would have done without my wife Mita. There was nobody in the world who understood more about my unpredictable whims and moods. During tea I told her about the Sadhuji and about the invitation I had extended to him. She was so greatly taken by surprise that her tea cup nearly fell out of the saucer. She looked askance. I explained to her that it was no prelude to my renouncement of the world since I would not be able to survive long without her. The main reason why I was inviting him was to know more about him and ask him some questions in private. I had been greatly intrigued by his character.

When I met Debu a little later he was beaming from ear to ear. He greeted me by saying, "Didn't I tell you that Maharaj was a gem of a person. He really has something genuine in him, not like one of those fake sadhus. See how correct he was in his predictions."

Debu seemed to have accepted that whatever Sadhuji said was bound to be correct. There remained no doubt in his mind. I did not think it would be wise to communicate my impression about him at this stage. It would only end up in an argument and bitterness. If somebody had such blind faith let him enjoy his dreams. Moreover, I wanted some information from him. So I avoided the direct answer to his question and asked him in return, "Tell me all about this Sadhuji. How did you come to know him?"

"Ah ha! So you want to become his disciple? I knew something had struck you hard, the way you suddenly left this morning."

"Yes, you are right there. I was certainly taken up by him," I replied with suppressed sarcasm.

Debu needed no further prompting. He started, "About five years ago I and my wife went on a little tour of religious places. I met Maharaj at Rishikesh. He ran a small hospital of forty or fifty beds and was assisted by about twenty of his disciples. While going down from Lachhmanjhola to Gita Bhawan my wife sprained her ankle. The public there advised me to take her to Sadhuji's hospital for first aid. When I arrived there Maharaj himself came out to receive us and when he found that we were Bengalees, he was really delighted and looked after us very well. She got the best of treatments."

"Is he a doctor?"

"Oh, no. He was in charge of the place. Of course there was a doctor among the disciples."

"What else do you know about him?"

"Nothing very much except that everybody was full of praise in Rishikesh. Many, many sadhus and pilgrims had benefited from his charitable hospital in the last ten or twelve years. Incidentally this is unaided by the Government and run by public charities. That is why every year Maharaj goes out to many distant places collecting donations. Don't you

think this is the highest form of service to mankind?"

I didn't immediately reply. There was no doubt that what Sadhuji was doing was praiseworthy but I had another thought in mind. After listening to some more eulogy about Sadhuji I left Debu.

Next day Sadhuji arrived punctually at seven in the evening. I took him to the library where we would be least disturbed. As per previous plan Mita brought some fruits and sweets for Sadhuji and some money as donation for his hospital. He seemed to have been pleased with Mita's devotion and more possibly by the amount of her donation. He wholeheartedly blessed her and invited her to visit Rishikesh. Mita knew when to leave so after a few minutes she excused herself and we were left alone.

Sadhuji seemed to be ill at ease and appeared to be looking for an opportunity to ask for leave. Therefore, without much beating about the bush I came straight to the point.

"Maharaj, may I have your permission to ask you some frank and blunt questions?"

"Of course, ask any number of questions." He tried to make his tone casual.

I looked at his eyes again and found them alert, already on their guard. I started, "Maharaj, I am a materialistic person. Even though I lead a worldly life but still I don't forget that I was born and brought up in India where we were very much influenced by religion from our very childhood. Whatever I may be I cannot possibly get out of that basic influence which has formed a core in our minds. The result is that we are left in midway. Neither have we full faith in God nor can we become complete atheists. We try to seek God through scientific method."

"But this is foolish," he snapped.

"I know that it may be stupid but what can we do? We have no control over our mind. We can't order and get faith overnight. That's why I want some guidance from you."

"What are you driving at? I don't really understand what you really want?" his voice was piqued.

"I am coming to it. Debu gave me a little resume about the working of your hospital and that made me think. Please tell me if you have renounced the world or not?"

"Yes. Why the doubt?"

"Then aren't you attached to the materialistic world through this hospital ? Aren't your requirement the same as any worldly person, except that you want them for a different cause? Like all of us you want money."

"But I am using it in the service of mankind, which is the same as serving God."

"Maybe, but you are not free. You are attached to the worldly things in some form or another. Now it has come to such a stage that you even go to the extent of cheating for obtaining money."

"How !" he exploded. His anger was rising. I softly said,

"Maharaj, please don't be angry and please don't take any offence. I am only trying to get some doubts cleared. I have some basic knowledge of palmistry and from it I know that you don't know even the ABC of it and yet you pretended to be a palmist. What you told me yesterday was hundred per cent wrong but I didn't want to say anything in public. That's why I invited you here".

"Now that I have had your candid opinion, may I have your permission to leave," he sneered

"No, Maharaj. I am still at the introductory stage. I haven't asked you the questions as yet. Maharaj please calm down. I am not here to criticise you but I sincerely want some lesson from your devoted life. Unless you are frank and sincere I shall never learn from your experience to shape my future life."

I think it was the sincerity and urgency in my voice than the reasoning which affected Sadhuji. He quietened down and after a little while plainly said,

"Ask whatever you want. I shall answer frankly."

"When you first left home, didn't you come only to seek God?"

"Yes."

"The thought of serving mankind didn't come to you then? You renounced everything only to find God, isn't that true?"

"That's correct."

"It's obvious that you might have advanced a lot but you didn't reach your goal. If you had, everything would have been at your disposal, you would not now be begging. Moreover, you could have done the service to mankind from home. One doesn't have to renounce everything for serving mankind. How and why did you change the path?"

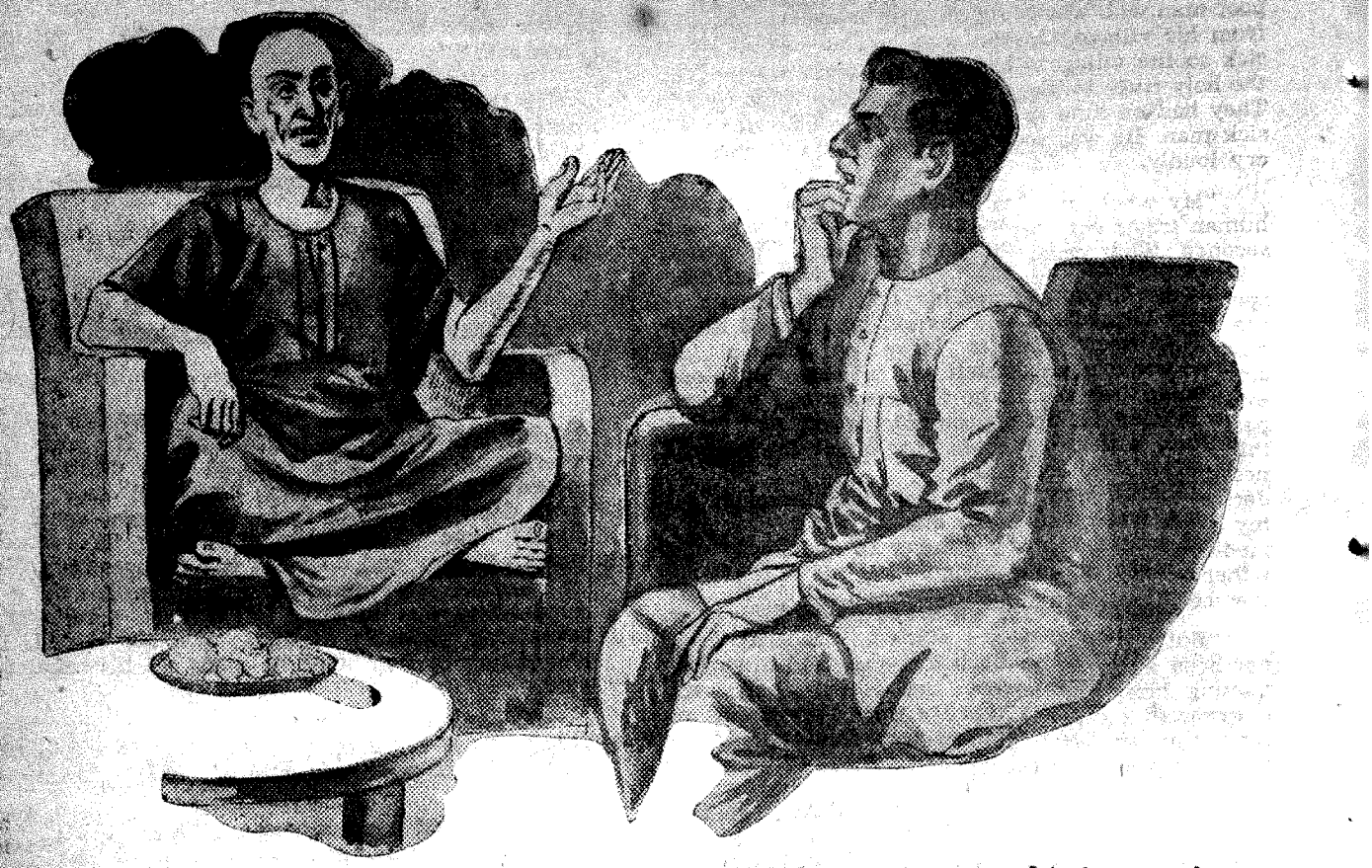
Sadhuji kept quiet for a considerable time. I suppose he was debating in his own mind about something, probably deciding whether to tell me everything or not. Then he made up his mind and said,

"I don't know whether I should tell you everything or not but since you said that it would help you to decide your own future, I shall narrate in brief."

He paused for a moment. "Over thirty years ago I left my home as a sadhu in search of God. I shall not tell you about my family background and the details about my relations, not only because it is against the code of Sadhus but in the present context it is superfluous. Anyway, I was born in a well-to-do landlord family of Bengal. I was the only son of my parents though I had sisters but according to the law of that time I was to inherit my ancestral property. I was a good student and graduated at an early age. Everybody expected me to get married as per traditional custom and settle down to looking after the family property. I did not, however, want to settle down so early to this routine life. I wanted some time to look around the world. My parents were informed that I wanted to study law before I finally settled down in our ancestral profession. They realising that my knowledge of law would be of great help to them in administering the landed property, readily agreed.

"I was not very religious in the sense that was normally understood in this country. I believed in God but all these usual Pujas (Rituals) in our ancestral home never impressed me. I thought these were too noisy and showy. I could not believe that God could be realised through such a glamourous fashion. But all the same I had a burning desire to learn the aim of life. Anyway to come back to the subject, while I was studying law and reading up the many past cases, my mind started to change. The amount of lies, cheating, fraud and inhumanity which lie under the cover of law and so-called justice shocked me. That people wanted to gain so little by such mean methods simply revolted my mind against every materialistic thing. Nobody seemed to consider that their gain was so short lived. There must be something more permanent which one should search for in life. My mind groped for an answer.

"Somehow these thoughts took such a root inside me that I decided to find out the truth of life and God. I was no longer interested in anything perishable including my body. The desire to seek



When I first started palmistry to satisfy them, my conscience pricked me and even now I feel very guilty.

God became so much of an obsession with me that one day I wrote a letter to my father giving him all the details of my mind and left home forever.

"I did not know where to go and how to start the mission of my life. I first went to Banaras but the knowledge they imparted was only bookish and superficial. I then moved to Hardwar but there also I could not make any progress. Someone suggested that I would have to find my Guru, that is a 'Master', before I could really make any progress in my mission. When I started searching for one, I found a hundred volunteering to become my master. The same person who gave me the idea of finding my own Guru also warned me that I should not accept one until my own heart was satisfied. I was told that the true master and their respective disciples were supposed to have been ordained by God. Since none of them appealed to me I still remained without a master.

"My next course of action was to visit all the religious shrines in search of my master. It was at Kedarnath that I found him. I practised whatever he wanted me to do. I went through all the Asanas (Yogic exercises), Japa (Repetition of prayer) and Dhyan (Meditation) under his guidance. For fifteen long years I followed him wherever he went and remained a constant companion disciple."

He stopped and we both remained quiet, lost in our own thoughts. I broke the silence by asking.

"Did you succeed in your mission ? Did you get what you wanted?"

"One's own achievements are not supposed to be divulged. But I can tell you this much, that I got complete peace of mind and I certainly found my path. Anyway to cut a long story short, my Master left this world and I was left alone to make my own independent progress. After his departure I realised how lonely I was and what he meant to me. For another few years I continued along the path shown to me by my Master."

Again he paused as if to arrange his thoughts for the next part of the story. I thought that it would be inadvisable to distract his thought at this stage, so I remained silent, patiently waiting for him to continue.

It was nearly two minutes before he resumed narrating the remainder of his story. "About twelve years ago, one evening in May, I was sitting by the side of the Ganges near Lachhmanjhola. It was the season for the pilgrims to visit Badrinath and the whole area of Rishikesh was crowded with people. As I sat there I saw many different parties from practically all the parts of India walk past me to their destination. Those who could afford it went by bus as far as Chamoli and then walked the remainder of the distance. Others mostly poor villagers and Sadhus walked the whole way. Surprisingly, poorer a person was the more devoted he was to his religion. No wonder Karl Max said that religion was the opium of the poor.

"When it became quite dark I got up and started for my little hut which was only about five minutes' walk from that place. I purposely avoided the main road because of the crowd and started to stroll along the river. Suddenly I heard some muffled sounds of groaning. I stopped, listened carefully and then moved towards the direction of the sound. Fifteen yards further on I came across an old man lying on the ground. He was in agony, tossing from side to side. At first I was unable to distinguish the words he was muttering between his moans, but as I put my ear close to his mouth I was able to make out his desperate plea, 'Save me, I am dying. Don't leave me! Between his whimpers and his impure village Hindi I could gather that he was a

poor man who was going on pilgrimage with a party from his village. On the way he had fallen very sick so the villagers had left him on the banks of the holy river to die and thus go straight to heaven. They had no time to waste to look after an old and sick man. He was too worn out to be even able to cry loudly.

"My whole mind was so shocked by this inhuman treatment that I remained stunned for a few seconds. What cruel pilgrimage were they undertaking? Would they be able to achieve anything special at the temple if they had annoyed God at the very start? As a true Hindu Sadhu I should have been above all emotions. I was expected to be stoic, tranquil in sorrow and in happiness, but that evening I found that my heart still ached with compassion and sympathy. All these twenty years of intense effort had not been able to change the softness of my heart, I lifted the old man on my shoulder and brought him to my little hut. I laid him on my bed and went to the nearest dispensary for some medicine. It was more by his own good luck than either by the insufficient medicines or my nursing that he became well and was able to return home.

"But he left back something from which I have not been able to free myself as yet. While I was nursing him many people saw with surprise the unexpected sight of a Sadhu nursing a villager. A reputation was established. Even before this old man fully recovered another patient arrived. In India there was no dearth of people asking for help so it was no wonder that I would be continuously busy in my new found work. I also found a new charm in serving mankind. I saw a new path for my salvation through service.

"Since then I have not been without some patient or the other. Gradually the work started increasing and I could not cope with it. Volunteers came and joined to help me but the main difficulty was the provision for these sick people. This little hospital got such a hold on me that I went out begging just to raise enough money to run the place. Disciples started gathering and the number of patients started increasing. The simple wish to nurse some sick people developed into a big organisation. Soon I found that I could not raise enough money from a small place like Rishikesh or Hardwar. I started going out to other places for donations.

"People do not donate easily. They want something in return. They would not believe that I am indeed a Sadhu until I gave some proof either by showing some miracle or act of clairvoyance. When I first started palmistry to satisfy them, my conscience pricked me and even now I feel very guilty. But then when the faces of those sick people in agony appear in my mind, I forget everything. Sin or virtue, right or wrong, false or genuine no longer have any bearing on me. The only yearning that remained in me was how to mitigate their sorrows and sufferings. Their need was pressing and I gave in even to fraudulence. Quite often I thought of running away from all these botheration, responsibility and bondage of human affection but I have not yet been able to get away and I don't think that I ever will either."

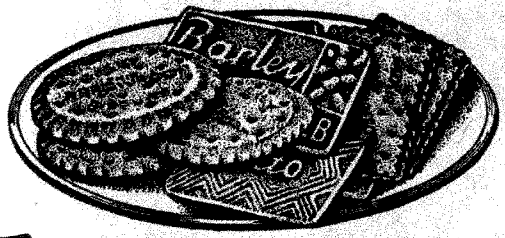
When he finished I wanted to ask him if it was not for the weakness of fame that stopped him from giving it all up but I had another important question to ask,

"Maharaj, do you realise that you had run away from home to avoid attachment and now you are back again from where you had started?

He remained silent and unheeding for a while as if he had not heard the question, then he said slowly and heavily, "Yes, I know but I have also learnt that we are incapable of doing anything ourselves. God has already chalked out our course. We may try and do anything but ultimately we will have to follow the path ordained by Him. I do not judge myself anymore. Complete surrender is salvation."

Before even finishing his sentence he got up abruptly and without taking leave, walked out of the room as if in a trance. I wanted to call him back but in spite of my effort no audible sound came out. Dumbfounded I watched the curtain still moving by his going.

On festive occasions



Treat your guests with

LILY

BISCUITS

LILY BISCUIT CO. PRIVATE LTD. CALCUTTA-4

LB-HV/65

TRAVELLING AT HOME

KOBITA SARKAR

TRAVELLING in one's own country perhaps lacks, in the popular imagination, the adventurous quality of a trip abroad. In fact, there was a time when the more sophisticated Indian, heir to the 18th century concept of "The Grand Tour", preferred to familiarise himself with western modes and manners, cheerfully ignoring the wonders of the country about him. Paradoxically, it was the foreigners who, lured as much by his imagination as by the palpable attractions, came to India, more often as a scholar than a mere tourist, or rather with a scholar's interest in tourism.

In recent years there has been the inevitable reaction and an increased curiosity about one's immediate environment. Earlier, too, the more conservative or the less opulent restricted their tourism perforce to India, while many people, who set out as pilgrims, eventually combined their pilgrimage with casual sight-seeing. It is not uncommon even now to find parties which, after having achieved their major goal of pilgrimage, go to places of more secular interest. For them, and for others who are avowed tourists and sightseers, there are organised trips to various centres. There are, for instance, the Taj and the other major attractions of Agra, a sort of muted fiction-cum-historical atmosphere; Delhi, where so much history has been made; Rajasthan which occupies the centre of the stage; and "South India," a vague term covering too vast an area, with interests too diverse to be dismissed with such a nebulous appelation. Ajanta-Ellora is the commonplace of tourism, in India, and one's status as a seasoned tourist is incomplete without visiting the caves.

As a result of this increased interest, there has been a vast improvement in the organisation of tourism. Most of the better-known places are easily accessible by multiple modes of transport and, except in rare cases, accommodation of some kind is available. The real snag is suitable accommodation for all income-groups and correct information about it in advance. While the better hotels are well within the means of the foreign tourist, they are often beyond the reach of the average Indian. Again, those who do not mind the shortcomings of *dharamshalas* are all right; it is the in-between class, that finds itself landed in difficulties. At some places like Sanchi, till recently, there were no hotels as such, and there is infernal delay and endless red-tape in getting the use of the official bungalows. Besides, during the cooler seasons, if the place is packed to capacity, there is no alternative accommodation. Visitors to the Belur-Halebid area often find accommodation problems. Hill-stations fortunately,

are extremely well provided, with diverse types of accommodation, publicity and easy modes of access.

Then again, while the means of communication and advertisement of the relatively better-known places are undeniably excellent, other places, less familiar, which might not perhaps be of interest to the foreigner, but which are of tremendous interest to the national, are beyond their keen because there is inadequate information available about them. Often one stumbles on them just by chance. The Udaigiri caves and Bhilsa, for instance, which are so near Sanchi, are well worth a visit; yet how many enthusiasts who go to Sanchi find their way to them? Quite by accident for instance, one discovered that there were temples in the Mount Abu style in Ranakhpur which might not surpass the former in sculptural finesse, but excel them in architectural grandeur.

Sometimes it happens that a place suffers because of the not-always-justifiable reputation it has acquired through hearsay, and which it is difficult to dispel. A centre like Ahmedabad for instance, might be dismissed as "that place full of textile mills," overlooking the fact that it has some of the most unique architecture in the region, and is well worth seeing for that alone. The Aihole-Badami region again, suffers from inadequate facilities and lack of correct information about the accommodation and interesting features.

NOBODY'S BUSINESS

It must be emphasised that tourism is a relatively underdeveloped industry with us, and that perhaps accounts for the rigid schedules of tours, and the fact that anything outside the conducted tour is generally an uncertain hazard. What is disconcerting however, is that only the most routine questions are dealt with adequately. Any information which is even vaguely divergent seems to be nobody's business. An excellent brochure and a display of the most disarming courtesy soothes one, but helps no whit in the solution of the problems. It is not enough for a person to be well informed about the place in which tourist officials function. While specialising in information about a specific region, they should be able to furnish at least the basic facts (aside from travel time-tables) about other places in India. For not all their customers will be people from other countries wanting to know about the local attractions. There are those who want answers to their problems of travel in other regions or even in their own, since such information is not aways part of one's general knowledge. In this respect, the tourist at home seems to be at a disadvantage as compared with the foreigner. Admittedly, the function of the tourist office is not that of the guide, but a more personal approach would add immeasurably to the visitor's appreciation of his tour. And, after all, when a foreigner is excused his abysmal ignorance, isn't the person who lived all his life in Mysore as much of a foreigner to Kashmir which he hopes to visit?

Furthermore there is a change in the attitude of tourists in most places. Statistical information about architecture, and alluring posters are not always infalliable inducements to visit a place. Nor is everyone content with casually scanning famous temples all day and following that by an organised party at night. There is a growing realisation that the "atmosphere" of a place is not always savoured best by unqualified homage to its past or by poring over protected monuments. But this should be a personal discovery, and it seems unfair to complicate the work of a tourist office trying to get them to find it for you! For us, to-day, the architectural glories are a thing of deep and abiding interest; but so is the present of vital concern, for the face of the country has changed so radically in the last few years that one's perspective of the national culture is no longer complete with merely a pilgrimage to the past.

NOT A CUT AND DRIED AFFAIR

Tourism is not always a cut and dried affair, and people are now looking for places of interest off the beaten track—for here a greater sense of adventure prevails—or perhaps it invests them with an aura of superiority to have been to some lesser-known place, and to have obviated the need of a helping hand from an organisation. With a greater appreciation of the fact, perhaps the personal touch could be more effectively cultivated by the tourist offices; for it will eventually be a very essential part of tourism. We want to see the conventional places —the Taj and Jaipur; the temples of the south and the cave paintings and sculpture of Ajanta-Ellora, but why neglect the virile sweep of the architecture of Mandu merely because it is relatively more difficult of access; or the filigreed mosques of Ahmedabad, whose sheer perfection of craftsmanship is a wonder in itself, just because they have not been adequately publicised? And what about the modern achievements of Chandigarh (however controversial the subject), and Bhakra Nangal, which in their own way are quite fascinating and essentially representative of the spirit of the times? And the beauties that Nature so fortunately provides—the snow-capped Himalayas, the softly swaying trees of the southern backwaters, the vaguely terrifying allure (at a safe distance!) of a primaeval forest infested with animals? Or the craftsmen with their exquisite skill ? All these wonders from an exciting past to the tumultous future—are ours and all of them are vital components in the correct orientation of our outlook.

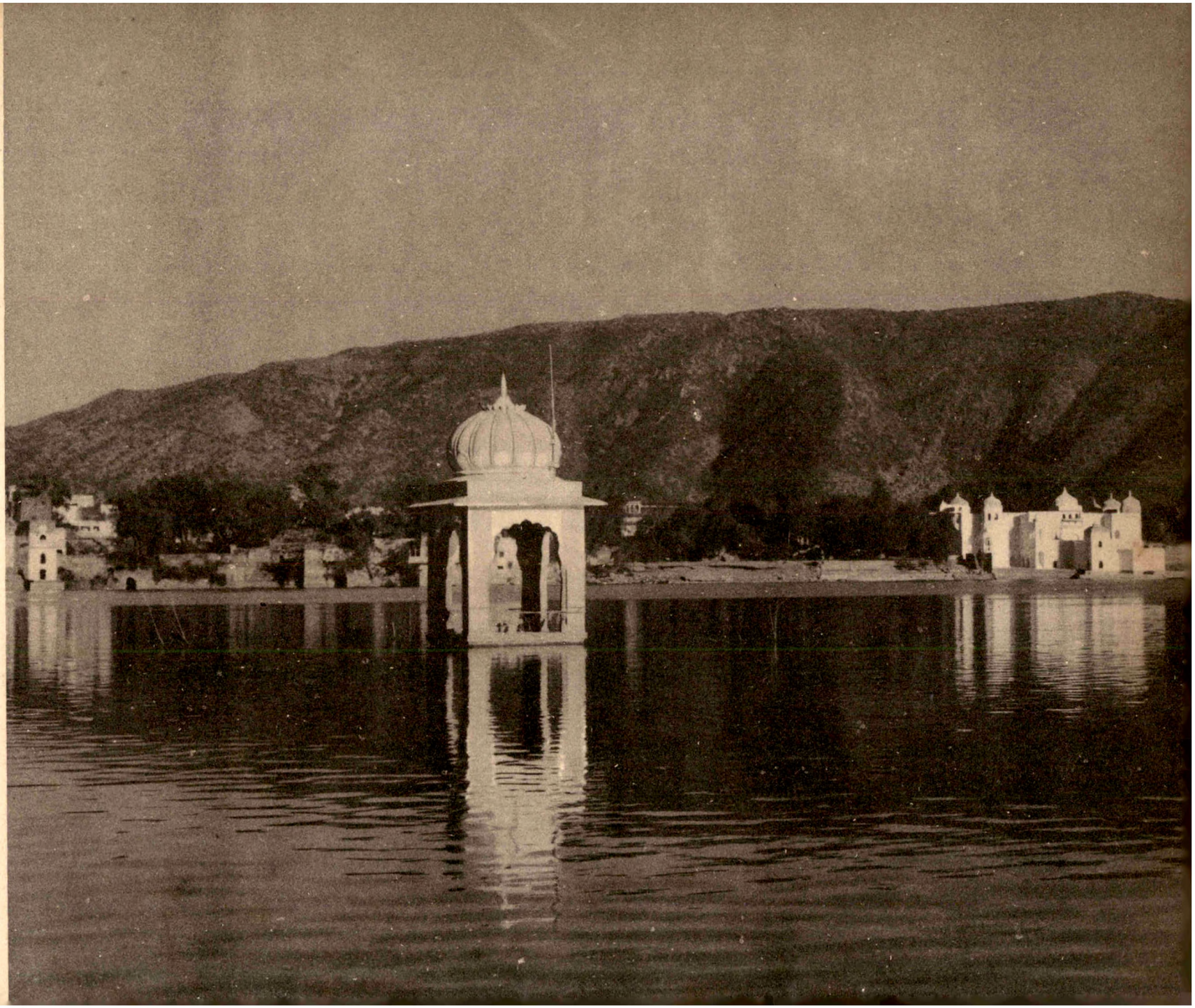
For many of us again one trip does not suffice as many things in the same region might have been overlooked due to ignorance. New secrets are ever being wrested from the earth beneath and, if one has seen them in the process of being retrieved, there is always a personal curiosity to see the whole after it has been laid bare, and there is certainly something special about this second visit, for the tourist himself has been changed by time and circumstance, and his reactions have been transformed along with it. The Taj is a familiar sight, and yet each renewed contact with it is a pilgrimage of rediscovery—of its many-splendoured attractions, small details one has overlooked, subtle excellences one has not appraised adequately, changing backgrounds that add a certain something to the most famous post-card of the East.

When all is said and done however, it is the individual approach the tourist brings to his travels which will finally make his personal discovery of his country an unequalled adventure for him.

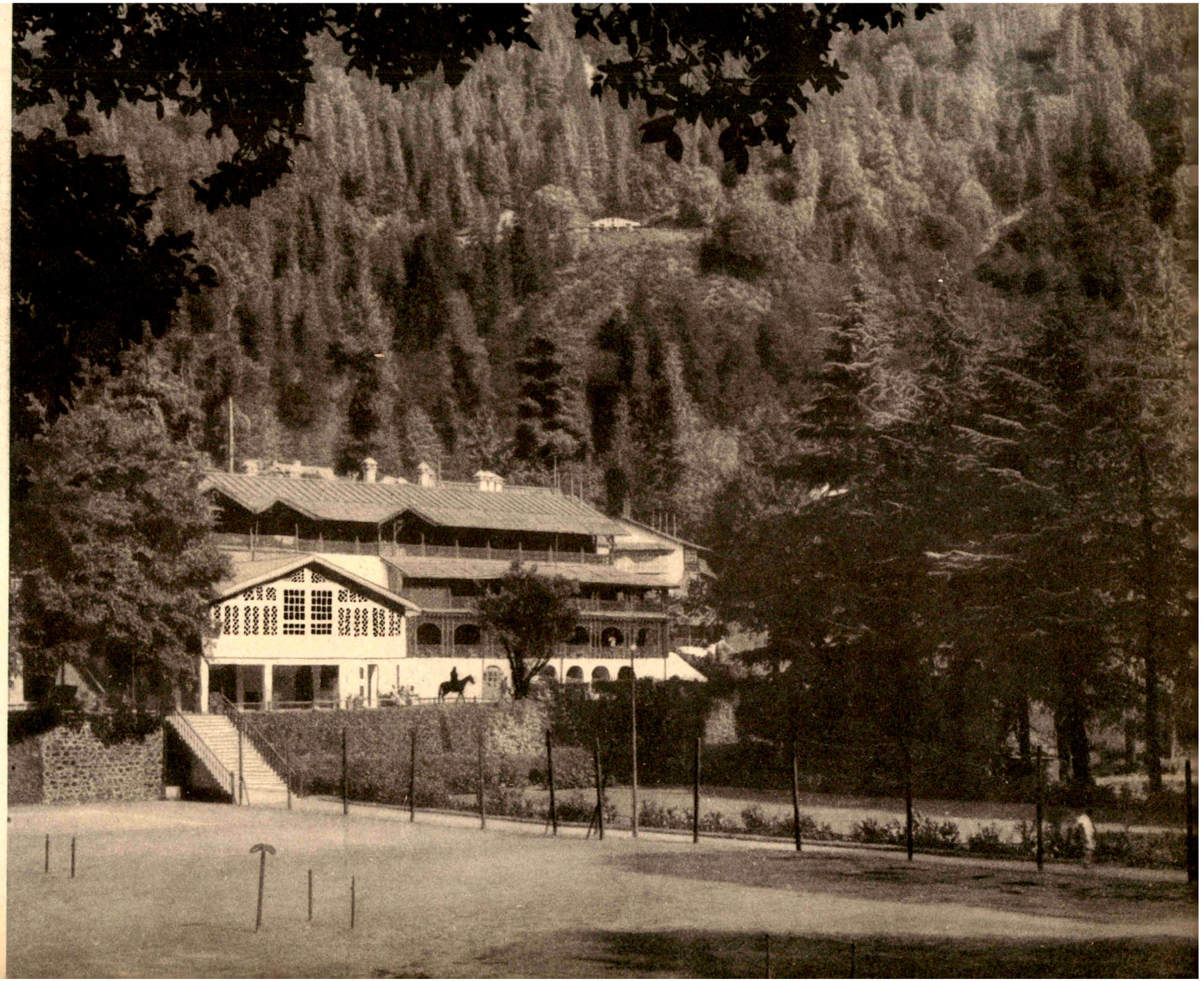
BEAUTY SPOTS of INDIA

PHOTO feature

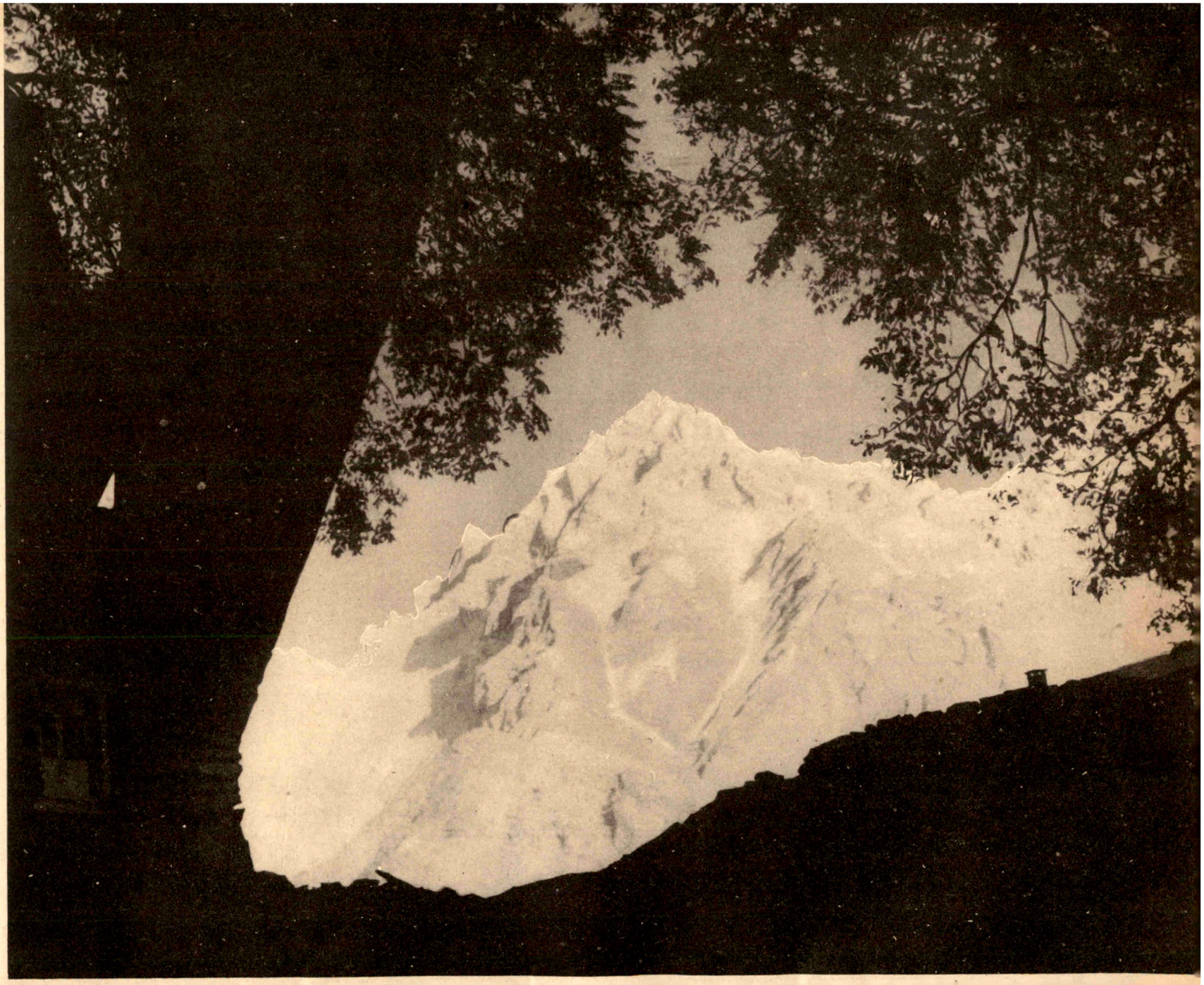
Marble Rocks,
Jabalpur.



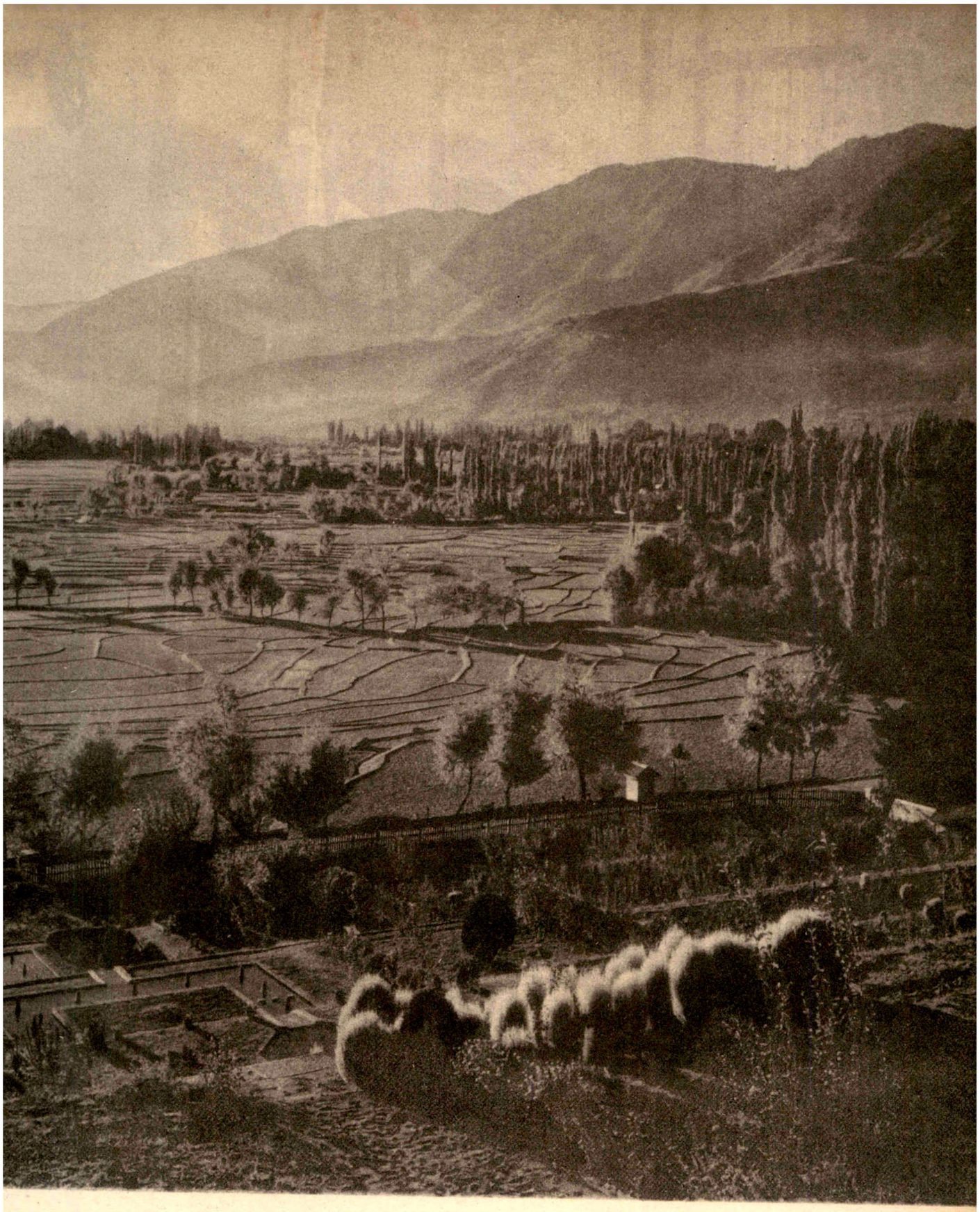
Lake Pushkar,
Rajasthan.



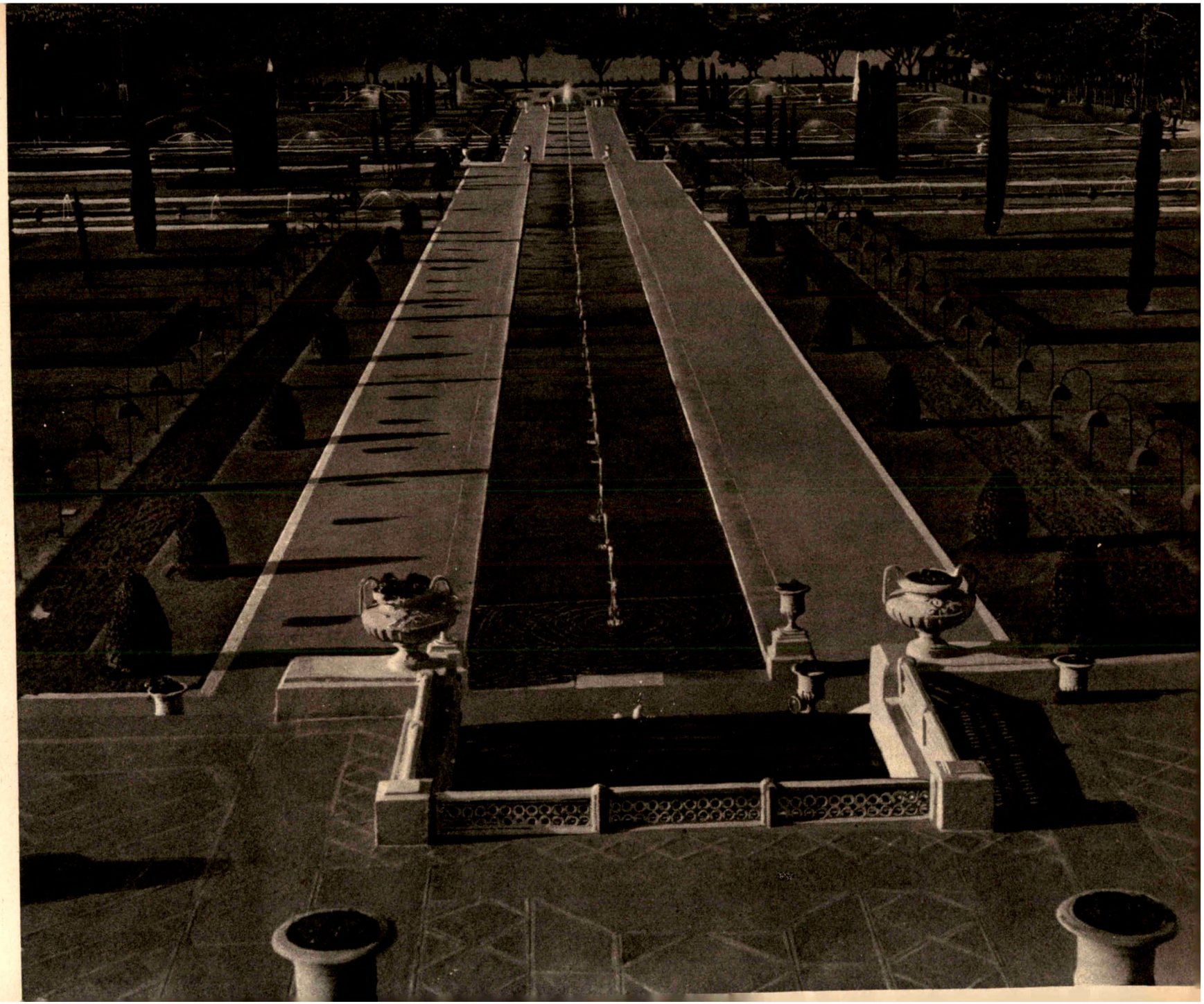
A view of Naini Tal.



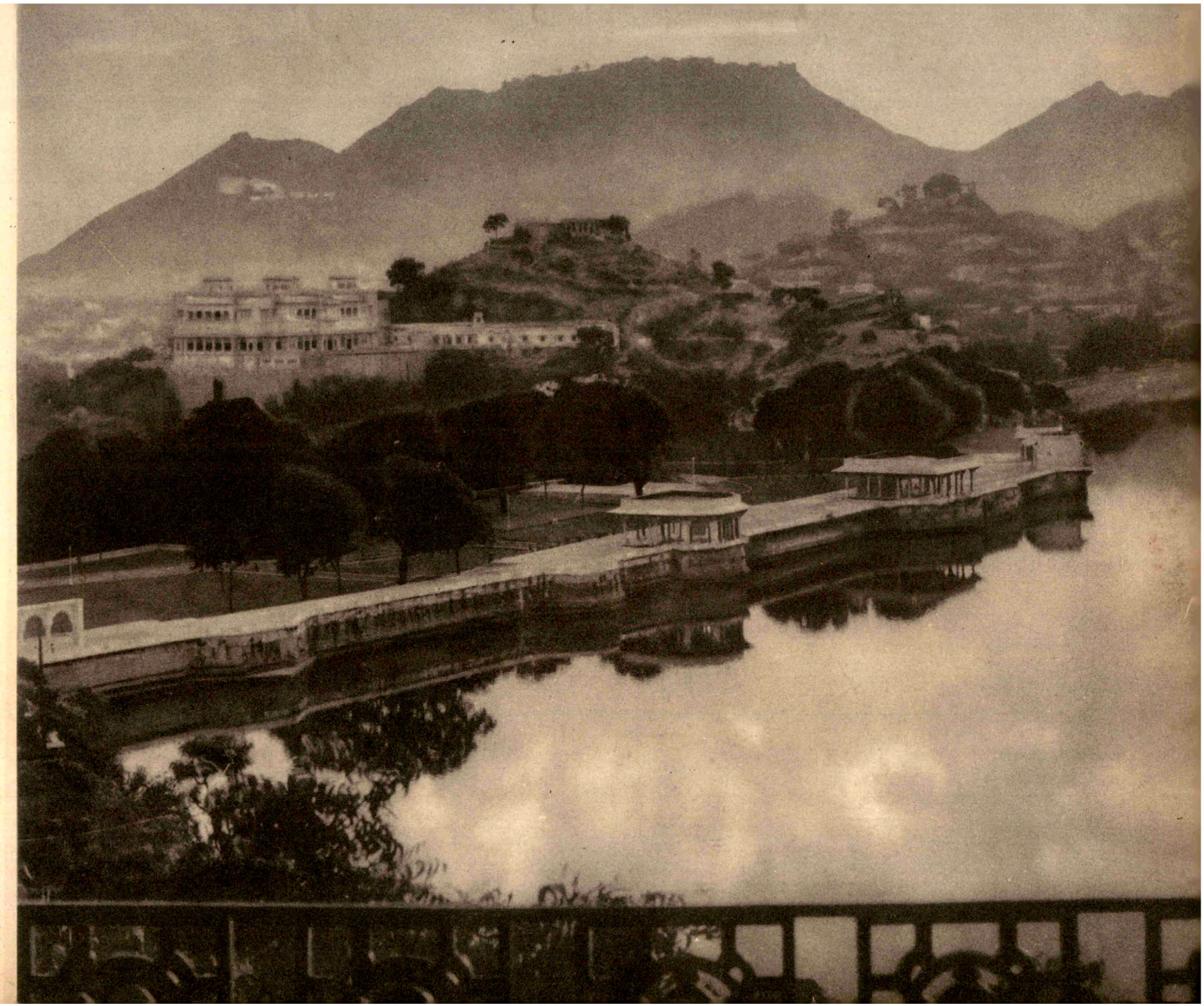
Kiner Kailash peak,
Himachal Pradesh.



The beautiful vally,
Kashmir,



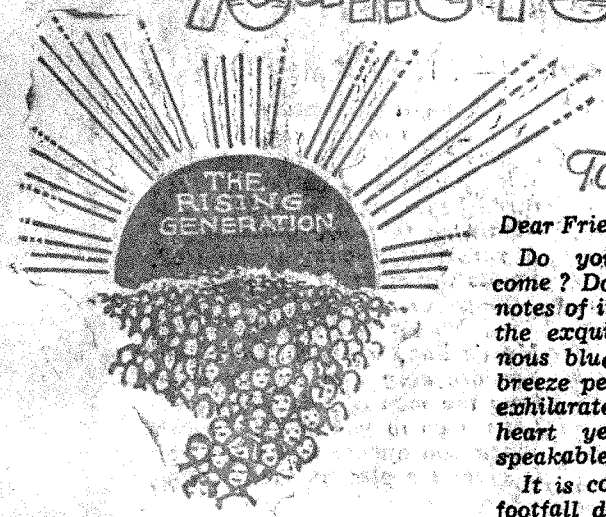
Vrindaban Garden,
Mysore



Ana Sagar Lake,
Ajmer.

Nakki Lake,
Mount Abu.

YOUNG FOLK'S CORNER



To young Folk

Dear Friends,

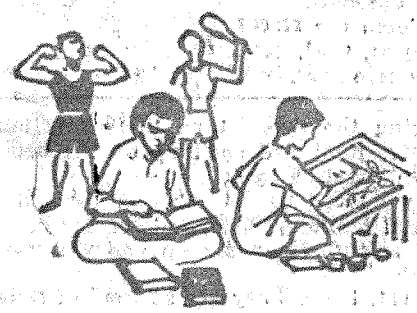
Do you feel that autumn is come? Do you hear the golden notes of its flute? Can you perceive the exquisite charm of the luminous blue sky? Does the gentle breeze perfumed by sheuli flowers exhilarate you? And does your heart yearn for something unspeakable, yet to come?

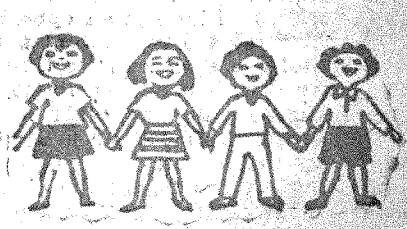
It is coming....The echo of its footfall dances in our pulse-beat.

With autumn, as we know it in our country, is interlaced this sublime, life-giving experience with its remarkable reaction. The thoughts are there, though much of the season's character has changed in recent years. So, often people seem to wonder why the rainy season is barren of rain and the cloudless autumn sky is daubed by cloud, erupting in nasty showers at times!

Externally, anything even worse may happen, but it is in this mental setting, charged with emotion, that the Puja festival is celebrated. And it is the Mother in it, the object of our worship, who is the grandest attraction. It is our longing for Her throughout the year which being intensest with the coming of autumn, gives a magic hue to all that we see around and experience.

I wish you all happiness. To the Divine Mother, whom we worship in a few days from now, who is 'Shakti', the giver of strength and valour, I pray, may She make you sturdy and unbreakable in body, mind and spirit so that you can work and fight for truth, justice and uplift of the downtrodden. To the Mother all children are same. How can She be happy when there is so much misery around us? And here let us remember Swami Vivekananda's declaration: So long as even a single dog of my country remains without food, it is my religion to feed it. Everything else is irreligion.





Yours Affectionately,

Big Brother

A HAUNTED HOUSE

By SAILA CHAKRAVORTTY

OUR gran'dad is a jolly man. But for some days he looked down-hearted. We couldn't guess what had happened.

One day he told us that he had bought an old house in the outskirts of the town. It was a lovely house overlooking a fine landscape of sal forests with the Doongri hill at a distance.

'It's good news', said I and Rabi, my cousin. "We will make plans to spend a few days there, it will be splendid!"

But the old man damped our enthusiasm saying, 'stop planning. You can't live there. It is a haunted house. I was a fool to buy it without knowing, and now I see why it was sold to me so cheap?

A h-a-u-n-t-e-d house! We shuddered.

'Yes, I with servant Bhaju went to spend a night over there last week, but could not stay. We were terrified. People around there say that an ugly goblin dwells there, he does not want that a man should occupy it.'

'Did you see the goblin?'

'No, but I heard his footsteps clearly. I heard him roar like a tiger.'

We were crest-fallen but curious at the same time. We approached gran'dad the next day with the proposal that we would go once to see the house and at night.

'Do you dare?' He wondered.

'Yes, we shall hear how a goblin makes sounds and if possible, see how he looks. We've read so many stories, and here is an opportunity.'

Gran'dad refused to agree at first but ultimately yielded. And one afternoon we three, Rabi, gran'dad and I started with beddings, lights, food for supper including some milk and other necessary articles.

The house was dark, we had oil lamps. We had such heavy meals that the milk pot lay untouched on the floor. We put out the lamp and went to sleep. There was hazy moonlight outside.

It was about midnight; Rabi and I were sleepless. Suddenly we heard a sound outside, some gr-r-r-r-h and thumping on the floor! We felt some-

(Continued on next col.)

one was scratching the doors, then there was loud bump on the floor. Rabi and I sat up on the bed. I saw two greenish dazzling eyes.

Rabi quickly flashed the torch on the floor. We saw an animal lapping the milk kept there.

We called gran'dad. He woke up and witnessed the sight.

'It is a wild cat, I see. They are so fond of milk,' he said.

We chased the beast away. The morning came and we saw tiger-like footprints. These wild cats live in neighbouring forests and haunt the house at night.

Gran'dad regained his cheerfulness and said, 'Brovo boys, a pair of Sherlock Holmes! So you discover the goblin!'

'It is I who planned this adventure, gran'pa,' I asserted.

'But it was milk that helped us detect the goblin and it is I again who kept it on the floor, boasted Rabi.

'Both of you will get rewards', gran'pa declared.

Winter Morning

By BASABJIT BANERJEE

(Leaguer — 21829, Cal. 31)

Chilly night disappears,
At the rays of the sun,
Snows are going to be melted,
With joy as well as fun.
Birds begin their singing,
Highlands then are glittering.
A rural voice—praying for God,
Points the start of morning.

(2)

IT IS NIGHT

My darling, my night, will you love me?
You are very busy and very lucky—
Now the men of this city sleep,
Let me go to you or let me peep.
When you appear and when you go,
It gives me pleasure and sorrow.

What my feet can do

By SUDAKSHINA KAR

(Leaguer — 21644, Chittaranjan)

Ducks can waddle,
Sparrows can hop,
But I can spin round,
Like a spinning top.
Fish can swim,
And worms can crawl,
But I can jump over
Our garden wall.
Climbing hop-scotch,
Running on tiptoe,
Oh! the wonderful things
That my two feet know.
Uphill, downhill,
Away down the street,
Thank you, God,
For my two feet.

KONTU of CONDORE

By K. S. KUMAR

I don't know from where exactly the man came, but old Kontu had been with us ever since I remember. He had some tongue twister of a name, and so I began calling him Kontu, after a mad dog which used to roam our streets before it died.

Kontu may not have been a Jeeves of the most exalted kind, but his sincerity to us baffled me. He was, speaking from all points of view, the old man in the family. It must be admitted, Kontu was of a boastful nature and had the audacity to invariably burst in from nowhere and give his opinion on some problem we were all discussing. When I passed my school final Kontu came to me and said, "You must take your degree in Science subjects." I tactfully put him off by saying that he should discuss these things with my father.

Once when one of my uncles came on an official visit, I heard Kontu tell him, "Son, you must get married and settled down." My uncle was about to tick him off when he caught my frantic signals behind the door. You see, Kontu never liked his remarks to be contradicted.

Kontu had some philosophical traits in him and he amused all the children with one story. He told of an El-Dorado full of riches unheard of and then came those O. Henry sort of 'twists'. These riches were honesty, loyalty, truthfulness etc. . . . .

Kontu excelled in dishes a-la-carte (we were the guinea pigs of all his new dishes). Occasionally something did go wrong and Kontu was never one to admit his own faults. He attributed his mistakes to his not getting enough encouragement from the gourmets of the household.

The old cook many a time got fits of nostalgia and sadly tried to bring back old reminiscences. He enjoyed innocent bragging too and talked of his skill in football and polo. He boasted that he was once praised by a Nawab of a place never heard of, whom he astonished at polo. Kontu managed to convey to us how dashing and debonair he was in his youth. We imagined that he must have saved many a maiden in distress. Once the man astonished me by saying that in the early 1900's he had even driven my grandfather's Ford Motor Car!

When Kontu had nothing to do, I tried to

(Continued on next col.)

escape from his 'clutches', but I was usually caught and then I had to go through that dreadful ordeal of getting out my chess-board and watching him checkmating me.

Kontu sometimes talked of his days at Condore. I gathered he must have come from somewhere there (I didn't have the slightest notion where this place was).

Recently, Kontu left us all to go to my grandfather's house and I was astonished to perceive a tear in his eye. For all his bitterness and sanguine nature, the fellow seemed to have some affection. Now, I would not mind telling him as Orlando tells Adam in Shakespeare's 'As you Like It'.

"O Good old man, how well in thee appears
The constant service of the antique world,
When service sweat for duty not for need!"

CARNIVOROUS PLANTS

By PRADIP CHAKRABARTI
Leaguer — 21630, Cal.-29)

PRESUMABLY you are a bit surprised seeing the title of the article. You need not be so. In fact, such plants exist in the plant-kingdom.

This type of plants is found in large number in Ceylon and some places of Assam. The soil on which they grow is devoid of nitrogen. So in order to get nitrogen (plants cannot do without it) they capture insects by some devices.

The devices by which these carnivorous plants catch insects and ultimately absorb protein from their bodies are different in different plants. Sometimes the leaf of some carnivorous plant is so shaped that it resembles a pitcher. At top of this pitcher-like leaf there is a lid which shuts out the mouth of the pitcher as soon as an insect enters it.

The leaf of some aquatic plants is in the form of a bladder. This bladder has a valve or a trap-door which opens only inwards. Small aquatic animals having got into it cannot come out due to quick closing of the trap-door. There they die and then the plant takes its necessary food from the body of the animals.

There are many other processes also by which carnivorous plants imprison insects and small animals.

The Song of Youth

(By Young Folk's League)

(Ho) Rises the Sun, so do we
Not to glory nor to spree;
Not to blaze all the while
But to burn whatever is vile,
Whatever breeds misery, bedevils the soul,
— To bring cheer for dismal dole.
(Ho) Rises the Sun, so do we
Not to glory nor to spree.
Yes, we rise never to fall —
Heed you all our clarion call!
Our faith-sword flashes in sun,
Weakling amongst us there's none!
We work, we move, we sing,
Hope, courage, resolve we bring.
(Ho) Rises the Sun, so do we
Not to glory nor to spree.

CHITTARANJAN as I saw it

By MRIGENDRANATH ADHIKARY
(Leaguer — 15502, Howrah)

ABOUT 148 miles from Calcutta on the main line of the Eastern Railway near Asansol, stand the magnificent township of Chittaranjan and its locomotive workshops.

Chittaranjan is a befitting tribute to the loving memory of Deshabandhu Chittaranjan Das, one of the illustrious patriots of India.

Deshabandhu was a great dreamer and it was he who remarked that if he died in the work of winning freedom, he would be reborn in this country again and again, working for it with all the energy of his life, with all the love of his nature till he saw the fulfilment of his hope and the realisation of his dream.

The establishment of that dream town of Chittaranjan to house the biggest Locomotive Workshop in Asia constitutes a landmark in the history of Indian Railways.

Chittaranjan is situated within ten miles of West Bengal's rich coal belt and only six miles from the Maithon Dam of the Damodar Valley Corporation which will ensure an abundance of hydro-electric power and a perennial supply of water.

Chittaranjan has been planned as a model town —a town that will measure up in civil amenities and character to the spirit and ideals of the great Indian after whom it is named.

Chittaranjan has more than 5000 residential quarters occupying about 4,200 acres of land, 71 miles of road. There are separate colonies of composite self-sufficient units each of which has its shopping centre, maternity clinic, school, play-ground, dispensary, park, social amenity centre and recreation institute. The main hospital named after Kasturba Gandhi with 50 beds is centrally situated to provide medical facilities for all residents of the township.

WORKSHOPS

Construction of the workshops proceeded concurrently with the building of the township. The production in the shops was inaugurated on 26th January 1950, by Shrimati Basanti Devi, widow of late Deshabandhu Chittaranjan Das and the works were named "Chittaranjan Locomotive Works" by the then President of India Dr. Rajendra Prosad on November 1 of the same year. Locomotives produced here are now hauling many trains all over the country.

As regards entertainments and recreations, two big institutes, one of which can claim a pride of place amongst the Railway Institutes in India, and four community halls have been provided in different parts of the township . Each institute has its own well-equipped library, reading room, indoor and outdoor game facilities, swimming pool, gymnasium, a spacious auditorium for meetings, dramatic performances and cultural functions. A central sports organisation besides holding annual athletic meetings, also encourages participation in healthy outdoor games.

The amenities provided at Chittaranjan help to raise the status of the workmen and to give them a sense of dignity. There are no slums typical of industrial towns. Chittaranjan—to those who built and worked for it—will forever be a source of pride. To

(Continued on next col.)

ON GETTING UP LATE

by DAVID SASSOON

THERE is nothing better than getting up late in the morning — particularly on a winter morning. Cocks are only meant to get up early. Who says the person who gets up early is on top of the day? I prefer to be under my blanket. Getting up late is as dear to me as life itself — in fact dearer. I know quite a few people who rise with the sun and set the rest of the day. That certainly is no achievement.

All over the world we should form clubs for late-risers for we are perpetually looked down upon by those who are up early when we are in our beds. These clubs should have one slogan, "Late risers of the world unite. You have nothing to lose but a few hours of life."

If getting up late has been described as rising from the dead, I for one would love to marvel at such a miracle occurring every morning.

Someone said that the early bird catches the worm. If all birds were early there would be an unusually keen competition for the worm. It is the late bird that gives the early one a chance.

I cannot understand why everybody seems to be in such a hurry. Why is it that people say to be a success you have to have a ghastly alarm ringing at the unearthly hour of four in the morning? Why can't we, at eight in the morning, rise with a sweet bell-like sound from a clock summoning like a heavenly anthem.

Everywhere it is nothing but rushin', rushin' rushin'! I prefer being Indian, ancient, timeless, unhurried. It was Coolridge who said,

"O sleep, it is a blessed thing
Beloved from pole to pole !"

Isn't it singular that so many people who set themselves the task of rising early never make it? Many a man from 10 p.m. to 3 a.m. nervously checks his clock at intervals of one hour; and when the alarm does go off finally at four he jabs it down and continues blissfully to sleep till seven. This only goes to prove that it is not in the nature of things to rise early.

The other day a friend of the family who never knew anything about my habits was explaining to us the value of rising with the lark. In little or no time he was lost in the ecstasies of his convictions. I do not know how it happened but suddenly a yawn escaped me. He was brought to earth and angrily asked, "Don't you get up early?"

"Yes, I do," was my sheepish answer. "I rise at the crack of dawn — fill the crack, and once again am off into the world of sleep."

P.S. A couple of hours ago, a friend of mine, after reading my defence for late-rising asked me when I had written the article, I, like all laterisers, not in the habit of telling lies, muttered, "Early in the morning."

"Ahhh..." he breathed knowingly — and I was clean bowled.

(Continued from previous col.)
the nation it is the realisation of a long-cherished dream. Chittaranjan symbolises free India's newborn creative energy and is the biggest single step towards self-sufficiency in her motive power for railways.

The HYPOCRITE

By ADHIR KUMAR BOSE

(Leaguer — 2836, Kharagpur

YEARS ago the capital of Northern India was a city called Kosambi. During that period the ruler of that capital was Naravahana Dutt. In the same city lived a poor man named Vasudhar who earned his livelihood by carrying loads.

One day this ill-fated man found a diamond bangle just outside the palace gates. He took the bangle home, removed the diamonds from it and took them to a diamond merchant whose name was Hiranyadutt.

Hiranyadutt examined the diamonds and told him that they were very valuable ones worth quite a few lakhs. He asked him if he wished to sell them. Vasudhar wanted to sell the diamonds but, as he could not keep so much money with him he requested the merchant to keep the money, saying that he would draw whenever he required it.

Vasudhar took only 5000 dinars. With this he was able to enjoy kingly comforts like eating good food, dressing well and leading a happy and easy life.

In that city there lived a trader called Ratnadutt. This trader used to give Vasudhar some loads to carry to his shop. He noticed that Vasudhar had been missing for some time. Other load carriers told him that Vasudhar had become a very rich man. Ratnadutt was curious to know how Vasudhar could have made such a big fortune in so short a time.

Ratnadutt sent word to Vasudhar inviting him for dinner one night, saying that they were old friends. Vasudhar agreed to come. Ratnadutt made Vasudhar fully drunk and, by sweet words, managed to find out his secret.

He went to the king and told him the whole story, saying that such costly diamonds could belong to none other than the king and pleaded for inquiry into the matter.

The king remembered having lost a diamond bangle a long time ago when he was going in a procession. He had then ordered a search to be made for it but afterwards forgot all about it.

The king ordered Vasudhar to be present before him in court with the diamond bangle. The bangle was embossed with the king's emblem. On seeing his emblem on the bangle the king became angry and asked Vasudhar how he could have made it his own, seeing that it belonged to the king.

Vasudhar said, "I am only a poor illiterate load-carrying man, so how could I know that it belonged to you?"

"Why didn't you find out who it belonged to?" Vasudhar replied, "If I had shown this costly ornament to anyone he, would at once have concluded that I was a thief.

The king's minister said, "This man is innocent."

The king immediately ordered Hiranyadutt to present himself before him. When he came the king questioned him how he had accepted the diamonds knowing that it belonged to the king.

Hiranyadutt said, "O Mighty King, it is true that I have purchased the diamonds but I saw the diamonds only and not the bangle in which they were set. Even though he was poor and illiterate I didn't deceive him. I told him their correct value

(Continued on next col.)

(Continued from previous col.)

and purchased them from him. He has taken only 5000 dinars, and the remaining money is with me".

Then the king asked, "When such a poor man brought such costly diamonds to you, did you not doubt whether he had stolen them or not?"

"O Mighty King" said the merchant, "my trade is to buy or sell diamonds and not to question where they came from. You can punish me if I have cheated anyone in my dealings."

The king realised that he was right and ordered him to be paid the 5000 dinars which he had given to Vasudhar and to hand over the diamonds.

The king then ordered Ratnadutt to come to the court. Ratnadutt was full of joy and expected a big reward. When he appeared the king told him that he had been an unfaithful friend in betraying Vasudhar but pardoned him since this was the first offence which he had committed.

Ratnadutt hung his head in shame and went away.

Three Generations

By SHYAMAL DATTA

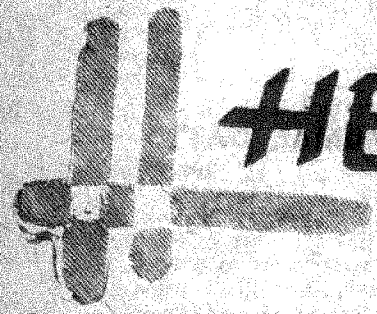
(Leaguer — 21712, Deoria)

I being his daughter's only son,
Have a kingdom in his affection.
'Dadu', my beloved, is so dear,
A grandfather like him is rare.
Though old, his ways are modern,
Sour-faced, but full of fun.
Generous in heart, but a MISER,
— One word that irritates my mother,
Uttered by me even in jest.
I terribly fear not her protest
But her prayer 'Let me die'
Because I tell a black lie —
In regard to her revered father
Whom I slander calling a MISER!
I bend down on my knee
And entreat her to forgive me.
'I never mean it', I say, —
'A sheer joke, an innocent play'.
'Even jokes that hurt your mother
Must stop', gravely warns my father.
'I do it, father', I submit,
'To learn how to be fit
As a devoted son to you'.
'What fine pleading, indeed brand-new!'
So saying father looks at mother —
She smiles and draws me closer.

We are Children

(By Young Folk's League)

We are children, new-comers here!
Treat us as near and dear;
We may be noisy and naughty,
Very often wild, unbearable, haughty,
But damn us not as devil,
Have some patience with us till
From bud we bloom into flower —
Your most beloved, darling, dear.
We are children, new-comers here!
Treat us as near and dear.



HEAD-PHONE

by SUBHENDU GHOSE

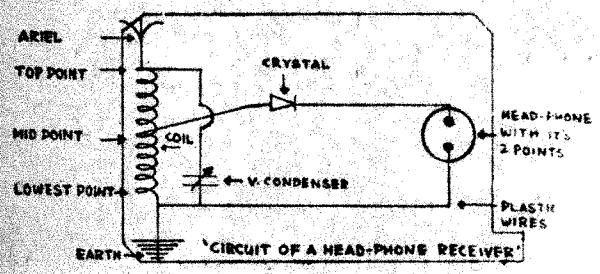
(Leaguer — 20799)

TODAY I will tell you how to make a head-phone receiver. I will only tell the process but not its function, because most of you may not understand it.

First you have to collect the following materials:—

These won't cost over Rs. 12/-.
(1) one coil (Rutary, Type R-2). (2) variable condenser (·0005). (3) one crystal. (4) one plastic knob (5) one head phone (40 ohms). (6) one yard plastic wire. These may be available in any big electric shop.

The diagram below is the circuit of a head phone receiver. A circuit means a diagram showing how the wires should be joined.



'CIRCUIT OF A HEAD-PHONE RECEIVER'

Before beginning I ask you to get a licence for your set.

Take a wooden board of suitable size and make two holes on two sides of the board of diameters 1 cm. and 1". Through the small hole introduce the V. Condenser and through the bigger one introduce the coil. Now examine the circuit carefully.

If you look inside the coil you will see 3 wires running to three different points. The wire which runs upto the top is the top point. The wire running upto the middle is the mid-point and that running upto the bottom is the lowest point.

"A DIAGRAM SHOWING HOW THE WIRES SHOULD BE JOINED'

Now let us start the connections. Fix 2 pieces of wires (8" each) on the top point. Any one of these two wires is connected to the ariel. The other is connected to any one point of V. Condenser.

Take a plastic wire of length 6". One end of this wire is connected to the mid-point of the coil. The other end of this wire is connected to any one point of the crystal. Another piece of wire is joined to the other end of the crystal. The other end of this wire is connected to any one point of the head-phone.

Last of all you join 3 pieces of wires (10") on the lower point. Connect any one of this wire to the earth. Join another wire (among these three) to another point (not the previous one) of V. Condenser. And the last remaining wire is joined to the other point of the head-phone. Fix the plastic knob on the Condenser.

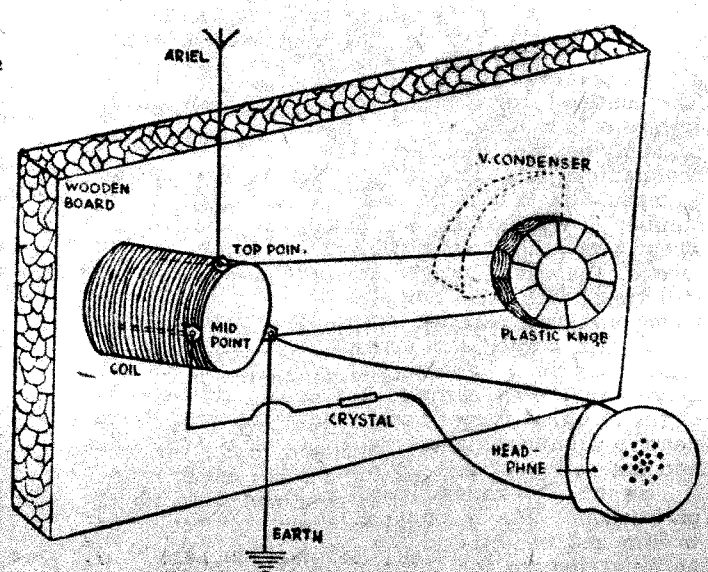
Now you can tune your head-phone receiver by turning the knob. In this set you will get all stations locally. It will work for years without any help of electric current or battery.

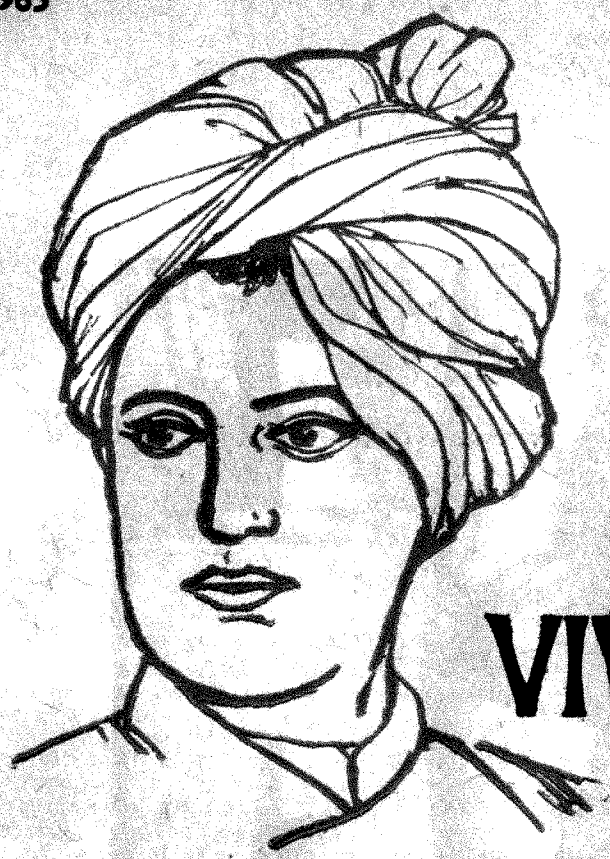
Those of you who live in a flat (having no land) can put the earthing-wire in any of the holes of a plug **only by switching it off first.**

Those of you who have a piece of land can bury the wire a few feet deep in the soil.

The ariel of this receiver must be a separate one, not the ariel of your house radio-set (electrical).

It is better not to put the earthing-wire in a plug but to tie the wire with a house water-supply pipe.





By
PRADEEP KUMAR
GHOSH

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

AMONG multitudes of men there are a few who fight for the realisation of higher truth. It is they who set up the national tradition. Swami Vivekananda was one of them. His life glitters like the sun of autumn having been endowed with all possible glory of a virtuous man.

India was then passing through a time of disintegration. The self-forgetful nation was busy in imitating others. The country had lost its faith. In such a condition Swami Vivekananda appeared in the scene with his call to the nation. By opening each petal of the flower of national tradition, which had so long remained but as a bud, Swami Vivekananda showed that India's culture was one of the most glorious cultures the world had ever produced. He invoked the sleeping soul of the nation. He exhorted — "Have faith that you are all, my brave lads, born to do great things"

He pointed out that India never lacked in virtue. The cause of her deplorable condition was not the failure of her religion, but the failure of her sons in applying the finer qualities of that religion to the national life. The fact, as described by Swami Vivekananda, that India is still alive against a great number of aggressions, a smaller part of which has swept away many many old cultures from the surface of the earth, proves that India has a culture still fresh. He drew our attention to the past days when our great ascetics initiated the world in total unity. He argued that the present world requires that virtue in a greater degree than before; and hence the Indian culture having at its base, the virtue of unity, is more useful now. Swami Vivekananda's argument was very effective at that time, and the nation woke up within half a century.

Swami Vivekananda was a staunch worshiper of freedom. The bondage of India was intolerable to him and he inspired the nation to break it. He entirely changed the trend of national thought. He said, "Come up, O Lions, and shake off the delusion that you are sheep". He cried — "Strong, vigorous, believing young men sincere to the back bone, are wanted. A hundred such and the world becomes revolutionised" The result was that, the nation acquired a great capacity for high thinking and became mentally prepared for independence.

Swami Vivekananda's views on education brought new light in India. He felt that India should have greater knowledge of science and technology. But he wished to have an interplay between the eastern and the western views towards life. He said that the knowledge of the west should come to India and at the same time the knowledge of India should go to the west.

His voice was imbued with living ideas of democracy, though he was never a politician. He knew it for certain that without raising the multitude of people working in the fields and factories India could never rise. He reminded us that everyone in the vast country was our brother, and that everything we possessed was dedicated to the nation. He repulsed the very idea of uniting a nation by applying force from outside, and said that diversity was the sign of life.

"If everyone were to think exactly the same thoughts, there would be no thoughts left for us to think. He went even so far as to say — "I pray that they may multiply so that at last there will be as many sects as human beings, and each one will have his own method". At the same time Swami Vivekananda warned us by saying that our ways must be such, that they may create a way to prosperity. He said, "I want to teach you to live the truth, to reveal the light within your soul"

Brahmachari Prema Chaitanya says 'Vivekananda is pre-eminently the prophet of self-reliance, of courage, of individual enquiry and effort'. His words threw new light on the mind of India. Unexplored sides of Indian culture being discovered a sense of fullness pervaded the world. A new life come pouring in art, science and literature. Round about the nineteenth century it would be difficult to find another man who could manifest in himself so much social consciousness with spiritual consciousness, and so much social activity with spiritual activity.

"Co-authors"

FATE AND The Princess

IN the town of Ratnakar there lived a woodcutter. He has his wife and a three-year-old son. He cut wood and sold it in the town and whatever he earned was enough to support him and his family. One day the woodcutter got up earlier than usual and went to the forest. As fate would have it, while he was cutting a branch, a snake happened to pass that way. The woodcutter jumped down from the tree and as his leg fell on the snake, he was bitten and died.

It was the rainy season. After the cremation the wood-cutter's wife returned full of grief to her hut. Her young son, whose name was Dhawal, was running about outside the hut. Adjoining the hut was a small river. Accidentally the boy fell into the river and was carried by the strong current a long distance away.

The river passed through the city of Pannasahar. The Chief Minister of Pannasahar was an old man of sixty. He had no son. He was in the habit of going out in the early morning for a bath in the river, and that morning, when he was bathing he saw a child being swept by the current. He asked his men to rescue the boy, which they did, and he took him home. His wife was overjoyed. Both husband and wife thought that God had sent them a son, and they adopted him as their own.

From now on, the best of maids were employed to look after him and when he grew a little older, teachers were appointed to teach him every art. The boy grew up so robust that when he was sixteen years old he looked well-nigh twenty. He was tall and handsome. He was conversant with all the Shastras and could shoot an arrow so perfectly as to cut down a lemon from a tree at a distance of a hundred yards.

Every year, in the month of Magh, celebrations were held in the town and all and sundry assembled

there. The young men of the town took part in competitions in shooting, riding and other manly sports. In every contest Dhawal came out first. The king also graced the occasion with his presence, as did his daughter, Sheel Kumari. Seeing a beautiful and well-built youth such as Dhawal, she was moved at first sight.

Sheel Kumari and her foster-mother were very friendly and the same evening the princess went and burried her face in the old woman's lap and started sobbing. She tried to console the princess, but Sheel Kumari said that if matters could not be arranged so that she could marry Dhawal, she would die by striking her head against the floor. The foster-mother assured the princess that she would find a way to unite them.

Next day, she went to Dhawal's house, and, finding him alone, conveyed to him the desire of the princess. She advised him to come with two horses and stand at night under the princess's balcony, where Sheel Kumari would come out and elope with him to some distant city. Dhawal agreed to the proposal, as he had been equally charmed by the beauty of the princess.

It was a star-lit night and everything was quiet when Dhawal took two horses and went to the palace, he himself riding on one of them. He had filled his bags with as much wealth as he could take and stood waiting for the Princess. The princess was just ready and the moment she saw Dhawal with the horses, she came down with a bag full of jewels. Both of them mounted and started towards the east.

After travelling for a week they reached the main city of Kamrup, where they got down at an inn. Princess Sheel Kumari busied herself making preparations to cook, while Dhawal went out to fetch fodder for the horses and provisions for themselves

He was passing through a narrow lane, when the daughter of the physician to the king happened to be looking out of her window. This woman was a well-known sorceress. When she saw the tall, graceful youth, she became enamoured of him and immediately cast a spell over him converting him into a ram. She tied a string round his neck. At night, by untying the string she restored him to his own self while during the day he remained a ram. Dhawal, who had fogotten all about his past, continued to remain under the spell of the physician's daughter.

Princess Sheel Kumari waited for a long time for the return of Dhawal. She had heard that many women in this area practised witchcraft and how bewitched people suffered at their hands. She apprehended a similar fate in respect of Dhawal. She purchased suitable garments and assumed the guise of a young Prince to set out in search of Dhawal. She presented herself at the Durbar of the king of Kamrup and offered her services to him. Pleased with this 'youth' (princess Sheel Kumari) the king appointed her to a suitable post.

The princess proved her efficiency in the work and so much endeared herself to the King that soon he began to rely on her more and more. One day, the king went out hunting accompanied by her. They went quite far into the forest and the day being hot they were soon tired. Other men of the party had been left behind. The king and princess in disguise reached a small lake. The place was cool and there was a nice shady tree. They dismounted from their horses and the king decided to rest there for a while. Suddenly a large tiger appeared and was about to attack the king. In the twinkle of an eye the princess rushed with her dagger and stabbed the beast on the neck killing it.

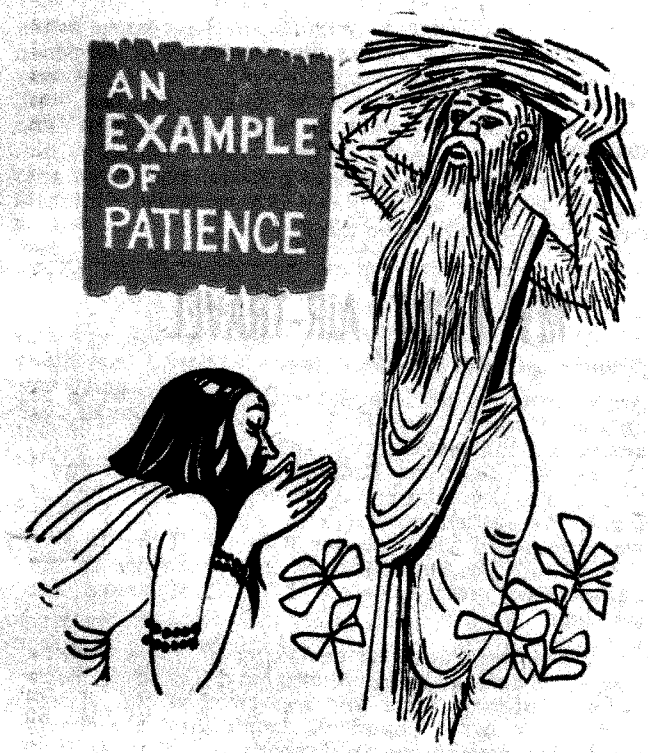
Struck by her courage and finding the 'youth' an eminently suitable match, he offered him his daughter in marriage.

The princess said that she had no objection to marrying his daughter, but according to her country's custom marriages were performed with a sword. After that, the bride and bridegroom lived apart for six months for it was otherwise believed that they would not live long. The king accepted the condition. Dhawal, before going out had left his sword with her which she now presented to be married to the king's daughter. Keeping the sword on the pedestal the marriage ceremony was performed. The rooms in the palace selected for the two were widely separate. Sheel Kumari reflected that she had gained six months, but if meantime Dhawal was not discovered, all would go in vain. Therefore she devoted the utmost attention to this mission. The city was now celebrating the marriage festival and it struck the princess that she might well use the occasion for her purpose.

She suggested to the king that it would be a splendid sport event if fights were organised between various animals, elephant fighting elephant, horse fighting horse, and ram fighting ram. By turn every section of the people brought the beasts to the arena. The whole city was excited and everybody enjoyed the fights.

Nothing happened for a week. On the eighth day, all the animals of the area where the King's

(Continued on Page 172)



By SUBRATUMA SARKAR

NARAD, the famous quarrel-monger hermit had no house of his own so far. So, for rain, heat and cold he used to suffer a lot. He had no money for building a house.

He told Lord Bishnu about his desire to get a house. He was a favourite devotee of the Lord.

Lord Bishnu said, "you need not worry my son. I shall see that you have a house. Select a site you like most and then come to me. I shall send Viswakarma to build a house for you."

Glad beyond measure, Narad came down to the earth in search of a suitable site for his house.

During his wandering he came to a place from where he saw at some distance a strange sight. A motionless human figure standing like a statue with a huge load of straw on his head! He seemed to be dead, the body covered with thick hair, eyes closed.

Narad wondered how could a dead man stand erect on his legs! He thought it was some supernatural being.

Going near, he shouted, "my lord, be pleased with me and tell me who you are. I am Narad, son of Brahma".

The strange figure opened his lips and replied, "my son, I am known as *Lomas*, the hairy hermit."

Narad submitted in reverence, "Oh, Brahmin, may I ask you why are you standing over here with this straw-bundle on your head?"

"Narad, it is a shameful story. Once I desired to have a cottage of my own to escape from heat, cold

(Continued on next page)

By RAJAGOPAL SARMA

I would never forget the day I had my first air-travel. I was then a fifteen-year old lad, and had just passed the school-final exam., and was contemplating whether to take the science or the arts course. Meanwhile, my grandmother had come on a visit to our house.

If I remember aright it was the 6th day of April, when like a bolt from the blue, we received a telegram addressed to my grandmother, from her son in Madras, saying that my uncle was seriously ill and that my grand-ma was to start immediately.

As chance would have it, my father had gone on a business trip and was not expected to be back for a week. So my mother took a firm decision to send my grand-ma to Madras by air and I was to be her escort. I managed to purchase two economy-class tickets for the next day's flight.

My grandmother was a sexagenerian, and she was having hysterics over the bad news. When she was told that my mother (her daughter) had arranged for her to fly to her son, she at first resented the idea, preferring to go by rail. When she was told that she could gain a lot of time if she travelled by air, so that she may be in time to be a support to her son, before any catastrophe (God forbid!) could befall, she readily agreed.

We started early the next day, as then there was no good motorable road between the city and the airport. We arrived a good half-hour before the departure of our plane and I must admit that I was feeling nervous partly due to the fact that it was to be my first air-travel and mostly due to the bad

(Continued on next page)

FATE AND THE PRINCESS

(Continued from Page 170)

physician lived were to be brought for the fight. The physician's daughter became very uneasy and tried to conceal the ram which in reality was Dhawal. But the king's soldiers took charge of the ram before it could be removed elsewhere. Princess Sheel Kumari had made it a rule that before the fight she would inspect every animal herself. It so happened that while she was passing by the rams on show she noticed one having a string tied round its neck. Believing it might be Dhawal she ordered a soldier to take the ram to the palace as she wanted to buy it. The physician's daughter would not sell her ram, but against the order of the king's son-in-law her objection was ignored. The woman was therefore paid for the ram and it was taken to the palace.

Back to the palace, Sheel Kumari broke the tie round the ram's neck and to her surprise it changed into Dhawal. At first he stood dazed, but seeing the princess he remembered the whole past. The husband and wife were overjoyed at the unexpected reunion after a long separation.

Sheel Kumari took Dhawal to the king and explained everything.

She told the king that the sword belonged to Dhawal and therefore his daughter was married to him. She might live as younger sister to her and she would always endeavour to keep her happy. The king agreed to this arrangement. Dhawal after staying with the king for a week requested the king to plead with Princess Sheel Kumari's father making his return to his own country possible.

At the request of the king of Kamrup, the king of Pannasahar agreed to accept Dhawal as his son-in-law. Dhawal and his two wives then bade good-bye to the former and returned to Pannasahar.

At Ratnakar, the widowed mother of Dhawal, finding her only child missing, had lost all interest in life. Fate, however, decreed that she should live and people went out of their way to help her. Whenever she was short of food, someone always came forward to feed her. As time went on she became completely disgusted with her life and surroundings and left the town. Fate ordained a safe journey for her and she reached Pannasahar on the day Dhawal returned there.

Dhawal was being taken in procession on an elephant when he suddenly saw an old woman lying in front of it. Another step and she would have been crushed under its feet but Dhawal jumped down and running fast, pulled the woman out of the way. While doing this, his sleeves got entangled in the elephant's tusk and were torn revealing a birth-mark on his right hand. The old woman stared at the sign for a moment and then fainted.

Meantime, a crowd had assembled and everyone noticed the way the woman gazed on at the birth-mark. All, even Dhawal himself were curious about it. The woman was carried to the Chief Minister and when she came round she looked again intently at Dhawal's face. He was astonished. The Chief Minister quietly asked her: "O woman, have you seen something which has moved you "

"O Lord ! the eyes of an old woman always betray her. Take no notice of it and let me go."

But the Chief Minister would not give up so easily. He wanted to probe into the whole mystery. He had a suspicion in his mind and he wanted to know whether it turned out to be correct. He persuaded the old woman to relate everything without fear after calculating the days from the date when boy Dhawal was found, he became sure in his own mind that the old woman was his real mother. Dhawal was happy beyond measure when he came to know all the facts. The old woman was given a place of honour in the Chief Minister's household.

After the Chief Minister's death the king appointed Dhawal in his place and he lived with his two wives happily ever after.

MY FIRST AIR-TRAVEL

(Continued from Previous Page)

news about my uncle and the fact that I was to be an escort when I myself felt I needed somebody to assure me that everything would turn out good.

By this time, we had boarded the plane, and I had to literally drag my grand-ma after me into the plane. We settled ourselves in our seats, and when we were asked to fasten our seat-belts, I had to give a short-talk on the merits of this procedure to my exasperated granny, before I myself fastened her seat-belt.

When the plane started taking-off, my grand-ma started chanting Vedic hymns and I had to be a patient listener. After she was tired of this, I had to reassure her a hundred times that we would reach our destination all right and that her son would recover from his illness in a very short time.

We reached our destination all right and we rushed to my uncle's house and were pleasantly surprised to see him standing in the porch, hale and hearty. He explained later that he had sent the telegram a day before 1st April, which was 'All Fools' Day'. I had overlooked the date on which the telegram had been sent. It had taken six days for the telegram to reach its destination. I did not know whether to praise the P. & T. Department, for giving me a chance to travel by an aeroplane, or to curse it.

AN EXAMPLE OF PATIENCE

(Continued from Previous Page)

and rain when I kept myself absorbed in meditation. I begged the straw from farmers because I had no money to buy it. But now I think why should I bother for all these earthly things? How long shall I live here? So, I don't want any cottage. I have kept the straw-bundle on my head. And this is enough for protection from rain, heat and cold."

"How long have you been here in this position ?"

The hermit replied, "I started my meditation perhaps in the beginning of *Satya Juga*."

"How long will you live ?

"I shall die when all the hairs of my body go off."

"How long it takes one hair to drop from your body ?"

"One hundred years, my son."

Narad was extremely ashamed. *Lomas* was to live for so many years, yet he did not care to have a cottage ! Narad completely abandoned the idea of building a house of his own.

Grand Gaube fishing village, Mauritius — youngsters show their catch.

CHILDREN'S THEATRE in Education

by Samar Chatterjee

I RECOLLECT my days of childhood when despite all precautions taken by my grandfather, I used to slip through the backdoor to visit the Jatras and Operas of such eminent showmen like Mukunda Das and Umanath Ghosal. In the vast make-shift auditorium, I and my fellow-culprits used to sit huddled up in the cold watching with wonder the exquisite show full of colour, song and costume. Some of the spoken words were understood and some were not too clear to the young heads—yet we used to swallow every bit of the acting, song or dancing.

There in those hazy days, we the children and chums, committed to memory all the songs and then re-enacted the plays with swords and spears made out of bamboo-chips and other easily available materials. Not content with mere show of our talent as actors and players, we used to gather around us, our mothers, aunties and sisters, made out make-shift stage with spare cots and the screen with mothers' sarees and lo! there was a full-scale play with a fairly full house of ladies and the children of the neighbourhood.

In recollecting those days, anyone could find a clue to the requirements of the children in so far as Children's Theatre is concerned. Children look with wonder at any Theatrical shows and take in every movement of the players with a great deal of seriousness. To them play-acting is natural in that they start play-acting the very day they grasp the significance of all the actions of the adults moving around them in and outside the house. To the child every new movement it sees is a new discovery. A child is not merely satisfied with it; it would like to re-enact the piece in a manner often comical to the adults but very much real to the player. These reproductions are a continuous process in which the child leaps from one stage to another until it reaches adolescence and then into more serious stage of its life.

It has been established beyond all doubt that entertainment for the children and by the children should form a part of their education and should be invariably mixed up with the school curriculum. All that we have now to find is the correct manner in which such education is to be imparted.

Children's Theatre is an entirely new subject and its growth in this country is of very recent origin. Some form of Children's Theatre was of course there but that was mostly confined to school-prize ceremonies and occasionally as a part of the adults' show presented during pageants and festivals. Outside these shows, the only other place where children found some form of Theatre activities was the Camp Fire of the Boy Scouts and Guides. In these lovely nights, Drama found very little scope inasmuch as Camp Fire stunts have to be short sketches,—an item lasting not more than a minute or two. The school-plays are usually longer and unhappily often contain themes totally unsuited for the age-group. This is not because material for children's plays is unavailable but for a general lack of interest in the matter of choosing and preparing plays for them. There is also tendency amongst the grown-up to treat all children's plays as 'Child Plays'; as if it was not necessary to groom the little players for their respective parts and any extempore or improvised form of show was good enough for the child. Our recent experiences have shown how important it is to prepare the children for either straight plays or difficult ballets.

STRAIGHT PLAYS

In considering the technique of Children's Theatre in all its aspects, our first consideration should be to find out what types of story, play or ballet-pieces are suitable for children of various age-groups. In the modern educational system of all the advanced countries, the schools have accepted dramatic activities as a part of the curriculum. This has necessitated search for suitable plays for children of different age-groups. The job is not easy. The playwright must have an insight of the child's mind and must not attempt to dose down didactics in the grab of entertainment. Often the playwright forgets that the script is really meant for the children and not for the adults.

In some schools the teacher-producer advantageously uses episodes from history or from popular story-books. But in selecting such stories or plays he has to take special care in choosing pieces with showy costumes and abundance of arms and armours. Much though the child may like to read stories about his own kind, he would prefer playing at being king or a legendary villain—rather than being the good boy winning lots of prizes. He would like to rattle his sabre as Rana Pratap; putting on the robes of Alexander means much more to him than ordinary sedate roles of daily life.

Straight Plays are mostly those having only play-acting on the theme with very little musical support. Play-acting item for the lower age-group often falls flat due to the child's lack of interest. Not that the child is wholly uninterested but what it requires is some form of rhythmic support for memorising and reproducing lines. The subject-matter must be such as would easily kindle the children's imagination and let it take up the 'spoken lines' with pleasure and confidence. He must take the experiences of the child's everyday life and give it a special importance—a kind of glory that it did

not have when they were just experiences. To illustrate, it may contain as its characters puppies, snails and butterfly and frogs—a kind of animal fair which the child of six can easily consider as a wonderous collection of new experiences. To this age-group the play-wright can introduce holidays and trains, falling leaves and bonfires, planes and cars, clouds and sun. He should intersperse his plays with talking monkeys or laughing cats or any ridiculous yet loveable characters such as spooks and goblins, fairies and elves.

The trouble however starts in the matter of presentation of these characters. Should such plays be confined to play-acting alone or these should be in rhyme with definite emphasis on music and rhythm? I have already said that play-acting for the children of the lower age-groups becomes uninteresting unless supported by music and song. To the bigger age-group also, a play must have that much of verve and element of drama so that the players feel that absence of music has been sufficiently compensated by enough interesting situations. For example, a boy playing a short drama (historical) would find it jolly good to rattle his sword and chase a fleeing co-actor off the stage. He would love to tell lines condemning a villain in no uncertain manner. He would also give a good account of himself as a clown in circus or a monkeyman playing monkeys. He has in fact no time to play at being school again or being the good boy which he is often not.

The playwright's job would be to go back to his own childhood and come within a child's own wave length in order to study the little crowd of children and find out for himself what interesting discoveries are being made by his younger friends. The playwright is sure to find that these discoveries are not the same for all ages. With the progress of time, the newer generations are coming to know a different world than the one that we were inroduced in our time. Already he has started disdaining the idea of spooks and goblins, elves and fairies. Therefore the playwright of this age will have to see that his characters are fresh and modern. His characters must act, play, sing and dance with enthusiasm. It would be impossible for the child either on the stage or in the auditorium to sustain the interest unless the playwright can introduce new situations every three minutes. He has to abandon long dialogues and interminable talks and sermons. Less words and plenty of action would be the ideal setting for the play-acting part in a children's play. The playwrights must take good care to avoid too many scene shifts.

BALLETS

From straight plays we come to Children's Ballets. In choosing stories for ballets the teacher-producer must be careful in selecting pieces with emphasis on rhythm, musical value and story. A child's reaction to rhythm is instantaneous and positive. It either rejects or likes it. To a child subtlety of a ballet-piece is immaterial. All that it wants is a catchy simple tune set to basic rhythm with jingling words to match. For a seven or eight year old child, to execute the complicated rhythmic steps of classical dance is not unknown; sometimes they do their part with commendable professional skill and often the mudras and expressions are well-blended although they represent expression of adults and are accordingly entirely unsuitable for that age-group. Such characterization for a child is not only harmful but also tends to be in serious conflict with its childhood environment.

Obviously the choreography of the children's ballet must consist of very simple composition with clear value on rhythm and grace. Similarly, the story for the ballet also should be such that the child may be able to recognize it as a story oft heard from granny or read in popular story-books. The words and verses of such stories should scintillate the mind of a child.

Ballet Fantasies have varied effect on the average child. Some people consider that fantasies are good to read but in presentation as ballet or plays they sometimes react adversely on the children. This is not quite true. Often large audiences have been kept enthralled when fantasies were put up well synchronized with music. There is no dearth of good material. What is required is apt adaptation of these stories into ten, twenty or thirty-minute pieces for children of different age-groups.

RHYMES

Just as we put a baby to sleep with mothers' easy chanting of a lullaby, so can we get the best out of a naughty, dull or backward child who would otherwise not respond to the cajoling of the teacher through regular curricular activities however skilled the latter may be in imparting purely book education.

All normal small children become restless if they have to sit still for long, and the more intelligent the child—the more restless it is likely to be; because its mind leaps quickly from one object to another. Fortunately we are in much happier possession of facts concerning the idiosyncrasies of a child than a decade ago and retaining all the technique of our wise old grandmother we can perhaps still find a means to direct the child through an entirely different and happier way to obtain the best from a child. We have now ample proof that steps and dances, miming and play-acting, songs and games can make up for the many deficiencies of a backward or dull child by way of bringing to the surface other latent qualities which in turn tend to develop other failings surely.

School-room Rhymes are the one sure key to this development and yet it is not a new technique. For generations our grandmothers have tried this technique of controlling a truant child by humming Nursery rhymes. If we apply the same means by a judicious mixture of Rhyme, music and song whereby it may be made interesting, the teacher will have the finest possible means at her disposal for arousing interest amongst her charge. Here the Children's Theatre can do a lot by way of development of the material for this type of rhyme and music and handing it over to the teacher. While emphasis will have to be given on suitable words, the tune is no less important. The children must have that type of songs and rhymes on the instant hearing of which, they will know that here are the songs that will give them vitality, beauty and power of

their own emotions, imaginations and experiences. Nay more—it must be of such freshness that the teacher also finds it exhilarating to participate with the whole class. Add to this, power of demonstration—that is to say, if the rhymes are also suitable for demonstration, the little folk will make the teacher their own Prime Minister!

Group action through suitable rhymes however can focus the child's whole attention and satisfy its longing for movement and change. Moreover every child responds to an invitation to beat out the time. Group activities based on easy graceful demonstrative rhymes, in music and in stepping should be the key to the development of young children but unhappily there is a dearth of suitable material for the schools. The English-speaking child is fortunate in inheriting a wealth of Nursery rhymes in every variety of rhythm, which lend themselves to music and miming. Many of these rhymes are little more than jingles, words strung together for their merry sound for it is the rhythm rather than the contents that appeals. The origin of many of these old rhymes is lost in obscurity but nevertheless these have just as much meaning for the child of today as they had for the child of a century ago.

To the Children's Theatre should go this sacred duty of bringing joy to the Indian child. A store of rhymes—many entirely new and others adapted may be composed and built up for the class rooms. To these rhymes may be set delightful rhythmic tunes and simple steps based on traditional dance movements, which can be taught to a whole class of children and which can be produced on the stage in colourful settings. Rhymes, rhythms, tune and colour are blended to provide a rich appeal to the children and to awaken their artistic faculties. Every effort should be made to find the child's own mode of expression and to mould each item according to the reaction of the children themselves.

The Children's Theatre can thus put more life and joy into our Nursery and Kindergarten schools by giving full recognition to the principle that small children need rhythm to develop their inherent faculties and that they learn more by action than by formal teaching.

From the Rhymes in the class room to the show on the stage is but a step. If the children enjoy doing the rhythmic movements in class, they will learn to do them without self-consciousness on the stage and so give pleasure to thousands of other children. Once a team had been built up they could tackle longer items and dramas without difficulty and reach a surprising degree of perfection.

In the field of education today children's theatre plays a very important role. Just as we need good text-books for the child so do we need suitable set-up for the dramatic activities in schools in the matter of literature, technical help, euqipment and accessories. The cultural value of the theatre in the school today is unquestionable. Its utility as an educational force has been fully proved. Play-acting, miming or dancing cannot be regarded any more with animosity either by the teachers or by the parents.

The children's theatre movement in this country is charged with the task of finding out more and more about the child on the little stage. That the recent activities in this direction have received such spontaneous international response is proof enough of its wonderful potentialities. With more and more experience it will provide a tremendous force to new generations who are no longer required to bend down over dull deskwork in dingy dark class-rooms. We must provide children with the very best of everything so that they may grow up as better citizens than ourselves.

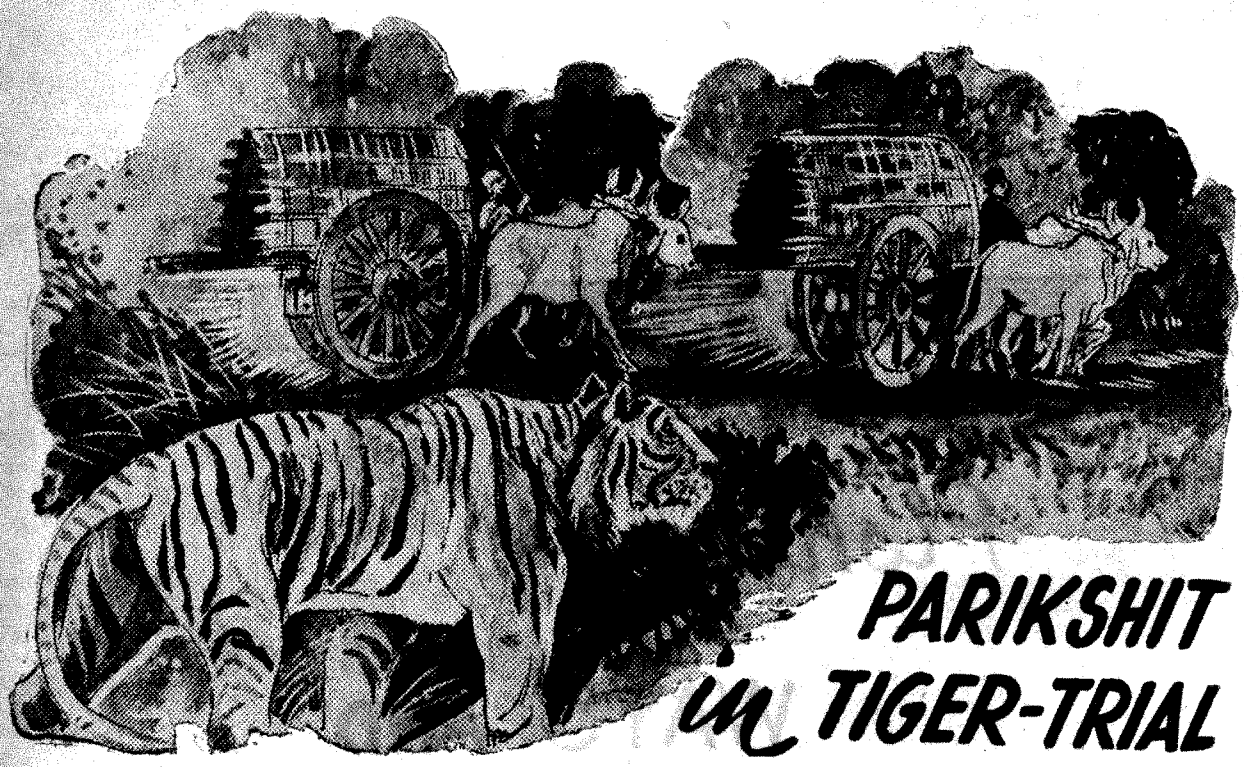
Dry those tears: See our more cheerful study, overleaf.

Ah, happy moments. Was I weeping? I don't remember.

Fishing —
WAYS AND MEANS

Puja Annual 1965

pictorial feature



PARIKSHIT in TIGER-TRIAL

By Sri DHIRENDRA NARAYAN ROY

PREPARATIONS for the Puja festival had already started. Many of the orders received by the Kumartuli Mart for making images of Mother Durga contained instructions about various designs of ingenious conception and imagination,—modern or antique or a blending of the two. The main emphasis was on something of striking novelty in the images. Some enthusiasts even suggested a background showing Goddess Durga descending from the hill station of Kailash by an aeroplane.

Chaturbhuj, a man of peculiar ways, hit upon the idea of bringing out a few 'Puja Specials' containing attractive writings and pictures for earning easy money on the occasion of the grand festival. Of course, he had a fair experience in the line. He knew how to secure at the least cost suitable writings from well-known people in the field—stories, complete novels, treatises on cinema, theatre, sports, life sketches of artists and all that. Even khaddar-brand writing will be welcome. . . . . .

— Khaddar-brand writing? What's that? — I interrupted him. I had so long been listening to his programme.

— Why? Writings on five-year plans, cottage industries, Panchayet Raj and so on and so forth. Even foreign materials are sometimes given such an indigenous colour that one cannot understand the trick. At any rate, we are not poor in vociferation.

— Why this taunt? Do you think there is no honest worker in the country?

— There must be and there is. But don't you see the condition of the country? Where is it gradually going?

Finding I might be unfavourably disposed towards him, the cunning fellow immediately changed the topic and came straight to his business. In front of the table was a dishful of delicious sweets and Chaturbhuj with a pose as if he was so long waiting for the same, began to gobble them.

Nevertheless, he was really worried about his Puja special publications. The work was not so easy as it seemed. He must personally approach the writers and the artists, get their protographs and life-sketches which indeed increase the demand for the papers. Then, he has to secure agents to push the sale and procure advertisements, the principal source of income.

While he was thus talking on his plan and finishing the sweets at the same time, I suddenly found him in an awkward position. He seemed gasping. Fearing that a bit of the food had stuck in his throat, I offered him a glass of water. But he did not need it. Instead, he looked pathetically at me, perhaps with a purpose. Then, he made a proposal:

— Well, I must have from you a story on hunting for my Puja Special. Don't say, no.

— Funny! Why of all things a shikar story?

— The answer is easy. Many papers publish such stories of yours. Why should not I, an old friend, get one?

— I agree on one condition. You will have to write down what I say.

I recounted the story of a recent shikar by a new entrant in the field of sports. Chaturbhuj began to write:

Balawant Singh is much junior to me in age though not in experience. He is well known in the

world of sports. One day he came to me accompanied by a newcomer and introduced his companion as an ardent lover of hunting. He had achieved some success in hunting a few deer, wild boars and birds and also a bear. Now he was bent on bagging a tiger—what a magnificent idea!

Parikshit had gone through quite a number of treatises on hunting and acquainted himself with the technique and the rules of hunting; so theoretically he could be classed as an expert on the subject. One had to keep himself informed about the nature and habits of a tiger if one wanted to kill a tiger. By a close study of the old tales of tiger-shooting, he felt as if he had himself participated in those adventures. Knowing fully well that the old-type weapons used from 1892 to 1910 had become obsolete, he was now after a suitable man who could give him definite and helpful information about guns and rifles currently used in tiger shooting. So he thought of me and came to Calcutta.

Parikshit was newly married. Naturally his young wife would not like the idea though she could still feel a little proud of her manly husband. So with a mixed feeling, she timidly enquired:

— When would you return?

Ready was the reply from Parikshit: As soon as a tiger is bagged. Be sure, I shall have earrings made for you of the claws of tiger and the locket of your necklace with it.

— Promise me, then, that you will not stay a day longer. I am sure you will get a tiger on the very first day.

Parikshit felt very much flattered.

Parikshit then narrated his first day's adventure thus:

It was the month of May and heat was oppressive.

We started from Calcutta direct to our destination in a jeep. Balawant Singh was our leader and practically, led the way by driving the jeep all through our journey. We started at 9 in the morning and thought of reaching our destination by 9 P.M. But as we had to change two tyres on the way we reached Asansol at 10 at night. We felt extremely hungry and had to be satisfied with the little that we could collect there. Then we resumed our journey.

We had not proceeded far when rains started in torrents with tremendous storm. The hood of the jeep car had a long crevice and the two flanks were bare so that the storm had widened the crevice overhead and the gusts of wind carrying the rains inside the car made our position very awkward and the canvas ears began to thrash us from both sides. So we removed the hood of the car and felt better under the bare sky.

Our jeep was running regardless of the incessant rains which however stopped after a while. It may be that we had crossed the rainy zone. All six of us were completely drenched. It was after an hour or so that our dresses dried up, but we were alarmed by a long continued hissing sound from underneath the engine of the car which appeared to have been cursing us. On an inspection, we found the radiator partially broken putting us in great difficulty.

On both sides were paddy fields alongside the drains and so we began to refill the radiator with water very frequently as we proceeded till we reached Chouparan at about 3 a.m. From a petrol pump there, fortunately we could get hold of a good mechanic who not only repaired the radiator, but also gave us tea which was most welcome and soothing. After the radiator was repaired and refixed to the car, we resumed our journey at 5-30 in the morning.

From Sherghati, our way bifurcated from Grand Trunk Road and we wended our way inside. After about twenty miles, the path to the jungle became difficult, more difficult than we had heard it to be. So the speedometer could never record above five miles in speed and naturally we could not reach our destination before three in the afternoon. We met an aboriginal inhabitant whom we asked about the forest Dak Bungalow. But neither he could understand us, nor we could follow what he said. He knew nothing of English, Hindi or Bengali, so we had to perform a speechless scene of a silent movie.

Soon we came upon another sign post which informed us that we were close to the Forest Ranger. When we went to his office at about half past four, we found him awaiting our arrival. He was very courteous to us and received us warmly. Our resting place was still seven miles from there, but with the help of a guide provided by the Ranger for us, we reached resting place in the evening.

The Bungalow was nice. We had been so exhausted that four of us flung themselves on four chairs and the other two found great relief in lying flat on the ground. We had hardly any energy left, after the strenuous journey of thirty-three hours; and all felt sleepy.

Scarcely had we slept for an hour when the Head Clerk of the Forest Ranger's office called on us. He had an ardent wish to witness our shikar. He had the pride of a fine sportsman, being a pucca shikari himself; and to prove it he had as many as two guns in his possession. One of them was rather of a loose type and one has to wear spectacles while using it.

— What is that? I enquired.

The reply was prompt: It is nothing serious. The fact is that when you use it, the hammer works and through the breach dusts of burnt gun powder rebound on the eyes and so one has to wear eye-preserver.

He was so enamoured of his hunting equipment that in declaring that he had even a rifle, he spoke highly of the range of the rifle which, he said, was more than the distance of the eye-sight.

I thought he was a little deranged. For soon he himself began to pull and push each one of us and roused us from sleep. His request in that early morning was to take a shooting excursion to a place not far from there, where deer were abundant. If one could be bagged, they would have a grand feast. He was so insistent that we had to agree to his proposal.

Leaving aside the heavy guns, I took the lighter one just enough to kill a deer and as we went about a mile, the Head Clerk began to focus the torch-light in different directions. A deer really came to our sight, and one of our party raised his gun and then waving it horizontally gave up the attempt declaring that he failed to spot out in which portion of the animal he would strike. He was disdainful of having his first shot a barren one.

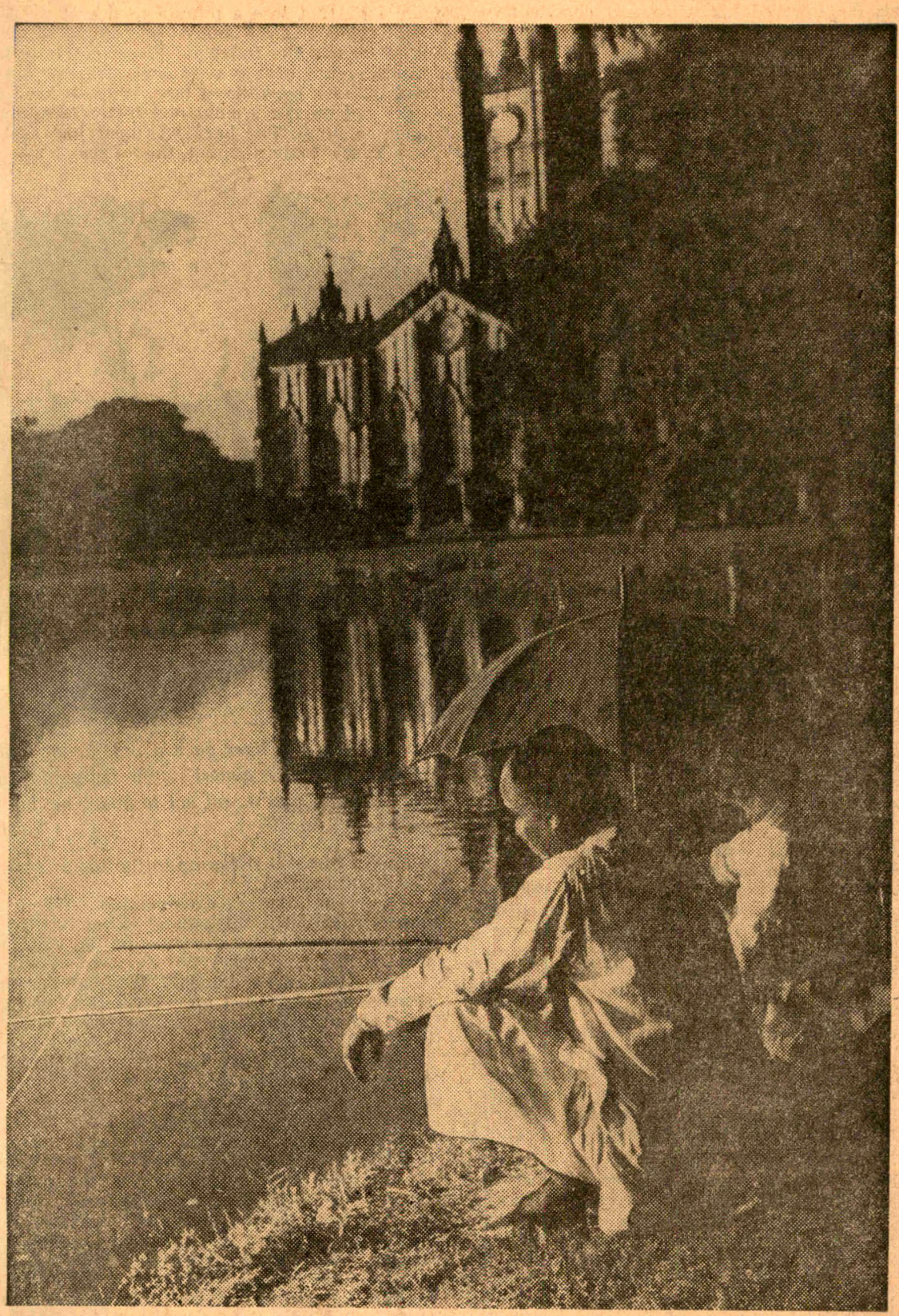
Every one of us looked at him with a mixed feeling of awe and disgrace. But I did not miss the opportunity and struck straight on the animal and pulled him down.

The dead deer was carried in the jeep car and while proceeding towards the Bungalow, we decided that while the cooking would go on, we should again go out for reconnoitering the jungle. When an antelope was so easily shot down, much more success would be achieved with a little more labour.

The Head Clerk suggested: Well, we have come very near to Ranger Sahib's Bungalow, why not pay a visit to him?

It was a good idea and we all called at his place

Bounties from the sea in shape of netfuls of fish add variety to the dishes served at the hotels, specially during winter. —*Photo by Arun Ganguly*.



The steadfast deeds of patience seen by any pond in Calcutta in season.
—*Photo by Amiya Banerjee.*

where also we had another reception with drinks, etc. The Ranger also was eager to accompany us and suggested that as he knew the creek and corner of the forest, he could lead us to a place which was very rich in wild games. Even a tiger could be found there. He lowered his voice and confidently proclaimed that a man-eater was reported to be haunting the place.

He made an exhaustive account of the ways of tigers, their habitual haunts and the courage and steadiness that are required for hunting a tiger, and ended with an assurance:

— Well, when I am with you, you need not worry in the least regarding a tiger—that's certain.

— Why? Is he well-known to you?

Ranger Sahib was stung by the pungent remark. He became serious all on a sudden and said :

Don't you take it too lightly. Every body knows me here.

I tried to pacify him :

Oh, no, don't take it amiss. We have been very much heartened by your stoutness and I must appreciate your suggestions which are calculated to ward off the fear of a tiger coming upon us.

Ranger Sahib pocketed my compliments without a word.

After going a distance, he asked us to turn our car to a house, looking like a granary.

As we entered in, we found three or four American cars, two jeep cars and a beautiful garden of roses. That was the residence of 'Fakkar' Sahib who had a number of guns and rifles. He was previously a landlord now converted into a jungle contractor. He knew the scientific method of bidding in the auction of forests which indeed he performs at a comparatively cheaper rate by the uncommon mercy and affectionate tenderness of the Ranger Sahib. The tie of friendship between the two was therefore unquestionable.

Fakkar Sahib took our invitation very lightly. He said: Well, I have had enough of tiger shootings and have myself killed many. I am not interested in it any way now. But you are new comers, so you may try your luck.

He had the air of an expert hunter, but no trophies could be found on the walls.

It was 10 o'clock at night. When we left 'Fakkar' Sahib's house. In about fifteen minutes, we reached the table-land by crossing a number of ditches and marshy places. Bad luck indeed, for there we came across three female deer and a few younglings. According to rule, we can not shoot at female deer. So we returned to our bungalow.

We covered the entire distance in silence, for everybody felt sleepy. The front glass of the jeep car was drawn up, for, though it was otherwise warm, the forest wind was rather cold. Suddenly the spotter whispered something in the ear of our driver Balawant Singh and the jeep made an abrupt halt.

We opened our eyes, though still feeling sleepy. We found at a distance of about fifty yards in front of us two rattling bullock carts with the drivers dozing. Only two lanterns burning timidly were fastened to the carts. To the right along a drain, a tiger was silently creeping towards the carts with the intent purpose of pouncing upon the drivers. The continuous creeking noise of the carts ahead and the dashing noise of the jeep behind were no cause for concern to the tiger but the metallic sound of drawing the bolt of the rifle at once set it to action and it almost instinctively turned backward.

As the front glass pane was drawn up, it hindered firing that way. So we got down from the car and immediately the tiger gave a big jump inside the jungle. He came almost within ten yards from me, but his jump was meant not to attack me but to save his life.

I did not lose a minute to fire at the tiger and with the sound the animal was found to give a big jump in the air. Balawant Singh correctly observed that the tail of the tiger was straight like a stick and its back bent like a bow. With its head low, the tiger fell on the ground and instantaneously made another jump. The back was bent just as before.

Every body thought the tiger was fatally

Immediately the tiger gave a big jump inside the jungle. He came almost within ten yards from me, but his jump was meant not to attack me but to save his life.

wounded but still it ran up to the top of next hillock like lightning.

I was greatly disappointed. When I was almost sure about the animal being fatally injured, it had escaped to a safer position. So dejected I retired to the jeep car.

But the Forest Ranger? Well, all his courage seemed to have failed him. Terribly shivering, what he could utter in his mumbling conveyed little except the frenzied advice—"Fly away—fly away—the tiger has not been hurt. It sometimes gets perplexed on hearing a fire close to the ear. So please save your life and mine also."

Without paying any heed to his words, I decided to wait there for a little while and watch.

Balawant Singh considered it otherwise. He even wanted to wage a bet of a thousand rupees when he declared that the tiger must have been severely hurt and we must have it. But Ranger Sahim did not accept the challenge, saying that the betting was one-sided.

Balawant Singh was sufficiently sure of his finding. He said: All right, let it be one-sided. I am sure I must win. So many times have I been in jungles and have killed tigers, I know better how they face death. It is just as we have seen now—their tails become straight and backs bent like a bow and their heads also fall down when hard shot.

Just at this time the drivers of the bullock carts made their appearance. They were very glad in the expectation of a deer having been killed. One of them grinned and prayed for a quantity of meat.

Poor fellows. They did not know even that a tiger was preying upon them for their meat in stead.

Our leader wanted to make fun: He said: Just go, the deer being hurt has fallen in the jungle.

They too naively took it to be really so and immediately made for the place. All our efforts to restrain them proved abortive, till the Ranger Sahib whom they knew well, stopped them.

But even after waiting for some time, nothing new happened and at last we decided to return to the Rest House. The Ranger got down in front of his Bungalow but the Head Clerk was with us. He said: Let us go back if we want to get the tiger. I could not say anything in front of the Ranger. He will go to 'Fakkar' Sahib and tell him everything about what has happened. Fakkar Sahib will leave no stone unturned to collect the tiger with the help of his men. His business is to do so and sell the skin at high prices, and I suppose the Ranger has share in the bargain.

After our dinner, we again made for the place in no time. The heavy rifle was taken this time.

I was careful about the signal that would help me to ascertain the place from where I fired at the tiger. In a couple of minutes of focussing the spot light, the man entrusted with the work, exclaimed:

— Right ho! We have got the tiger.

The jeep too stopped roaring just then.

The recoil displaced us from our seats but we did not miss the opportunity of following the pencil of rays from the spot light and have a glimpse of the tiger which lay prostrate on the ground.

Next was nothing but wild revelry.

We began mirth-making and dancing in joy. At times, the probability of the tiger being in feign sleep, troubled us. But, for the fact that inspite of the huge noise created by us in our exultation, the tiger still lay motionless, we had some positive proof to be convinced of its end.

We all got down from the jeep. Some stones were thrown at the tiger but still it showed no sign of life. We then moved a few steps nearer and pushed the head of the tiger with the barrel of my loaded gun. But the tiger really had relinquished its tigerly existence.

Parikshit made a halt here and saluting Balawant Singh with a nod, paid hearty compliments to his preceptor, saying,

Balawant Singh was our guide and master, just like Sri Krishna in the battle of Kurukshetra, he was our charioteer. He is indeed our Guruji—how correctly did he signify the death of the animal merely by seeing its back bent like a bow when hit by a bullet. He had himself come with a wager—but still we did not like to place adequate confidence in him.

With these words, Parikshit with a smile and some hesitation, as one feels when speaking about one's ownself, concluded his story: "It was no small thing to be successful with the first shot on the first day. My Guruji very minutely observed the shot that I sent and congratulated me with a first class compliment: Parikshit was first class first in a test of tiger-hunting."

I did not lag behind and encouraged him.

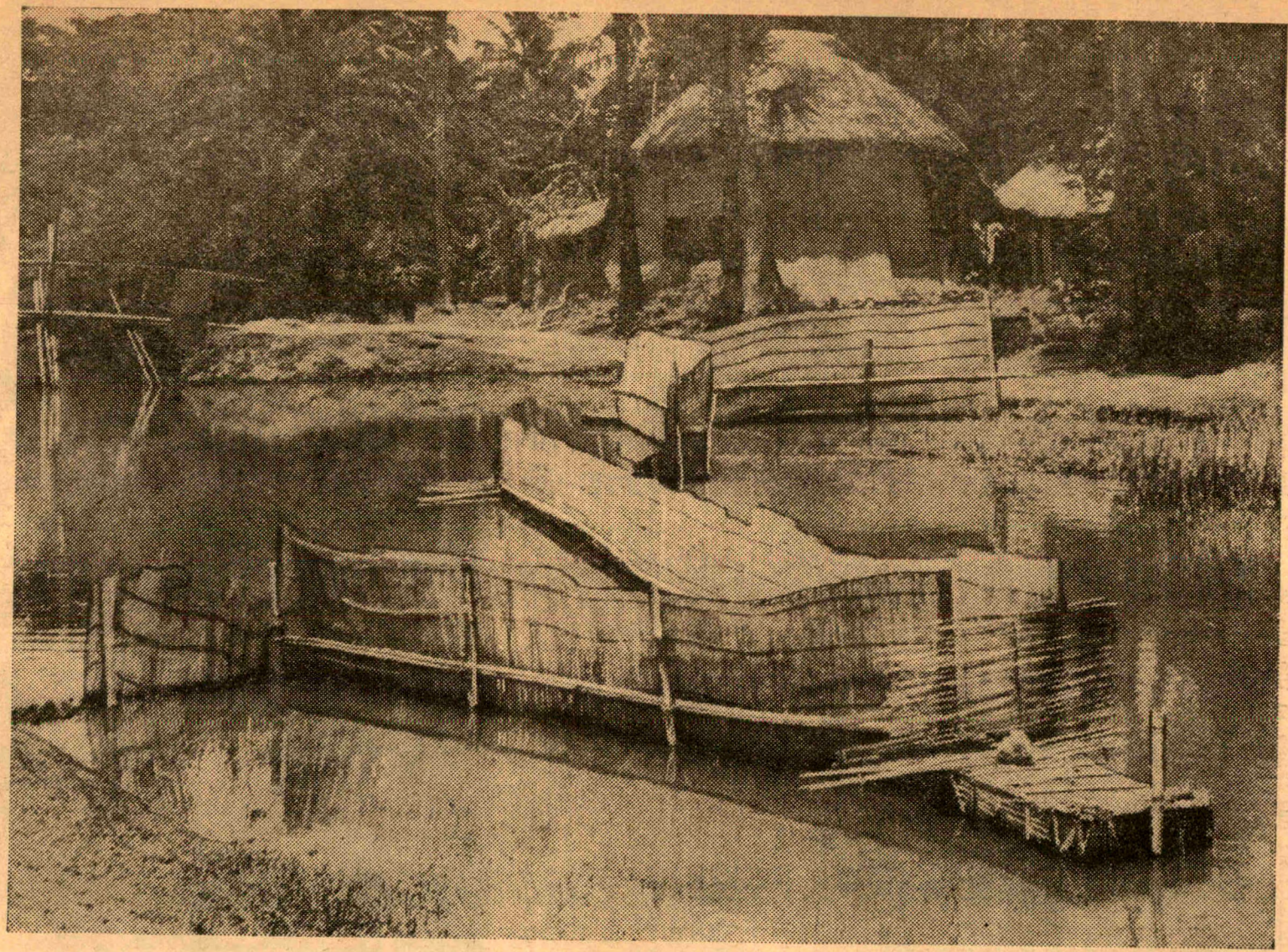
Parikshit went on:

— We have still the tail of the story which, though superfluous, is no less interesting. We six could not move the tiger even by an inch. We went again to the Ranger's Bungalow and with his order took help of a few coolies and thus brought the tiger to the jeep. The night had dawned just then.

On our way to the Forest Bungalow, we made another courteous visit to the Bluff-master No. I Fakkar Sahib, with the intent purpose of showing him the object of our shikar so decently bagged. But he was a very intriguing person, so much so, that he took up the pose of one not at all moved by it. But his pose was shortlived, his face soon changed and in the place of utter indifference, it bore the signs of great despair. Then suddenly he made a neglectful remark;

— It is not a tiger, you see—else it would never allow to be shot at by being in front of a rifle—it is a veritable donkey.

We than moved a few steps nearer and pushed the head of the tiger with the camel of my loaded gun.



An automatic hedged — in device that leads small fry along the current into a one-way wicker box. —*Photo by Amiya Banerjee.*

A lone fisherman casting his swirling net in a river in West Bengal.
—*Photo by Amiya Banerjee.*

DISCOVERY OF TELENAPOTA

By PREMENDRA MITRA

IF Saturday and Tuesday combine well you may also discover Telenapota one day. In other words, if you suddenly get two days' leave when you get tired of your work and men who crowded around you and if someone tempts you with the news of one strange pond where the most innocent fish are eagerly waiting to be hooked—and if you have not been able to catch any thing bigger than *punti* fish in life—then you may also suddenly come across Telenapota.

To discover Telenapota one afternoon in the waning light you will have to get into a bus packed to capacity—with men and goods—and then the bumpy road and the pressure from fellow passengers and heat of Bhadra month will make you uncomfortable. You sweat and being wet through you will have to get down after two hours all on a sudden in the middle of the road. You would find in front of you a long culvert over a low waterlogged place. The bus rolling with a strange noise will cross the culvert and get lost at a turn of the road on the other side. Then you would realise that the place full of thick jungles is getting dark even though the sun has not set. You may stretch your eyes but you will not see any humanbeing. You would feel that even birds have deserted the place out of fear. You will also sense a damp suffocating atmosphere. You would think that a cruel serpentine vapoury curse is gradually taking its invisible hood out of the watery place below.

You will have to go down from the high road to that water logged place. A muddy nullah will appear running through the thick forest in front. Even that nullah like a line is lost amidst bamboo grove and big trees on both sides.

You should have two friends and companions with you in this expedition for the discovery of Telenapota. They are not so greedy for fish as you are yet they have joined you in this expedition—who knows for what other motive.

Three of you would stare at that nullah with great expectation and would kick hard in a bid to check the intimacy of the mosquitoes and cast at each other a questioning look.

After a while your faces would not be visible in ever thickening darkness. The concert of the mosquitoes would become more tense. When you are thinking of going back to the high road to catch

a bus home you would suddenly hear a strange sound coming from the muddy nullah that is lost amidst the jungle. It will appear as if someone was wrenching that inhuman cry from the dumb jungle.

But that sound will cause you a stir. All of you would again start expecting something. A dim light will be seen swinging in that indistinct darkness and then a bullock cart will slowly emerge out of that jungle.

The bulls are as the cart is—as if that abridged edition of a bullock cart has come out from some land of dwarfs down below.

Without uttering a word unnecessarily three of you will squeeze yourselves into the cart and with three pairs of hands and legs and three heads try to solve the problem of accommodating the maximum of goods in the minimum place available.

Then the cart will start moving on the same road or nullah to the same direction from which it had come. You would be surprised to find that the dense jungle is slowly revealing a tunnel like path in front of you. Every moment you would think that the wall of darkness is impenetrable but the cart will slowly move forward undisturbed.

For some time you would feel uncomfortable apprehending that the head and limbs may go out from their usual places. Often there would be unintentional clashes with your friends, then you would realise that in that surrounding deep darkness the last peninsula of sense has been engulfed completely. It will seem to you that you have left far behind your known world. Around you now is a misty world devoid of any feeling. Time has stopped, there is no flow any more.

Time has stopped and so you would not be able to guess how long you would be under such trance. All on a sudden a horrible musical interlude will awaken you and you will peep out of the shade of the cart and see the stars above. You will also see that the cart driver is beating a tin cannister with gusto.

If you feel curious and ask him the reason for this, he would non-chalantly reply, "Ah, this is just to keep away the tiger."

After realising the implication of the matter and before you can ask with a trembling voice whether it is possible to keep away a tiger by simply beating a tin, the cart driver will assure you by saying that the tiger is nothing but a leopard and unless it is hungry the beating of tin is enough to keep it away.

While you would be pondering over this strange phenomenon of the existence of such a place infested with tigers within thirty miles of the big town the cart will cross a vast field. By that time perhaps the belated thin moon has made its appearance. In its dimlight the gigantic silent sentinels will seem to move away slowly on both sides of the cart. Those ruins of old buildings—a pillar here, a gate there, the remains of a temple somewhere—are waiting in futile hope to bear witness to eternity

If you can manage to sit somehow in that cart you would have a strange sensation all over the body. You would feel that you have left behind the living world and reached a misty land of memory of the past.

You do not know how much the night has advanced but it would appear to you that the night never ends here. Every thing would appear to be submerged in the deep silence which has neither beginning nor end as bodies of various animals are preserved in alcohol in a museum.

After taking two or three turns the cart will now come to a halt. After somehow collecting your limbs from here and there you would get down one by one like wooden dolls. A pungent odour has been welcoming you for quite a while. Now you would realise that it is emitting from the putrified hyacinth of the pond. In that dim light of the moon you would come across not a small tank nearby. On one side of the tank there is quite a big building in ruins standing against the moon like a castle with its broken roof, crumpling walls and windows without shutters like sockets without eyes.

You will have to accommodate yourself in one of the more inhabitable rooms of this derelict house. The cart driver will bring from somewhere a broken lantern and leave it in that room. He would also bring a pitcher of water. Entering the room you would find that you are the first ones to set foot as representatives of mankind after ages. Perhaps someone had tried before to clear the cobwebs, dust and accumulated rubbish of the room. You would get proof of the resentment of the soul of the room in a damp smell. Any movement of yours would cause a shower of sand from the roof and walls like the curse of the angry soul of the room. A few bats will quarrel with you the whole night over the right of possession of the room.

For the discovery of Telenapota it is necessary that one of your friends should be addicted to alcohol and the other a companion of Kumbhakarna, a master of the art of sleeping. Hardly a mat had been spread on the floor when one would fall flat and start snoring and the other get himself lost in drink.

The night will become thick. The glass chimney of the broken lantern will gradually get darker with soot and ultimately cease to emit light. Some mysterious wireless signal will stir all the young ablebodied mosquitoes of the area to come to greet the new comers and establish blood relation with them. If you are an expert you would be able to realise from their mode of sitting on the wall and on your body that they are the aristocrats of the

You would take the torch and trp to climb the broken steps to get to the roof top.

"Polo" used extensively in East Bengal for trapping the unwary fry.
—*Photo by Amiya Banerjee*

A hefty man from Bihar trained in landing big game" with a hooked spear.
—*Photo by Amiya Banerjee.*

Suddenly turn her head and say, "Why are you sitting quite? Pull."

mosquito community—anopheles, the second-to-none carrier of malaria. By that time two friends of yours are not in their senses due to two different reasons. So you would slowly leave the bed and just to save yourself from the sultry atmosphere for a while you would take the torch and try to climb the broken steps to get to the roof top.

Every moment the danger of falling down by the displacement of a brick or a tile would caution you against this risky adventure but some unavoidable attraction will lure you to go up.

On the roof you would find that the parapet is mostly lying broken. In the cracks, the fifth column of the forest has put the root of conspiracy and has advanced the final destruction of the building. Even then in the dim light of the moon every thing would appear fascinating. It would appear to you that if you stare for a while perhaps you would be able to know in which secret room of that magic tower submerged in eternal sleep the captive princess is lying unconscious for ages with the magic wands of gold and silver. At that very moment perhaps you would see a thin stream of light in a window of what had appeared to you as a heap of ruins on the other side of the narrow road. A mysterious shadow of a figure will come and stand there covering the light. You would perhaps wonder why this lady appeared at the window at that hour of the night and why she had no sleep. But you would understand nothing. After a while you would think that all was an illusion. That shadow has moved away from the window and the line of light has been wiped away. It would seem to you that a bubble of dream had come out of the unending slumber of the devastated tower and appeared for a while in the living world and then vanished for ever.

You should cautiously get down and you would not know when you managed to squeeze yourself between two friends of yours and fell asleep.

When you will awake you would be surprised to find that morning comes even in this land of night, and chirping of birds fills the sky

Surely you would not forget your main purpose. Soon you would drop the line in that pond the water of which is green with moss.

The day will advance. On the other bank of the pond a kingfisher just to tease you will dart now and then to water and return back to the bamboo with joy of success. A fat and long snake will scare you by emerging out of a crack of the ghat and swim casually to the other side of the pond. Two grass hoppers will wave their thin glass like wings and try to sit on the float of your fishing rod and an occasional cry of the dove will make you absent-minded.

Then suddenly the sound of ripples of water will startle you. The calm water has now broken into waves and the float of your rod is swaying softly. You will turn your head and see that a girl was filling a brass pitcher with water after removing the moss. There is curiosity in her eyes but no rigidity in her movement due to shyness. She will look straight at you, observe your float and then turn her face and lift the pitcher to her waist.

You would not be able to guess her age. Her calm, sad and grave face shows that she has journeyed through the long merciless path of life but the slim, tall and undernourished body will appear to indicate that her adolescence has been perpetuated.

While going away with the pitcher the girl will suddenly turn her head and say, "Why are you sitting quite ? Pull."

The voice is so placid, sweet and grave that it would not appear to you to be unnatural that a village girl is talking to you without any introduction. The suddenness of the whole affair will make you forget to pull the line. Then the submerged float will again appear on the surface of water and you will draw the line to find that the bait is missing from the hook. You would have to cast an embarrassing look at the girl. She will also turn her face and softly walk away but it would appear to you that while she turned her face there was a glimpse of a smile in that calm and sad face.

After that none will disturb the stillness of the pond. The kingfisher on the other side has flown away giving up its vain bid to put you to shame. The fish with a deep disregard to your skill and ability will refuse to enter into a competition for the second time. The whole incident will appear to you as unnatural. You would not believe that in that solitary place there is a girl like that.

A time will come when you would feel disappointed and collect all your things and make for the house. There you would find that the story of your skill in angling has somehow reached the ears of your friends. Perhaps you would be a bit upset at their teasing and ask how they knew about it. Your friend addicted to alcohol would reply, "Who else would narrate ! Just now Jamini saw with her own eyes."

You would certainly feel curious and ask who Jamini is Then you would come to know that the unnatural girl with sad eyes whom you saw at the

"Mother is refusing to listen to me. After getting the news of your arrival she has become awfully restless."

ghat of the pond is related to your alcoholic friend. You will also hear that your mid-day meal has been arranged at her place.

Last night a shadowy figure in the ruins of a house had surprised you. In the rude day light the ugly derelict house will pain you. You had never imagined that after the lifting of the mysterious veil of night the naked ruins would appear so ugly, so repulsive.

And that is the house of Jamini—the news will cause you a surprise. In one of the rooms your meal would be served. Just an ordinary meal, perhaps Jamini is herself serving. You have earlier noticed that the girl does not have unnecessary coyness. From close you would see that the sad gravity of her face has further deepened. As if all the dumb pain of this deserted forgotten locality has cast its shadow on that face. Her eyes saw everything but seemed to be lost in the depth of tiredness. One day she herself would gradually disappear among the ruins.

While she was serving food, you would find her feeling perturbed and worried once or twice. A thin voice from upstairs seemed to call some body. Jamini will leave the room in haste. Every time she returned her face would appear to have a deeper shadow of pain — and with that there is a sort of helpless uneasiness.

After your meal you may take a short rest. She would hesitate and then desparately say from the door, "Manida, please listen."

Manida is that alcoholic friend of yours. He would go near the door and the conversation would not be in such a low voice that you would not be able to hear.

You would hear Jamini saying with an embarrassed tone, "Mother is refusing to listen to me. After getting the news of your arrival she has become awfully restless".

"Ah, that old whim," Mani would say in a vexed voice, "she thinks that Niranjan has come, does she?"

"Yes, she is constantly repeating—'he must have come, just out of shame he is not coming to see me, I know, call him. Why are you trying to hide the truth?' I do not know what to do. After becoming blind she has grown so impatient that you cannot make her understand anything. She gets angry and knocks her head against the wall so violently that it becomes a problem to save her life."

"Hm, it is really a problem. Had she not lost her eyesight, I would have shown her that Niranjan is not among us here."

Now even you would be able to hear the thin but shrill voice from upstairs. Jamini will entreat, "Come Manida for once, please — if you can pacify her."

"Well you go, I am coming fairly shortly." Mani will come back and mutter to himself, "It's a nuisance. The hag has got her legs and hands paralysed, lost eyesight but has taken a vow not to die."

Perhaps you would enquire, "What is the matter?" Mani would say in the same vexed tone. "Oh, it's nothing. She had settled the marriage of Jamini with one Niranjan, son of a distant relation. Even four years ago that chap had come and assured the old woman that he would return from the place of his service which is outside Bengal and marry Jamini."

You cannot help asking, "Has not Niranjan returned from his place of service?"

"When did he go outside Bengal? He never did it. The old woman was pestering him, so he simply bluffed her. Why should he care to marry the daughter of a penniless woman. He is leading a happy married life. But who would divulge the truth to her? She won't believe it. And even if she does, the shock would cause her instantaneous death. Who would commit this sin unnecessarily?"

"Does Jamini know of Niranjan?"

"Oh, yes. But she can't tell it to her mother. Now let me do this odd job." Mani will make for the stairs.

At that very moment without knowing what you are doing, you will also get up. Suddenly you would say, "Well, I am also coming with you."

"You will come!" Mani will stare at you.

"Yes. Is there any objection if I do?"

"No, not that," Mani would say still bewildered and show you the way.

The room that you would reach after climbing, narrow broken stairs, will appear to you to be not upstairs but somewhere in a tunnel under ground. There is only one window. That too is closed. At first every thing would appear to you to be indistinct. But after a while you would be able to see a broken bed has covered almost all the space in the room and on that is lying a skeleton of a figure wrapped in rags. On one side of the bed stood Jamini like a statue.

The sound of your footsteps will stir the skeleton, "Who is it? Niranjan? So you remembered your unfortunate auntie after such a long time? I knew you would come and that is why my life has not yet come to an end. I could not die in peace. Tell me, won't you run away once again?"

Mani was going to say something but you would stop him and say all on a sudden, "No, auntie, I won't run away."

Even without lifting your head you would be able to feel the bewilderment of Mani and the stunned surprise of a stilled girl. But you would not find time to look at anyone. You are then breathlessly staring at two sightless eyesockets. It would seem

to you that two block flames of darkness coming out of those two empty sockets are licking your whole body to test you. You would feel that a few stilled moments are dropping like dews into the ocean of time. Then you would hear, "I knew that you would not help coming, my boy. That is why I am counting days in this house of ghosts."

The old woman will lose her breath in uttering so many words. You would cast a glance at Jamini and realise that behind that hard mask something is melting slowly — perhaps the foundation of a strong pledge made of deep frustration against life and fate is going to crack in no time.

The old woman breaks the silence, "You would be happy with Jamini, my boy. I am not saying this because she took her origin from me. You won't find such a girl. I have lost my sense due to miseries and old age. I know how I pain her by being peevish and rude but even then she does not retort. This place is nothing but a cremation ground—you won't find a male member if you search ten houses. Only the people who have one foot in the grave like me are just gasping here and there. In this surrounding she has become man and woman in one and is doing what not to maintain the family."

In spite of your great desire you would not dare to lift your head and look at her. Perhaps it would not be possible to hide your tears.

Heaving a sigh the old woman would ask, "Would you accept Jamini, my boy? I would not get peace even after death if I don't get your final word?"

Then with a choked voice you would be able to utter, "I promise you, auntie. My word is final."

Then in the afternoon the cart will again wait at the door. Three of you would get into it, one by one. Just at the moment of leaving, Jamini would come near the cart and looking at you with that pair of sad eyes would simply say, "You are leaving behind your fishing rod."

With a smile you would reply, "Let it be here. I had no success this time but would the fish of Telenapota be able to give me slip every time!"

Jamini will not turn her head. It would seem to you that a sweet smile tinged with gratitude emanating not from her lips but from her eyes is passing like the white cloud of autumn over the horizon of your heart and soothing it.

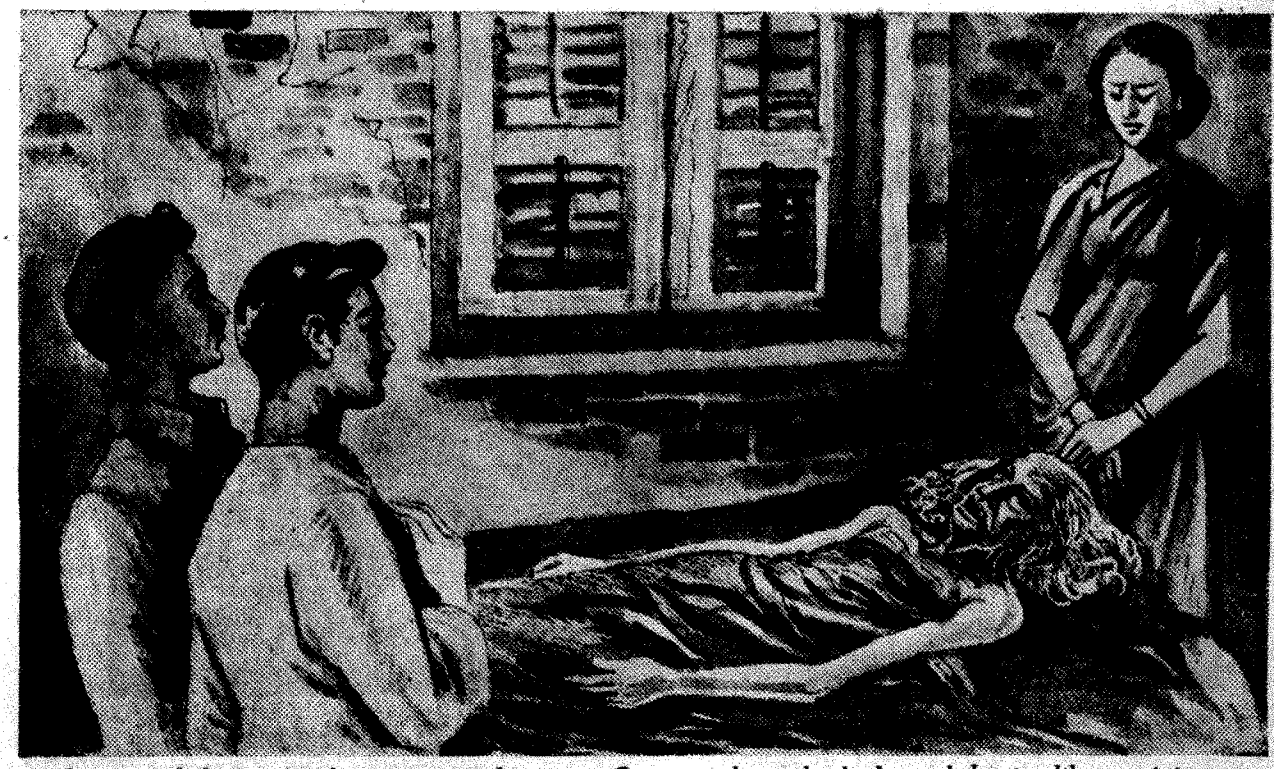
The cart will move now. Perhaps your friends would discuss how some hundred years ago an epidemic of malaria with a devastating surge had left Telenapota at the forgotten end of the dynamic living world. Their words would not enter your ears. The squeezing inside the car would no more pain you, the monotonous whining of the wheels would not seem to you to be harsh any more. You would hear in your heart throb it is being constantly repeated, "I would come back, I would come back."

When you would reach the crowded and well-lighted street of the big city the memory of Telenapota would be bright in our mind like a far away but every intimate star. A few days strewn with odds will pass away. You would not be able to guess whether a mist has gathered in the sky of your mind. Then one day when after removing all obstacles you would prepare to go to Telenapota, you would suddenly get a terrible headache and shivering cold and you would take bed covering yourself in quilts. The mercury column of the thermometer would indicate one hundred and five degrees and the doctor would put the question, "Well, where you managed to acquire this malaria from?" While listening to him you would be in a tremor.

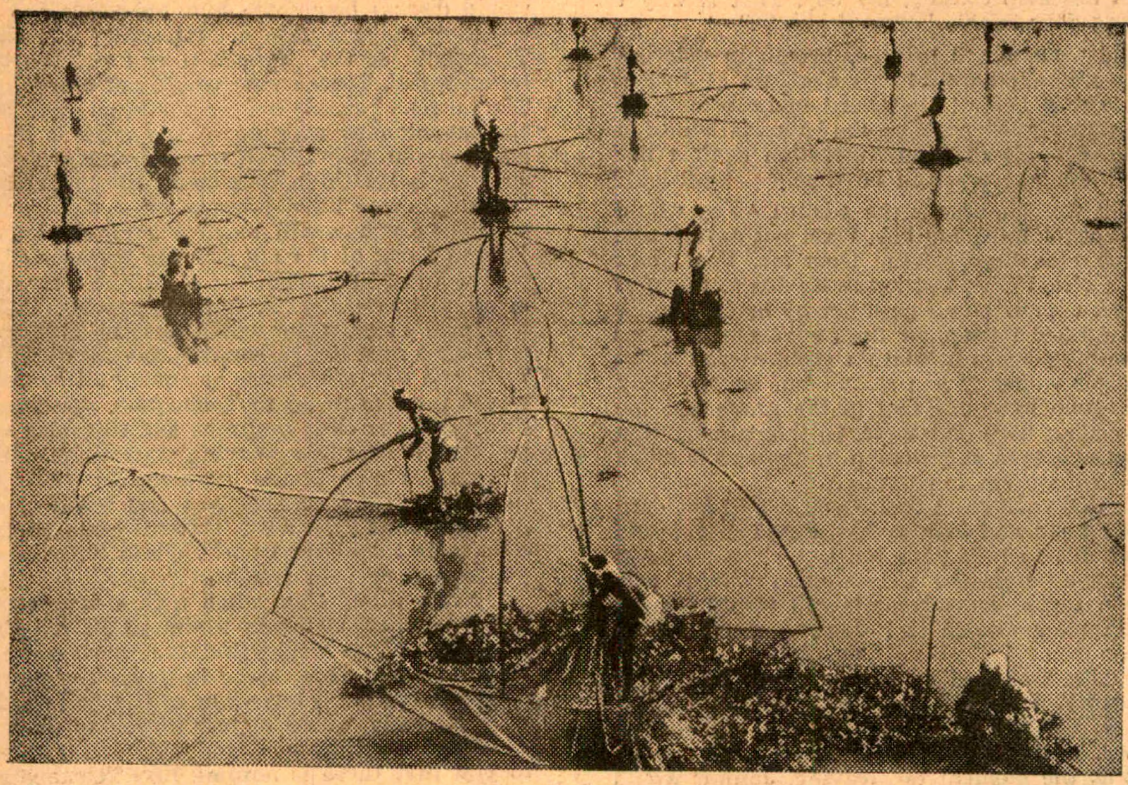
After a long time when with a very weak body and trembling step you would sit in the light and air outside, you would find that meanwhile lots of cleaning have been done in your mind and body without your being conscious of it. The remembrance of Telenapota would appear to you as an indistinct dream like a star that has already set. It would seem to you that there is nothing like Telenapota in the real world. That girl whose face is grave and hard and serene is far away and sad would appear to you only as an unreal misty imagination of weak moment like the shadow of the ruined house.

Being discovered for a while Telenapota would get lost in the depth of night for ever.

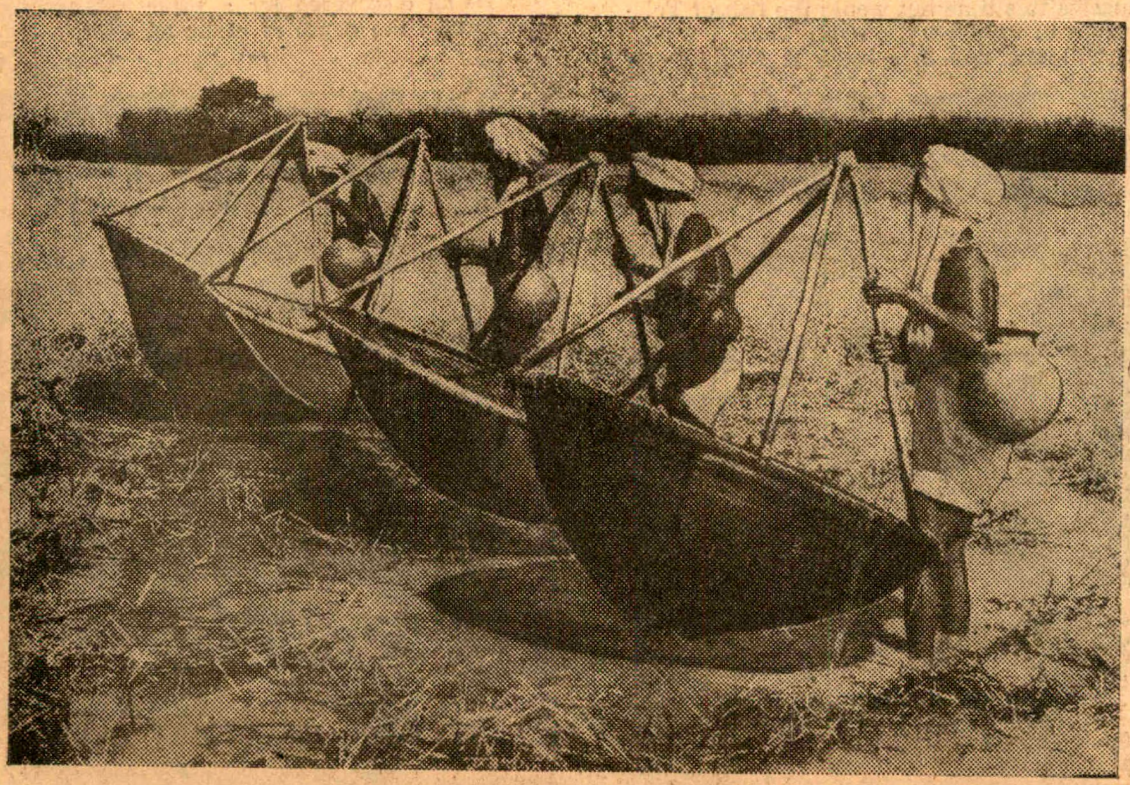
(Translated by Arun Shome)



Lying a skeleton of a figure wrapped in rags. On one side of the bed stood Jamini like a statue.



An animated scene from Assam of community fishing with dipping nets fitted to bamboo frames.
—Photo by Amiya Banerjee.



A group of women in Orissa operating sieve-like nets in shallow marshes.
—Photo by Amiya Banerjee.

Either, or..

By KABITA

BUT she did not move.

She heard the door bell ring and footsteps climb the stairs. In a moment the other lady was shown in.

"—Just sitting pretty," the visitor beamed. The hostess, who lay placidly in an easy chair, made a gesture of getting up.

"How do you do Mrs. Roy" ? she said "I think I have not seen much of you for a long time" just then her eyes fell on the pack of knitting things in Mrs. Roy's hand.

Her eyes twinkled.

"Come now, it is that knitting—isn't it—which brought you here ?"

The other lady smiled uneasily.

"Oh, yes, doing the neckline is rather a tough job."

"Thank God" the hostess said lightly," so long as you have difficulties with necklines, I would be lucky."

"No er," the visitor fumbled, "I have an idea that you don't like visitors."

"Not exactly", the hostess nodded, "but yes, in a way you are right. I am a bit choosy about them."

The two women sat speechless for a while under the spell of the chilly January noon.

This inner lounge of the rambling old house was looking into a spacious backyard, where trees grew at their will. There was a long stretch of waste land beyond the walled garden and then the railway track.

The yellow sun fell chequered through the decorative iron grills and was pawing the lady's lap like a cat. On a tripod lay a pair of specs, an English novel, a glass of water and a few tablets. But the lady was not using any of those, or she might have been fed up with them.

Now she straightened herself and busily went on knitting. The other lady sat on a puffe and watched her undo the neckline.

The hostess had two enormous eyes and a rather longlish face. Age had tried to slide down her cheeks, but failed. She was skinny. Her semi-transparent sari partly exposed the lines of her small rather undeveloped breasts and the fine embroidery of her costly petticoat. Motherhood left no lasting impression on her body. She wore a pair of jewelled bangles and marquis diamond ring. The diamond sparkled as she was examining the faulty neckline.

The big house stood silent. Only somewhere a sparrow twittered and a cat mewed. The rooms lining the long corridor stood with their doors agape. The winnowing wind was wandering in the lonely rooms and made the draperies fly like sails.

The other lady broke the silence.

"When is your son coming back from U.K. ?"

"Some time next year."

"I think Mr. Sen is much too taken up with his research work nowadays."

"Yes, he is." The hostess said dryly.

"You must be feeling lonely then."

The lady lifted her lashy eyes and watched her guest. Her face looked pale and eyes sad. Her voice was almost choked with some hidden impulse. Only a colic pain, or sudden shocking news may change a human face into a sheet, papery white.

But her lips wore a smile all right.

"Yes, I am terribly, terribly alone," the hostess muttered. As if she was speaking to herself.

"It was stupid of me to have left the job. Only because he did not like it. But I have nothing to do around here."

"But surely you can visit your parents occasionally," the hostess shrugged.

"I just don't feel like going there."

"But why not ?"

The visitor wondered.

The other lady kept silent. A lull fell between them, uneasy and disturbing.

The hostess closed her eyes. Perhaps she was deeply sunk in her own thought. May be she had felt a reality creeping over her : she was aging. The stab of loneliness was slowly going home. Nothing to be looked forward to but loneliness. Which in turn roled onward, down the slopes of old age into death. She felt a pang inside. Oh, if only she could dream dreams that became her age ! But she couldn't. She could hardly think of marrying her son to a lovely little thing and have sweet little grand children all around her.

"Women are really unlucky in a way," she said slowly.

"You are right, Mrs. Sen", the other lady spoke.

"Men can go out and mix with their friends whenever they like. But you know we women couldn't always."

"Our marriages are like being grafted—roots, trunk, stem and all," the hostess said, as she opened her heavy weary eyes.

"Quite true," said the other lady, "How vividly I could remember my girlhood days. Don't you ever feel nostalgic about your maidenhood days, Mrs. Sen ? The playmates, those long rainblow—hued summer afternoons ?"

"Perhaps you have pleasant memories. And who would forget them ?" The hostess smiled.

"And yours ? Aren't they pleasant ?"

The hostess did not reply.

After a while she resumed in an almost inaudible voice.

"God alone knows how I tried to erase all those uncanny evenings from my memory. But I just couldn't. She paused.

"I had spent most of my girlhood days in a residential school somewhere near the metropolis. And I was not the gay type, you know. When my friends played in the boarding house ground I wandered through the lonely side walk which ended up in the back yard of our school building".

The hostess paused again.

"And then as the shadows of the Goldmohurs began to lengthen on the grass I used to have those strange creeps. I stood motionless in the backyard alone, as if I was pinned to the ground. Then the evening was almost dark, even the afterglow had faded leaving the trees as vague, dark torsoes of some headless monsters. It's a fear which every child gets in the evenings. A sort of motherlessness." She shivered."

"Then came the night watch man with his will-O' the -wisp-like lantern. It was only the clicking of his boot nails that swept me back to my senses. And here in this house I feel lonely too."

The other lady, who was watching her attentively said in a low voice,

"You are talking like a friend of mine. She recently married her only daughter to a bright young man. And now she is lonely like anything".

The hostess looked curious.

"Is she a widow" ?

"Just a divorcee".

The hostess gave the guest a curious glance. She already undid a portion of the knitting. Suddenly she went busy with the curly mess of wool.

"Divorced ? What for ?

"Just because she did not realise her fault in time. Just a case of misunderstanding !"

"I know ! I know !"

The lady panted.

"Just a trifling mistake. And what a price one has to pay !"

The visitor saw a faint streak of bitter half smile on the lady's lips. Her eyes were half closed. As if she was wondering somewhere in the past.

"Did you recall something"?

"Oh ! yes ! The lady reflected," It's a long story." She added, "but I don't need recalling. The sting is always there. It is only covered up. It is something like a festering sore. If I slightly remove the bandage, flies come buzzing in. Flies ! flies how I hate those flies.".

Her voice sounded muffled.

"Get stuck up in a matter-of-fact life, then you will be safe. Just do the 'needfuls', nothing more, nothing less." She paused a while, "and nothing extraordinary. But once you forget to keep off the lure of doing things which this society does not permit, you would see the wound grow."

"And once it starts growing, it would grow like anything."

The visitor chipped in.

"You are rather right anyway"!

The lady lowered her voice almost to whisper But you know we all have unguarded moments Sometimes we are stupid enough and make show offs. Wounds look rosy when you first cut them open. But slowly they began to rot. The red blood slowly changes into a straw coloured serum and pus begins to pile up. Gradually the muscles lose tone and worms begin to crawl on them".

The lady writhed all over with her swanlike neck.

"If you have any wound, keep it covered up. Memories are like flies. Don't let them loose, or they would raise a hell for you". Again silence descended. Even the sparrows deserted the scene. Only a grandfather clock was ticking.

"Let's leave it for the day", the visitor insisted.

"Leave what ? the story ?" The hostess asked.

"No, the knitting only. But do you really feel like telling a story to me ?"

"Yes ! and a confidential one ! "The hostess mused, "You see, now doesn't matter at all."

"We are human beings", She pointed at the deodars and said, "not like the trees. Trees are always growing. Shamelessly they do respond to the stimuli, I should say. But we, human beings stop growing long before our death". She mused, "Sometimes I wonder, when I was dead, what my son would do with my photograph! I think he would keep it in his bedroom as long as he lives. But after him what his son would do with that faded old woman's photograph ? I could picture his embarrassed face. Yes ! he may tuck it away in the stack-rooms, and then, my great great grandson ? Oh ! my eyes are already bleary about that far flung future." The hostess smiled. "Now, I am going to tell you a story which I kept within me for a pretty long time. Time, you know, plays an important role with our secrets. It changes their values and weights. I never even dreamt of in my young days that I would ever tell the story of Labanya to anybody. But now, how easily I am telling you this. Strictly speaking you are not even a friend of mine. Just a neighbour. How lightly I am relating the story of Labanya's life. As if I am not telling the secrets of my most intimate friend but just relating the theme of a novel which I just found interesting."

The hostess gently put aside the knitting on the tripod and drained her glass of water.

The steady ticking of the grandfather clock came faintly from somewhere in the depths of the house. Occasionally a crow cawed and a squirrel twittered in the branch of a guava tree.

Then the little noises of the noon were hushed and an immense silence, brooding and mysterious, seemed to have fallen upon them. In some strange way it did not seem as though the quiet lounge was any longer a portion of the house or that outside the grill lay the rambling backward that they knew so well. Watchful, listening, and intent, the visitor sat silent, just waiting for what the noon would bring.

"This is the story of my friend Labanya," the hostess abruptly began.

"I first met that poor lonely girl at the residential school in which I was studying. Labanya was my roommate. Only a roommate I should say—not a friend.

"At first I was not friendly with her. A tin trunk and a small bedding were the only worldly belongings she had. We took her as a target to mock at. Our headmistress disliked her torn and untidy frocks and the boarding superintendent insulted her for the irregularities of her guardians in paying her monthly fees. Poor little Labanya ! She looked lowly in our eyes as she hardly had a visitor or a parcel or a letter ".

The guest glowed in sympathy.

"Tch, Labanya was then something like a Cinderella in her childhood."

"Yes, in a way," the hostess reflected, "did you ever notice how little children torture puppies and kittens in the streets. They drag them, poke them, pinch them, prick them till they go senseless and die".

The visitor nodded.

"Yes, I do ! Our sweet little things have their own cruel ways."

"The other girls did the same thing to Labanya". A letter, a letter for you Labanya,' they buzzed around her, or' a parcel, a parcel for Labanya', a big parcel for you'—they used to shout. And with breath taking suspense they watched her open the letter or undo the parcel, which obviously turned out to be blank paper or a bundle of staw. And they began to yell. A wild cruel yell, they began to shout and ridicule Labanya and thump on the floor and dance wildly.

The hostess covered her ears with her palms. As if she was hearing the yell just now. And there was a rich man's daughter. Lila. She had a nice table lamp, a cosy embroidered bed sheet, lots of nice dresses and many other luxury things for which we all envied her.

One day the affair reached a climax. My father sent me a lovely fountain pen. It was costly and beautiful. The next day I found the pen missing. Our superintendent simply went furious. "It is that snicky girls' doing', she burted,' I will search through her belongings." She broke in with her regiment of teachers and hovered on Labanya's belongings.

Labanya watched her tin-suitcase to be opened. They crumpled her dresses and ripped open the pillows. Labanya stood motionless. She did not utter a single word. But the pen was not with her. The Superintendent turned to the other girls of the hall and burst out unexpectedly. 'I must search you all now'.

And then she resumed the ordeal with her regiment. And lo ! the pen was discovered from the belongings of some one whom we never suspected to be a kind of thief.'

"I think it was the rich man's daughter Lila, Isn't it ?"

"You are surely not a thought reader! "The hostess looked at her in admiration.

"Well, the lady smiled, "it is only a question of simple arithmetic. A good story teller hardly introduces unnecessary characters in his or her story. Isn't it ?"

The hostess said, "How comforting you are, Mrs. Roy," she paused, "now let me resume my story. Since that day I felt for Labanya. And soon she became my fast friend. Anyway I may sound a bit

'And with breath taking suspense they watched her open the letter or undo the parcel which obviously turned out to be blank paper or a bundle of straw.

boaring if I relate too much of our girlhood memories. Let me skip off those sentimental trifles," she added, "I came back to the city to our own house after passing the Matriculation examination. Labanya, too, returned to the city. Some how, I got hold of her address and met her. I had a secret desire that we two would study together in the same college."

She looked up to her guest and said,

"In fact, Labanya had an unhappy life. As far as I gathered, after her aunt's death, who was a nurse—she had to come back to her parents, who were not quite well off. It was an old house in a narrow lane somewhere near Shyambazar. There Labanya was living with her poor parents and a herd of half fed uncultured brothers and sisters. It was just impossible for her to continue her studies in that situation. Disheartened, I left.

"But I met Labanya unexpectedly after a few months. She was waiting for me in my college common room. Incidentally", the hostess said, "I got myself admitted into Scottish Church College. "So you are my Labanya, I just cannot help telling that. Because she was a changed Labanya. She was almost like a lady. A respectable attractive young lady. Tall, slim, and dark. She wore a Dhakai Sari, a heavy gold chain, jewelled earrings and a dainty wrist watch". The hostess paused. "and also I gathered from her that she was studying the first arts in the Bethune College. Just on the other side of Hedua Square, near my college."

But how all those things were possible ? I thought to myself. Labanya later informed that somehow she had got a temporary shelter in one of her wealthy cousin's house. His name was Ajoy. Ajoyda was a business magnate with a paralysed wife. Labanya came to stay with this family as a sister but actually she had to run the whole show in absence of her sister-in-law. Tidying up the big establishment, odd errands, tradesmen's books, invitations and social notes, all these Labanya had to attend as a matter of course.

"I watched Labanya curiously. She looked very happy. She never told me that she was happy but I felt it. Happiness is something like a cocoon which a woman knits around her and sits cross legged inside a world of her own. She turned to be a bit selfish and inconsiderate." The narrator's lips were parted with an indulging smile.

"Labanya hardly asked me how I was, or what I was doing those days. She showed the least interest about my goings-on. She was just bubbling with praise for her cousin brother Ajoyda. Labanya was speaking in torrents but I hardly could catch her conversation. I was absorbed in a grim thought. My attractive young friend seemed too much absorbed with her new assignment. A married healthy young man, his paralysed wife and an attractive cousin, such settings and trappings almost sounded like the outlines of a psychological novel. Too much of anything is not good I thought and I decided to visit Labanya's new residence just to have a look myself about the goings on there. One should not be surprised to find that damm eternal triangle be there too. Within a week I visited the new shelter of Labanya. It was a big picturesque house with a well cared for garden. I just adored those long carpeted halls hung by lace tapestries and massive chandiers. Labanya stood at the front hall in a way as if she was a lady in waiting. Yes she was waiting really for her Ajoyda's home coming. Labanya greeted me cordially. She led me into the huge formal drawing room but I refused to sit there. I was anxious to see her sis-in-law and followed Labanya upstairs.

Labanya's sister-in-law lay in the best room upstairs. All the curtains were drawn and the room was stuffed with massive furniture. The side table was piled with medicine. The smell of camphor and massage oil hung heavily on the air. Labanya's sister-in-law looked a nervy, ill tempered lady who liked to speak incessantly so that she could not have a chance of being trapped by gloomy thoughts. She talked mechanically and with false notes. Her mind, I understand, was not there ; it was elsewhere.

"Labanya jumped to her feet as soon as the sound of a car parking was heard in the drive.

'I think he has come back !' I heard the lady say. Her socketted eyes almost quivered. Labanya was in a hurry. She turned to me and said, 'wait for me for a few minutes . I am just coming'—and off she went. In a moment I heard her clattering down the steps with her healed slippers on.

"I saw Labanya's sister-in-law pucker her brows. We resumed to our mechanical conversation again. But how vividly I remember when Asit sailed into the room and changed the whole atmosphere. That was the first time I saw Asit."

The hostess paused. Her guest was watching her intently, she smiled and remarked,

"The villain or the hero what is he?"

"The hero, of course, I should say. Asit was the pet younger brother of Labanya's paralysed sister-in-law. A handsome young man, a student of University, he was something like a cynosure of the family.

"We were introduced. But you see, Asit took no particular interest in me. 'He too seemed absorbed in his thoughts and talked like his sister. Just mechanically. He took me to the verandah where we sat on a wrought iron settee, and went into a lifeless tete-a-tete."

"After a few moment Asit sprang to his feet. 'Excuse me for a moment or two, will you', he said, 'I must see Labanya, but where is she'? I said, 'Labanya perhaps was busy attending on Ajoyda'.

"Asit left me alone on the verandah and went down the steps hurriedly. I sat for a while with a pictorial magazine and then got up and loitered on the terrace which sported some family photographs.

"As I walked upto the staircase I caught the sight of Labanya and Asit just by chance. They met half way on the steps and were talking in low voices. I saw Asit handover an envelope to Labanya and Labanya secured it at once under her blouse. I tiptoed to my chair and gave a sigh of relief. So it was not Ajoyda but Asit, I thought with ease. The prospect was not grim but bright. When Asit and Labanya came up together they saw me read a pictorial magazine.

"I left Ajoyda's place with a happy frame of mind. Labanya at last found love in her life.

"Later I saw them together in lots of places. Sometimes when I passed by the College Square I saw the pair walking along the sidewalk, too engrossed with their own problems. So that is that. A boy meets a girl. And I was happy that Asit would be a good match for Labanya. But I hardly met Labanya for a month. Love is that zeal and possessive. When one was over neck and above with it one hardly finds any time for others. I and Labanya were old friends. We were studying in two colleges facing each other across the Square. I called on Ajoyda's house again after a month or so.

"I found Labanya in the kitchen. She looked gay in a printed voil saree. 'I am very happy', she beamed, 'that you are just on time'. I sat beside Labanya at the kitchen table. 'Oh! you would feel

giddy here, let us go upstairs,' she insisted. 'Oh! no! I prefer to stay here with you', I said.

"It is a pleasure to see Labanya at work. She was tall dark and rhythmic in movement. She moved round the dining room setting one or two things straight and shaking up one of the cushions."

'How is Asit getting on', I asked abruptly. Labanya glanced at me and beamed.

'Oh! fine! he is now staying with us, in this house, he is preparing for his M.A.

'So you seem extra meticulous, making the tea'. I just cannot help teasing her you see.

"But Labanya gave me a sharp look. But as she was about to tell me something, Asit and Ajoyda entered the room.

"Labanya only could be able to lift the tray and said, 'come on, what you guessed is not true.' I gave her a teasing smile and she returned me an uneasy smile too.

"We talk little over the tea. Labanya's sister-in-law came in on her wheel-chair. She seemed a bit hard with Labanya. Asit's eyes were fixed on her. He was watching her movements with an unconscious attentiveness. It did not elude anyone. Ajoyda seemed enjoying it but his wife seemed cross.

"When I was about to leave, Labanya came near my car and said in a low voice, 'I would meet you tomorrow at your college.'

The hostess now paused a little. The guest looked too much absorbed in the story. They spoke nothing for a while. Just watched a local train go. The black smoke, curly and pungent, rose high up in the sky and slowly melted away."

"We are heading for a climax I guess," the guest asked inquisitively."

"So we are heading for a climax, I think!"

"An anticlimax, I am afraid!" The hostess said.

"Labanya came to my place next day. Yes! She managed an evening off somehow. She lay lazy for the rest of the afternoon and had a hearty dinner brought to bed on a tray.

"That evening I gathered the hang of Asit-Sumita affair from Labanya."

'Introducing a new star?' The guest inquired.

"May be a shooting star, I don't know," the hostess retorted, and picked up again the trail of the story: "but Sumita was a living, throbbing and vivacious woman I should say. Yes, in every way. She was a rich landlord's daughter. Rich and conservative. She was motherless, but had a Victorian grandma. Sumita's guardians hardly allowed her to go out and talk with her cousins even.

"Asit, of course, was her cousin. And they fell for each other when they both were in their teens. As she had been a brilliant student, her guardians just could not dare to stop her studies. But she was admitted to a strict Missionary Women's College.

And she had to attend her college in a curtained car. Asit hardly met Sumita after they two reached their teens. Sumita was something more than reality and mostly an imagination to Asit. She was the guiding angel. The less he got the chance of seeing her, the more he fancied her. Poor souls they were. Caught one day red-handed when they were kissing in a solitary balcony in Sumita's house, Asit's daily visit to Sumita's place ended abruptly. He was not allowed any more in the house. It was Labanya who kept their relations going. She helped the couple in exchanging letters and arranged for them occasional meetings."

"What a good girl that Labanya was!" said the guest, "almost saintly, don't you think?"

"Yes, she was a benevolent saint." But her saintliness caused much trouble for her. Everybody took Labanya and Asit for lovers. They were always seen talking with each other, and exchanging letters. They used to meet outside the house, in parks, restaurants. And whenever somebody dropped in unexpectedly, they abruptly stopped talking, much to the embarrassment of the intruder. Often Asit brought presents for Labanya—flowers, perfumes, chocolates etc."

"'And then people started talking about them."

"Didn't you talk," The guest suddenly chipped in.

"No, I just laughed to myself. Twice I fancied to guess right and twice it proved to be wrong. Really how little we know about ourselves and our friends!"

"The observation is noted," said the guest jestingly.

"Since then Labanya kept coming to my place occasionally. I was the only person whom she really trusted."

"I was inquisitive about this Asit-Sumita affair. In our time people who dared to continue these go-on-loving-against-the - guardian's - will," really needed guts. And those people who could come out victorious in the battle of love were hailed as heroes. Yes, Asit also then seemed to me a valiant hero, fighting against all the odds to get his lady love."

The hostess turned to her guest and added ruefully. "But later when I came to know what really their love meant I was shocked."

The guest looked rather amused. Jocularly, she said.

"How come? A moment ago you were just heralding Asit as your hero!"

"Well, I am coming to that." The hostess began with a bitter tone.

"Asit and Sumita were really two spoilt children. Too much reading of sentimental novels at a tender age might have spoilt them. They had had a crude physical attraction. And nothing more. They just christened it as love. And what did that love

I saw Asit hand over an envelope to Labanya—

mean to them? Gifts on birthdays, writing lengthy sentimental letters and kissing and hugging whenever they would get a chance."

"'Since that fateful day, when they both were found kissing, the doors of Sumita's house were barred to Asit."

"But you know, Asit just couldn't help seeing Sumita at least once in a day. Every evening, rain or shine he used to walk up to the gaspost in front of Sumita's house and waited for a glimpse of her in the balcony.

"'And since the day of the first fall of man, man desperately pines for the forbidden fruit."

"Is it not that an easy flow lessens the current? Put a barrier, the current would be tumultuous. This case was just a boy wanting to meet a forbidden girl episode, and nothing more. Asit was all alone. And there was none to give him solace, till Labanya came to stay at Ajoyda's place. Since Labanya came, Asit found a vent to his own anxiety. If there were no Sumita, Labanya could have won Asit in a trice. She had all the qualities which an attractive woman should have. Labanya was mature and reserved for her age. Sumita on the other hand was an impulsive and moody girl. She only knew the art of making her loved one unhappy. And she hardly had any faith in Asit." The hostess paused as if to gain time for the latter part of the story.

"Asit was then preparing for his M.Sc. final, and we, our first Arts. Asit was then staying at Ajoyda's place. He was already a bit nervy at that time. His whole future was hanging on his success in the examination. Sumita's letter would have restored his peace of mind and he actually expected soothing notes from Sumita. But Sumita never cared to write like that. Of course, she wrote letters. But they were just explosives, full of sound and fury. Her demands were many. She wanted a good flat to live in, a good job for Asit and immediate marriage. Sumita, unhappy herself, deliberately wanted to make Asit unhappy too! On the other hand, Labanya proved a perfectly sympathetic friend to Asit.

"Let me relate to you a day's incident. That was the first day of Asit's final examination. Labanya saw him off at 9 a.m. and entered the kitchen to prepare afternoon snacks for Asit. But Asit came back before the time in the odd hours of the noon. His face looked pale. Labanya smelt something uncanny. She slowly drew near Asit, but did not dare to ask him anything. She fished into his pocket for the question paper. There wasn't any. Labanya retired to a chair, just on the other side of the table and waited for Asit to speak."

"How patient your friend Labanya was!" murmured the guest.

"Yes, but had Labanya been a bit less patient she would have been happier these days—"mused the hostess in a low voice. "Now let's plunge into the main theme. Where did we stop? Yes, Labanya was waiting Asit to speak. What could he do? One cannot sit for exams. with all the world's anxiety in one's head. Sumita was pressing hard for immediate marriage.

"Asit spoke at last. He had dropped from his examination.

" 'If she would been only half as sensible as you, Asit sighed, 'I would have been a happier person!'

" 'Sumita?' Labanya asked, 'What happened to her'?

" 'See for yourself'. Asit threw a letter on the table. Labanya picked it up and read from the first line to the last. It was something like a time-bomb, I should say. Sumita wrote that if Asit would not take her out from her father's house she would take poison."

Labanya picked it up and read from the first line to the last.

The hostess tossed her head and laughed.

"The letter sounded so silly to Labanya that she had to make efforts to conceal her laughter. Inwardly, she was furious with Sumita. That silly brat! That bundle of selfishness had spoilt two whole years of a bright young man. But Labanya somehow controlled herself. She did not pass any remark. She knew, if Asit had to take sides, he would leave her friend and cling to Sumita. She only said,

" 'But you did stupid thing, Asit. A year's delay in passing the final exam. means a year's delay for your marriage too.' Labanya sounded logical and reasonable to Asit. Next day Labanya went to Sumita's College. Yes, she had to. Because she knew Asit took every line of Sumita's letter seriously. Anxiously he would say, 'Sumita is an impulsive creature, you know Labanya, she is able to do anything.'

"Labanya hardly believed it. But she went to visit Sumita only for Asit's sake. She found Sumita busy with her friends and with a nice lump of chocolate ice-cream.

" 'I thought, you needed a short lecture on value of human life. But now it pleases me to see that you are not in the suicidal mood, anyway.' Sumita purred.

'Maybe, when I wrote the letter I thought of committing suicide, and that's all you know.'

"Labanya came back. His weariness gone, Asit now became the same old jolly person. Every evening he used to come to Ajoyda's place. And of course, there was Labanya. Most of the time Asit would talk about the details of his future plans after marriage. With rapt attention, Labanya would hear all those tittle-tattle talks. A girl of seventeen, Labanya avoided all other teenage diversions and cancelled engagements only to become friend, philosopher and guide to Asit. She felt proud that Asit needed her. A girl of seventeen wants to feel proud you know, when her boy friend, much older in age, confides in her.

Sulekha
DRAWING
INK

Sulekha
OF EVERYDAY UTILITIES

Adsol
OFFICE
PASTE
& GUM

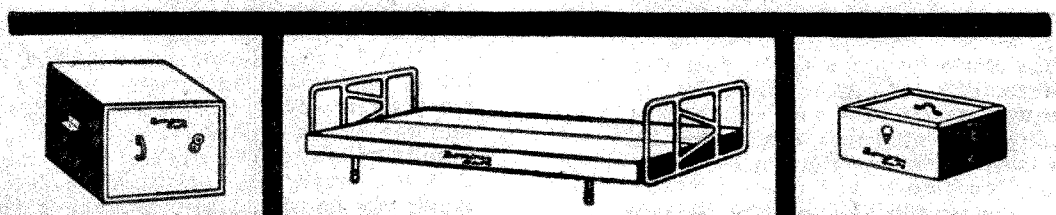
Sulekha
FOUNTAIN
PEN
INK

SIKURITI
SEALING
WAX

Sulekha
STAMP PAD

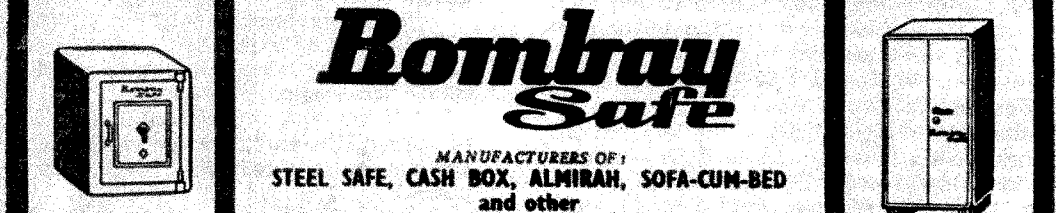
SULEKHA
WORKS LIMITED
Sulekha Park, Cal-32

Progressive/SW 22



Bombay
Safe

MANUFACTURERS OF:
STEEL SAFE, CASH BOX, ALMIRAH, SOFA-CUM-BED
and other
OFFICE, HOSPITAL, CANTEEN & DOMESTIC FURNITURE



BOMBAY SAFE
& STEEL WORKS PRIVATE LTD.
56, NETAJI SUBHAS ROAD,
CALCUTTA-1 • INDIA
Cable: "BOMBAISAFE" • Phone: 22-1181, 22-8716

PRASA

"Sometimes they used to go out together to movies and art exhibitions. But Sumita's existence was so vital that they always felt her presence around them.

"But Labanya's free mixing with Asit was not approved by their relatives. They disapproved of the whole affair. Labanya's sister-in-law was very much perturbed about the gossips connecting Asit and Labanya. She liked Labanya very much, but her concern for her younger brother Asit was far too deep-rooted to indulge Labanya.

"Labanya, however, was an intelligent girl. She could hardly do or say anything which would go against her. Rarely she would express any affection for Asit. Outwardly it seemed even that Labanya was a little indifferent to Asit. Asit's sister could hardly find any pretext to snub her sister-in-law and that made her all the more furious. She started hating Labanya. Gradually Labanya began to sense the growing ill-feeling between her and the mistress of the household.

"Sometimes I asked Labanya to tell her sister-in-law the facts about Asit and Sumita. Labanya just talked out my proposal with a smile. She used to say, 'If I expose the real truth, their future plan will be upset. You don't know what a great opposition those two poor things have to face then!'

" 'But why do you allow them to use you as a scapegoat! I would oppose.

" 'Let them do! But I have only to bear the brunt till this December when Sumita would be twenty one and Asit's result would be out.' Then she started musing, as if she was relating her own dreams,—'Asit would get a job, rent a lovely little flat at Ballygunge and get married, 'she turned round to me and beamed again' 'then those silly scandal mongers will prove themselves dander headed fools!'

"I had not seen much of Labanya since then. As I had been busy with my first Arts examination I found little time to think about Labanya. But I was very much sure that Labanya was not going to sit for her examination as long as Asit would not get married and settled. The last time we met I found her too much absorbed with Asit and Sumita's perpetual lover's quarrels. Sumita sent another letter, which too was full of sound and fury—enough, to turn a young lover desperate.

"The day my examination was over I felt relaxed and for a change I recalled Labanya. I felt that I should see her. I revived my interest in her worries and problems.

"But at Ajoyda's place when the front door was opened and I was ushered into the dining room, I found Labanya all right. Nothing had changed. Perhaps Labanya herself was immune to any change. As usual, she looked best and perfect behind the tea table—on which were beautiful silver tea-pot and cups and saucers of fine porcelain. How perfectly she was doing her odd jobs! Tea making. She was correct in holding the tea-pot and knew the art of filling the cups to the brim without letting an extra drop to fall on saucer.

"It seemed, as if Labanya was going on preparing tea from time immemorial to time yet to be immemorial, with her eyes down, lips taut and face expressionless.

"When the tea was over and we were alone, the first thing I asked Labanya, was about Asit.

" 'Don't you know Asit got married?' Her voice ranged metallic.

" 'Got married' I exclaimed.

"A successful love marriage in our time meant something extraordinary. I felt proud for the trio. Asit, Sumita and Labanya.

" 'But why you people did not care to invite me? Isn't it a historical event to be witnessed?' I said.

" 'May be!' Labanya grinned, 'but am I the person to be accused? They did not even care to invite me to their Reception Party, do you know that?'

" 'But why not,' I was really astonished, 'have you not thrown everything else into the shade for making that elopement successful?'

" 'Yes, I did', Labanya's voice was flat, 'but there the matter ended. Now I am relieved. Just a fine free soul. I can do anything with my evenings now. Asit will not come any more and talk my head out with his problems. Now, what are you doing this afternoon? Let's go somewhere. To a movie or coffee house—anywhere on the earth.

"Her voice dropped. As if she felt that spending the evening in a movie or in the coffee house was not at all a bright proposition.

"I was watching Labanya intently. Then I began in a grave voice, 'Labanya, don't do things you don't want to do, and then pat yourself on the back for doing them. No, Labanya, self deception is total self annhilation. Don't force yourself into unpleasant formalities.

"Labanya avoided my eyes and sat speechless.

" 'Is anything the matter Labanya?' I enquired.

" 'The matter? No, why?'

" 'You look all queer'.

" 'Do I?'

" 'Labanya, there *is* something. You really do look awfully peculiar. Come on! Tell me, I have never seen such queer expression in your eyes. What you are up to?'

" 'Nothing really. Oh dear, you must believe that it won't make any difference anyway. Everything is just the same, settled, only—'Labanya's voice faltered and died away. She covered her face with her palms and dropped in the sofa. I suspected that somehow Labanya was hurt.

She covered her face with her palms and dropped in the sofa.

"Later, I gathered the story of Asit and Sumita's marriage from Labanya's sister-in-law. That lady was very much impressed with the jewellery Sumita had brought with her. Asit's father, however, pardoned his prodigal son, but his father-in-law was adamant. He simply refused to accept Asit as his son-in-law.

"In the meantime, Asit's father, an influential man in the business world, arranged a fine job for Asit, and Labanya found out a cosy flat for him at Ballygunge." The hostess paused and smiled.

"You see, I have almost reached the concluding lines of my story: So they happily lived ever after."

Just at the moment a servant came up with a tea-tray. He arranged it on a side table and waited. The hostess waved him out and began to prepare the tea herself.

It was afternoon. The orange beams of the sun still lingered on the topmost branches of the guava trees. The long stretch of the waste land and the iron lines of the railway track still held the last rays of the dying sun.

The other lady broke the silence, "I think you also look perfect like your friend Labanya behind a tea-table."

"Yes, I do", the hostess handed the cup to her guest and said, "I resemble Labanya in many other ways. Like me she was good at knitting too." The hostess gently sipped her tea in and put the cup down.

"Now let's resume our tale," she said, "—yes, they happily lived ever after—a romantic novel may end like this. But not life. This real unknown, all engulfing, all pervasive life is more vigorous and turbulent than any cut and dried story. Life, I suppose, is the most whimsical affair for a person who lives it. It hardly ends where the ending is perfect. Either it goes on lingering after its purpose has been served or it stops half way unexpectedly.

"In that rented flat at Ballygunge, Asit and Sumita started their married life. The settings and trappings were almost perfect for a newly married couple. They had well-decorated dining and sitting rooms with a cosy kitchen and shining toilet, just complete with a flowery ivy creeper in the portico and a woolly poodle running about the rooms.

"But the gorgeous flat could add little comfort to the newly-wed couple. They were strangers to each other, forced to live under the same roof."

The hostess purred, "you just couldn't believe. What a worthless girl that Sumita was and we also did not expect Sumita to be a perfect housewife. Yet, she should have shown some interest in the affair of running the household. Even a worm turns and a creeper stretches in response to the stimuli, but not Sumita.

"Within a year of their marriage, the tiptop household, that Labanya decorated for the couple, was transformed into a mess. All the saris of Sumita were found huddled in the trunks and hangers, torned or discoloured. Asit's suits? Yes, most of them were crushed, worm-eaten and dusty. Nobody cared to send them in the laundry. The servants hardly stayed long. Sumita found fault with each of them. Asit seldom got tea or lunch in time. He had to keep the household account himself. On the top of it he had to attend Sumita almost every evening at her bedside. As soon as he came back home he would find her ill with a 'headache' or a 'pain' in the back. Sumita, you know was prone to all imaginary ailments. She invented them to keep Asit home. Asit had to sit stiff at the head of her bed and spray Eau de Cologne on her forehead."

"Strange!" The guest remarked, "I have never heard of such things."

"Yes, she was almost an impossible woman—no, she was something more than that. She was abnormal. A husband can excuse a silly wife's tomfoolery alright, but how can one tolerate a wife who is abnormally abnormal.

"From the first day of their marriage Sumita proved to be a jealous and possessive wife. She wanted to segregate Asit from everything and everyone. She did not spare even Labanya. Do you know what she had told Asit when they sat together to prepare an invitation list after their marriage registration?"

The guest nodded "no".

The hostess quoted, "Labanya and anybody related to her should not be invited"—Yes, this was Sumita, can you imagine?

"Asit tried to put sense into her, but Sumita was not to be taken in with reason. So Asit had to cancel the party. You see, Asit knew a quite different Sumita—impulsive, innocent and simple minded girl. They used to meet after long intervals during their courtship period. Sumita was more an imagination to him than reality. He was not allowed to see Sumita alone; her letters were the only things of joy to him. They were perfect love letters, you know. Full of passion, dreams, imagination, accusation and also, I should add, a wild wish of self-destruction. I had seen those letters myself. They were enough to reduce the addressee to a sentimental weakling. But even those letters did not represent the real Sumita. Asit discovered his mistake within a week of his marriage. Sumita was not a grown-up edition of that sweet innocent 'Lucy, half hidden from the eyes' whom he used to meet years ago. She was a completely different woman then.

The other lady murmured, "A wrong companion is worse than none—thus the sayings goes."

The hostess did not mind the interruption. She continued: "Sumita was too obstinate. She invited her own guests, though Asit cancelled the reception party, and made Asit to play the perfect host. Irritated, he decided to visit Labanya on the next evening. After the office hours he went to Labanya's place only to find her out. He was terribly disappointed. Asit went upstairs and asked his sister about Labanya. He gathered that Labanya had taken a job in a school and was frantically trying to get a part time engagement in the evenings. Still Asit kept coming every day. He just could not help it. Desperately he wanted to talk with Labanya. The whole week he thought of nothing but Labanya. One night when he came back home, he looked a complete wreck. Sumita answered the bell and found him standing at the door dazed.

'Are you sick?' she enquired. But Asit was not able to answer. He only staggered into the room and dropped on the sofa. The whole room seemed to roll before him and he could only whisper the name —'Labanya'.

"Next evening Asit again went to his sister's place.

'How are you Didi, feeling better?'

'Asit', his sister spoke in a strained voice, 'would you mind telling me a truth?'

'What is the matter Didi?' Asit said nervously.

'Why do you come here every day? Just only to see me?'

Asit became pale. But his sister did not wait to see the reaction on her brother's face. She continued.

'Asit, this morning Sumita rang me up and accused me of indulging you and Labanya. She said that your daily visit to Labanya is not to her liking. A married man must not visit his girl friend every day, keeping his wife in the house waiting.'

Asit left his sister's place heavy hearted. That night when Sumita asked him where he was in the evening, he told her a lie. And that was his first lie to Sumita. His first sin.

On the following day Asit did not attend his office. He drove to the southern end of the city where Labanya worked in a girls' school. But he did not go to her school straight away. He waited for Labanya near a bus stop. Meeting Labanya was not a new experience for Asit. Before his marriage he used to meet her in parks and restaurants. But then the context was different. They talked about Sumita and Asit's problem. But now Labanya herself came to the fore.

Asit wanted to tell her that he was aware of the whole situation, that he came to share her pain and anxiety and that let people tell whatever they like they two would remain friends for ever. But as he sat near Labanya in the tea room cubicle suddenly he came to his truth. The bare truth. He loved Labanya. Sumita was right. The gossipmongers were right. But now what he would do with this truth? Pity, it never came to him in time. When he was unmarried, when they were really innocent friends, when they turned their deaf ears to all the gossips. . . . . .

for God's sake, leave me alone:

"Asit closed his eyes and tried to recall those days. No, they never were innocent friends! Love was there. It was always there. A deep, all engulfing, subversive love.

"Silently he sat in the small dark cabin until Labanya began to sob. There wasn't any mist left now to shroud Labanya. Asit could read her mind clearly now. Asit broke the silence,

" 'Labanya, if you knew your mind, why didn't you give me an inkling?'

"Labanya did not answer. Asit watched her for a while, then he began accusingly, 'Labanya, why didn't you tell me the truth before I made the greatest mistake of my life by marrying Sumita?'

"Labanya lifted her eyes and just could say,

" 'Asit, the boy is waiting for the order'. "Asit hurriedly placed the order and leaned back on his seat. He had nothing to say, nothing to ask more. Labanya turned to Asit. Her eyes were sad. Now, they were openly registering the pain she was feeling inside.

" 'Asit, I don't see how can I help you! You are married now and it is not proper for you to meet me like this. Don't make your wife unhappy.' Her voice suddenly grew impatient, 'please leave me alone, Asit!

For God's sake leave me alone!'

" 'Labanya!', Asit's voice held a frightened note. Like a child's. But Labanya did not look at him. She was under a spell of tension. She got up and darted to the front door. In a moment Asit saw her disappear in the bend of the street.

"Asit sat in the dimly lit cabin for a while. He felt somewhat giddy. The taste of good tea turned sour in his mouth. And then Asit placed an imaginary Labanya before him and began to converse with her like a madman. From the vacant chair, the image of Labanya seemed to speak to him, 'I have given up my life for you, given up everything I cared for. I loved you. But I never dared to tell you.'

" 'But I did not know you really cared.'

" 'You didn't want to know! You had been shutting your eyes to the reality of flesh. You had been deceiving yourself'.

" 'Yes, yes it is true. But you know, I couldn't help it. I was under the spell of my first love.'

"The shadow of Labanya mocked him, 'What right you had to use me? Tongue tied I did everything you wanted me to do. I sewed the wedding dress for Sumita, rented the flat, bought furniture and even made your conjugal bed.'

"Asit suddenly felt suffocated in the small square of privacy. As if he was dropped into an aquarium. He walked out in the midst of the busy street. The idea of going back to Sumita simply gave him a creep.

" 'I am going back to the selfish mean woman, always fretting with her imaginary illness and there Labanya was wandering alone under the sun like a virgin mother, who had concealed her guilty love from the eyes of the angry crowd. She knew she would have to bear the burden alone till death.' Asit was thinking loudly.

"'Suddenly he was aware of the burden and it was a relief to him. A relief of sharing the burden.' 'I too am bearing the cross,' he whispered to himself. And at last he decided to accept his fate. He knew he had to bear Sumita throughout his life.

On the following week Asit honestly tried to make his wife happy. He stopped visiting Labanya and spent the evenings with Sumita. But, he was restless. He would talk in torrents, hardly waiting for Sumita to talk. He would roam about the city with Sumita without seeing or enjoying anything. And at last Asit discovered that he could not any more move faster than his mind. Labanya's absence drew him more towards her. In the absence of Labanya he thought more of Labanya. He felt the presence of Labanya everywhere. Suddenly it dawned on him that he could not perhaps do without her. He decided immediately to go back to her."

The hostess paused for a while.

"This is but the account of the sins of my friend Labanya. An account of her guilty love with Asit. When Asit succumbed to her spell, Labanya of course could not turn him out. You know, everybody has to pass through unguarded moments in life.

Gram : "AGRAHOTEL"
Phone : 274606

AGRA HOTEL

16, DARYAGANJ, DELHI-6.

INDIAN EUROPEAN and
VEGETARIAN CUISINE
WELL FURNISHED ROOMS
COURTEOUS SERVICE
HOMELY ATMOSPHERE

AIR-CONDITIONED
NON-AIR-CONDITIONED
ROOMS

SO RELISHING IN SUMMER

SPENCER'S
ICECREAM
SODA

SPENCER AERATED WATER
FACTORY PRIVATE LTD.
87, DR. SURESH SARKAR ROAD
CALCUTTA-14.
PHONES : 24-3226 • 24-3227

This is the time to go places. When care is a forgotten word and merry laughter is everywhere. Have the time of your life... Fly IAC. We bring people and places together the quickest way.

INDIAN AIRLINES 39, CHITTARANJAN AVENUE, CALCUTTA-12

IAC-74A

"Often they ran away to the far off fields where the sky was smokeless and the grass emereld. There they would sit for hours with hand in hand. And they did not speak much. There was nothing to say.

"Once Labanya was a shrine of ideal womanhood to Asit. Something to be adored and worshipped from a distance. But he saw it come to life. It lifted up into dimensions. To his amazement Asit found that its heart began to pound, lips trembled and eyes flickered. It was almost a woman's body, with real blood and flesh. Suddenly, he took her face between his hands, and kissed her. But this was what she had resolved not to extort from him; this was the gesture that could avail nothing against her inevitable happiness! For a second or two she stiffened her body in mute resistance, tried to move away, but then, vanquished by a passion stronger than herself she was limp in his arms.

"One evening Asit and Labanya went to the Botanical Gardens and sat beside a lake until closing time.

"Labanya, I want to tell you something,' Asit began nervously.

"Labanya lifted her brow and asked, 'tell me what is it?' Asit hesitated for a moment and said 'we are going to spend a weekend at Ajoyda's house.'

"You mean, you and your wife? No I just can't lump it. I can't live with you under the same roof, and see you two petting each other before my eyes.'

"Labanya, please!' Asit, trembling, clasped her hands.

"Let me go; she said curtly,' look Asit, this is going too far, I am going to leave that house for good.

"Labanya please, believe me, this is not my doing. The both sister-in-laws-put their heads together and decided to spend a week in each other's company. Labanya you did lots of things for me. This time, do me a little favour, don't leave that house. You need a good shelter.' Asit pleaded.

"Then the rain came. Pattering all over the streets and the stretches of grass. The taxi drove fast. They sat crouched in the back seat of the taxi. That was when for the second time Asit kissed her.

"Labanya passed that night in a trance. She never had had a sound sleep. It was interrupted by dreams. Next morning she woke up in an unpleasant mood. She tried to keep her mental balance and plunged into the household duties. She rearranged the room for Asit and Sumita just in the way she liked. Then she went down to the kitchen. 'How shameless I am today!' she thought as she ordered the cook to prepare only the dishes Asit liked. Asit and Sumita arrived just in the morning. Labanya met them half way on the stairs, with a smile painted on her lips. Sumita drew near her and said her in a cordial whisper, 'Labanya drop your school today.'

"As you please,' Labanya smiled vaguely,' I am joining you within a few minutes,' she said. Then she left to bathe and dress.

"I will do just what I please today,' Labanya said to herself. She put on a crisp voile saree and touched up her face slightly. She pinned a rose on her soignee and sprayed perfume of 'khas' on herself. Then she walked with grace into the sitting room where host and hostess and the guests were waiting.

Sumita has never seen Labanya using makeup. She never saw her wear voiles. It was a changed Labanya. A Labanya fully armoured to fight Sumita out. Suddenly Sumita went stiff. She did not exchange a single word with Labanya. 'Excuse me. I have a headache,' she said and abruptly left the sitting room. Everybody was startled. Even Asit's sister went sour "Asit, I heard that your wife has violent tempers. Control her in time, you silly boy, or she will make your life hell.' Asit wanted to guard his wife.

"Take it easy Didi, she is rather nervy nowadays. It will pass.'

"When Asit and Labanya were alone Labanya said, 'Asit your wife deliberately insulted me. She left as I came in!'

"Asit was in a fix. He went up to his bedroom where Sumita lay on her bed. He begged her not to create any scenes. But Sumita did not yield. She dug her face into the pillow and wept helplessly.

"Fed up, Asit left her and went down to the dining room where Labanya was waiting for him.

"Labanya, I am hugry; he said, 'Give me something to eat.'

"Labanya began to serve the dishes. Asit enjoyed the meal. As Labanya watched Asit take his food she thought, 'how I wished to live for you, to die for you. How I want to mend your shirts, to look after your households, to bear your children!'

"Labanya trembled at the middle of her thought when suddenly a shrill voice broke the silence of the dining room.

"I am sorry Labanya! I made you wait so long; said Sumita.

"Oh, come I have not taken my lunch yet.' Sumita just over looked Asit and began talking with Labanya with an artificial cordiality.

"So you got back your moods,' Labanya said.

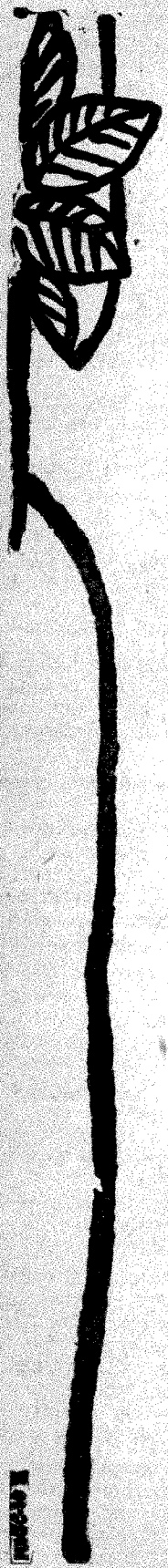
"Oh, I have quite managed to get it off with a few aspirin tablets. Those terrible headaches you know. Every one felt that the storm had passed over. Everything was normal again. In the evenings they set out for joy rides. It seemed that they were all on a giant wheel in a festive mood. But Labanya moved mechanically. Deep inside she felt a constant prick of pain.

"At midnight when the other members of the house retired to bed, Labanya was relieved. She came to her room and shut the door, and stood leaning on it for sometime. She felt as though her spine was melting. 'Now I am alone. I can do anything I like. Then she thought of Asit and Sumita in the other room. What they are doing now?' She wondered. 'Rooms beyond the close doors are always queer places, 'Labanya whispered to herself. But she did not sleep for the whole night."

The hostess grined, "Do you know when somebody has died, according to our Hindu funeral rites there is a custom that there must be an attendant beside the dead body ? Yes, Labanya was also performing the funeral rites of her maimed passion. She lay beside the dead room of Asit and Sumita like a sentinel watchful and wide awake. Even a slightest stir in the oher room made her tremble on her bed.

"In the morning Labanya puffed her face thickly with powder. She wanted to erase all the lines of turmoil from her face. Sumita was a late riser She hardly got up before ten. Asit had to leave for his office at 9 A.M. so Labanya had to attend him. She served him his lunched and saw him off in the portico. Sumita got up at 10-30. She dressed up and went out with Labanya for shopping. From the market Sumita went to her cousin's place. Labanya returned home alone. After a long trying day she had a quite afternoon to herself. It was a rainy evening, Sumita rang up Ajoyda and said that she would stay at her cousin's place due to rain.

"Towards the night the weather turned worse. The members of the household had had an early supper and they all retired to their bed. Labany suddenly got up in the middle of the night. She felt the presence of someone in her room. Somebody was sitting beside her bed. Asit!



Age is not all... nor the mere fact of survival on the frayed ends of tradition. Among the earliest promoters of a concept — that of self-sufficiency for our country through extensive industrialization, we have known no ingenious ways to overcome obstacles apart from flexibility in decision making, and regard for ordinary principles of management wedded to probity. If we are today a rational complement of industrial units, that is because of our reluctance to sit on the fence of the status quo — waiting for an overwhelming consumer demand to develop before being able to set our sights. And if we have a modest reputation of worthiness, we intend to live up to it through an optimum use of talents, available resources and initiative.

AGE IS NOT ALL...

AMONG THE COMPANIES IN THE MARTIN BURN GROUP ARE:

THE INDIAN IRON AND STEEL CO. LTD.: With an enviable record of production efficieney the million ton integrated steel plant at Burnpur is ready with another two-phase expansion programme to double its production capacity by the end of the Fourth Plan period. The largest foundry in the Commonwealth at Kulti is being steadily modernized and expanded.

A subsidiary, The IISCO-Stanton Pipe and Foundry Company Limited, recently inaugurated, has its brand new factory coming up at Ujjain for the manufacture of spun iron pipes and ancillaries directly for the benefit of consumers in developing areas.

BURN & COMPANY LTD., HOWRAH WORKS: Pioneers in foundry practice in India, in structural steelwork fabrication and the manufacture of rolling stock—the origins of the Company go back to the year 1781.

BURN & CO. LTD., REFRACTORY & CERAMIC GROUP: Apart from stoneware pipes and chemical stoneware, the works of this group—eight in number and located in four states—manufacture nearly all types of refractories to meet the requirements of India's steel industry, power undertakings, railways, ordnance factories—in fact, any industry requiring refrsctory material for the maintenance of furnaces.

THE INDIAN STANDARD WAGON CO. LTD., SANTA: The oldest Indian unit started for the specific purpose of manufacturing railway rolling stock—has been mainly responsible for building up the wagon building industry. Also manufactures springs, forgings, pressings and stampings for heavy industry as well as automotive springs and components.

THE HOOGHLY DOCKING & ENGINEERING CO. LTD. Established in 1819, the Company with its shipbuilding yard, dry dock and extensive workshops is geared to meet defence and civilian requirements, and to produce dredges to keep our new harbours and channels of inland navigation open.

ROBERT HUDSON (INDIA) LTD.: A premier concern in its own field, the Company devotes itself to all types of light railway engineering—has important connections with the mining industries.

RAILWAY COMPANIES: Some of the first feeder railways in India, with six systems in four states, still a great aid to suburban travel.

ELECTRIC SUPPLY COMPANIES: Pioneers again in the generation and distribution of domestic power in India serving a wide area in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

THE VAUGHAN BURN CRANE COMPANY LTD.: A collaboration with The Vaughan Crane Company Ltd. of Manchester...Hand operated and electric overhead travelling cranes and chain pulley blocks.

REYROLLE BURN LTD.: A collaboration with A. Reyrolle & Co. Ltd., Hebburn, England—for the manufacture of specialized types of electrical switchgear of worldwide repute.

MARTIN BURN LIMITED

Calcutta New Delhi Bombay Bangalore Patna

mb

"Labanya sat on her bed dazed, and Asit dug his face in Labanya's lap. He faltered in a muffled voice, 'Labanya, I don't know what to do? Really I don't know! Labanya gently stroked his head and wept.

"That night Labanya's fall was complete".

The hostess looked at her guest and enquired, "Are you feeling bored?"

"Not at all", the guest said, appreciatively, "One just cannot help feeling for Labanya you have represented the case of your friend magnificently". The hostess looked rather relieved. She began softly: "After a week Asit and Sumita returned to their own flat. But Labanya, you know, could not return to her normal life again. The experience of that stormy fateful night was too much for her. She completely lost herself. She began to meet Asit every day in the dark corners of parks, curtained cabins of resturants. And soon Sumita came to know all about their secret engagements". The hostess paused before going on. "I don't want to bore you with a dragging account of the perpetual scenes Sumita created and the rows she had had with Asit. To cut it short, Sumita left Asit's flat within a month. She wrote a letter to her father and made up with him. She was then expecting. Asit tried for a compromise but Sumita was adament. Finally she filed a petition for divorce".

"I can guess the latter part of the story", the guest beamed, "Sumita got a job in a village school and left her father's place with her new born daughter. Labanya too got a job somewhere outside Calcutta. She stayed there until Asit was a free man again. Isn't it?"

"But how on earth you could guess all these?"

The hostess was very much surprised.

"Intuition, just intuition!" The guest said, "now please, would you lift up the unnecessary mask of Labanya from your face and finish the rest part of the story in first person singular?"

The two women looked at each other. Without any change of expression, some intelligence appeared to be imparted.

The hostess abruptly began.

"All right, you win. That was a quiet evening. I sat alone in the portico. I was watching the stars and humming a tune. Suddenly I heard the jingle of a cycle rickshaw. Somebody was coming towards my quarter. I got up and received my unexpected guest. He was Asit, my Asit!

"That night we left for Bombay where Asit got a good job. On the following week we got married and settled in a cosy quarter at Bandra. After a year we had a son. We had all, a sweet child, lovely flat, respectable status but still Asit was restless. He could hardly sleep in the night. Often he would visit Calcutta and stayed there for days together. Perhaps Sumita's curse was hanging on us. Asit was longing for Calcutta. He got this old ancestral house repaired, resigned his post at Bombay and settled here. But here in this city I felt myself a stranger. I expected that my friends and relatives would forgive me for the crime I did not really commit. I did not want to come between Asit and Sumita. Really it was not I who had sparked the trouble. Sumita was impulsive, unadjustable. She herself aroused the passion in Asit for me". The hostess's voice rang for sometime in the air.

They sat speechless and saw the evening fall. The smog made the trees of the backyard almost vague and a chill began to hover on the darkning lounge. The servant noiselessly appeared in the shadow and took away the stale tea cups. Somebody switched on the light. But the light could not make the house gay. The house looked more haunted in light and shades. The guest collected her knitting things and got up when she heard the hostess murmur, 'Everybody hates me, even my parents, my sisters and my friends! Even my.....! Her voice got lost in the uncanny atmosphere.

There was no leave taking. The hostess heard the sound of the steps of her guest receding down the stairs. A gloom crept on her. She did not get up but lay still in the easy chair helplessly as if the chair was electrolocuted.

OR.

Mrs. Sen hesitated for a minute before the freshly painted green door of the small bunglow house and then she rang the bell. The door was opened and she met the smiling face of Mrs. Roy.

"Do come in, Mrs. Sen", she said cheerfully, "how pleasing to meet you". Mrs. Sen's voice was cordial. And then her attention was distracted by a little child at play.

"My grand daughter", beamed Mrs. Roy. "My daughter and son-in-law are out for a picnic".

"And what about the old man?"

"Oh, I have never seen such a lazy person in my life you know. Since he had retired from his service his only business is to sleep. He just sleeps the days out".

"Mrs. Roy went up to the coffee table and said, "let me prepare some coffee for you", she added, "you know we don't take tea these days, my husband is addicted to coffee. But now, be seated".

"I was watching those photographs. Mrs. Roy, you were charming in your time", Mrs. Sen said.

"Thanks for the compliment, but you see, I have been putting on flesh since my daughter was born".

"But you are growing old gracefully", murmured Mrs. Sen.

"I think you overlooked one photograph, that tiny one at the corner", Mrs. Roy pointed to a photograph hanging on the right wall of the room. Mrs. Sen got up and drew near a small photograph of two little school girls. Both of them wore school uniforms. One of them was strikingly beautiful.

"That was me" Mrs. Roy pointed to the plain looking girl and added, "and that's my friend of whom I spoke to you the other day".

"Your friend? Which friend? I just can't remember." Mrs. Sen tried to recollect.

"The one who divorced her husband and was working in a village school".

"Oh, yes! I remember now".

"I would like to tell you something about her. Would you care to listen, Mrs. Sen?"

"But why not?" Mrs. Sen said cheerfully, "you owe me a story, don't you?"

Mrs. Roy laughed.

"Please help yourself with a cup of coffee. I am just coming". Mrs. Roy handed her the cup of coffee and left the room. As she left, Mrs. Sen got up and went near the tiny photograph of the little girls. She watched those faded figures intensely. One of them reminded her of some one she knew intimately. But she could not place her exactly. Mrs. Sen got irritated with herself for her failing memory.

The hostess returned with a green shawl. Both of them settled comfortably with their coffee cups, covered their feet with the shawl and began to sip the coffee. After finishing her cup Mrs. Roy began, "This is too a story of damned eternal triangle. Labanya, Sumita and Asit. But here the role of the friend is real. Yes, that is my role in this story. I am just a narrator here, just a point out side the triangle.

FOR LOVELY LOCKS IN ABUNDANCE . . .

Use *LAKSHMIBILAS* a medicated and perfumed hair oil with *CENTURY OLD TRADITION* for all your hair troubles. It helps luxuriant growth of hair, revitalises the roots of hair and keeps your brain cool.
Regular use of at least three months will produce the desired effect.

CAUTION

When buying check up

(1) Trade Mark—Shri Ram Chandra Murti.
(2) Manufacturers—M. L. Bose & Co.
(3) 'RCM' Monogram on Pilfer Proof Cap.

LAKSHMIBILAS
hair oil

M. L. BOSE & CO. PRIVATE LIMITED • LAKSHMIBILAS HOUSE • CALCUTTA-9

"But you are pinching off the names of my story, Mrs. Roy?" Mrs. Sen said amusingly.

"Would you mind lending them to me, Mrs. Sen? You know, I am a very bad inventor of names".

"All right, as you wish. Now come on begin your story".

"To tell you frankly, my friend Sumita was not an ugly duckling like your friend Labanya. She was the Snow white.

"She was born with a silver spoon in her mouth. Her father was an aristocrat landlord and her mother was the only heiress of a rich Zaminder. Sumita was not a burden to her parents like Labanya.

"Sumita took after her mother. Her mother was strikingly beautiful lady. I have seen her huge oil painting in the picture gallery of Sumita's ancestral house. The unfortunate lady died on the very day her child was born. Sumita's grandma took little Sumita to her place. How often I went to that big palace. I can remember still those tall gothic pillers, the huge garden, the marble-fountains and an unusually big Rolls Royce car. The Rolls Royce fascinated me very much. It was a golden-coloured vintage car with two silver snakes on its two sides. Within their mouth two headlight bulbs were fixed. Sumita used to roam about the rambling old house. She discovered things in that old chateau. Often she would relate her experiences to me. 'Do you know that there is an ant's nest near the Chinese palm at the southern corner of our garden ? I love to watch them come and go. Oh, one day I placed a matchstick in their hole. How badly they needed a stair case.'

"And that was Sumita. Highly sensitive and imaginative. But she was not a lonely type of girl. She was the monitor of our class. We all loved to obey her. We loved Sumita for her over-sensitiveness."

"Then I should say your friend was an immature type. The world is too real for oversensitive persons, Mrs. Roy." The guest spoke sourly.

"I don't agree with you, Mrs. Sen," said Mrs. Roy firmly, "Sumita was not an immature girl. She was impractical. Now let me take up the trail of my story. At the age of fifteen Sumita met Asit at a seaside health resort. When Sumita returned to Calcutta after three months, she looked almost a grownup woman. She looked radiant with pleasure at the sight of me. I watched her with wonder.

"I think somebody touched you with a magic wand !"

"Yes, yes, yes." She said with a gusto and whirled in the room like a ballerina in a Swan Lake piece." Mrs. Roy reflected, "Oh ! I could still see her, whirling and dancing in the big hall. I am in love, in love, in love," she composed her own song playfully and danced around the room imprisoning my hands within hers.

"She met a wonderful young man at Puri. Her cousin, Asit. The two families stayed together for three months. Their love was a conspiracy of nature, I should say. The vast blue sea, those long stretches of the sandy shore, the pebbles, the conches, and the starfishes, even the stars that gleamed in the night and the phosphorus that burnt on the crest of the waves all lend their hands in that match making. They wondered in the sandy dunes all through the day, lay under the sun for hours, bathed in the sea at their will. In the evening they often played cards, or sat in the balcony till night."

"It seems, you are describing some scenes from a cheap Hindi film." Mrs. Sen pursed her lips with a mocking smile.

"Perhaps you are right," said Mrs. Roy, "It looked so unreal on the face of it, that sometime I too had my doubts. Any way Asit and Sumita thought that they would go on loving each other forever in that heavenly surroundings. And for them time would stand still.

"But one day their holidays came to an end. That was their last evening together. Sumita clasped Asit's hand and murmured, 'we won't be here to-morrow, isn't it ?'

" 'We would spend our honeymoon here.' Asit assured her. Again he said, 'We will marry as soon as we can.' Sumita pouted her lips, 'how ! you are only a student now.'

We would spend our honeymoon here, Asit assured her.

"And then all their talks ended. They watched the sun drop down and you know, the guest beamed, "one just can't count the kisses of the lovers and the waves of the sea.

"After a day or two Asit called on to Sumita's house at Calcutta. He felt a sort of stiffness there. Calcutta is a different place. The spell of the open wide sea was lost in the narrow lanes of the metropolis. Even Sumita's grandma behaved with him rather curtly.

"Sumita ! yes, she was not a normal girl as you have said before. She was impulsive. Love just radically changed her. Old habits gone, she was a new Sumita. She began to shun the company of her old friends. There wasn't any new discovery in the garden. For the whole day there wasn't life in her. She waited for the evening. With the coming of the evening slowly she was animated into life. Asit used to come in the evening. She waited with bated breath for Asit to come. As long as Asit stayed with her she looked radiant. But as soon as Asit was gone, she would lose all her colour. She then just looked a complete wreck. Sumita lost all the interests in life, save one. She spent the long hours of the night in her study just writing love letters to Asit. Asit too, hardly thought of anything but Sumita. I had seen his letters.

"The rich coulour, the vitality, Sumita acquired from the health resort, slowly faded out. She was reduced into a lean sickly girl. She lost all her pleasent manners and became a nagging type. The young lovers hardly could meet each other. But whenever they met they quarrelled.

"But you told me Asit was a polite young man?" Mrs. Sen asked inquisitively.

"Yes, he was! He was a polished young man to everybody but Sumita."

Mrs. Sen looked a question.

"Love is like that. It can change a person completely. Do you believe, that Asit a polite young man, crushed a burning cigarette out on Sumita's palm, even slapped her?"

"Oh, I just can't imagine," Mrs. Sen said excitedly, when with effort she changed her tone, "but there are more things in heaven and earth.....you know."

"Love needs sacrifice," solemnly Mrs. Roy began," it never spared the young pairs too. Asit was forbidden to see Sumita. You know, they were found kissing in Sumita's parlour. They were both dying to see each other. Asit somehow found a way out. Every evening he used to come before Sumita's house only to have a glimpse of Sumita on the hanging balcony."

"A roadside Romeo, I presume?" Mrs. Sen's remark was sarcastic.

"Yes, you are right in a way, Mrs. Sen. After all Romeo is the hero of a tragic tale. So is Asit."

Mrs. Roy got up slowly. "Let's have some more coffee," she said.

While preparing the coffee, Mrs. Roy turned to her guest and said "once you told that we are not trees. We won't be flowering any more, or bear fruits. We are all in a blind lane. Our fate has been decided a pretty long time ago. So is the fate of my characters. Sumita would never appeal to any higher court for retrial." Mrs. Sen darted a glance to her hostess.

"I think you are repeating the story which I have told you the other day." Mrs. Roy came near her guest and said calmly, "do you know, on the very day Sumita saw Labanya. She liked her? And Mrs. Sen the veryday I saw you I began to like you. I wanted to be your friend. I wanted to be very frank with you."

"Did you never hate me?" Mrs. Sen asked her hostess in a muffled voice.

"No, didn't." Mrs. Roy paused for a while, and went on again, "our youthful days are dead and gone. Sumita would never come and demand her lost love. But you shouldn't deceive yourself. You wouldn't get any peace of mind that way."

Mrs. Sen did not answer. She leaned helplessly on a pillow and watched the hostess.

"Sumita told me how she liked Labanya from the first day she saw her. But later her relatives poisoned her against Labanya.

Mrs. Roy paused for a while. Then she looked at her guest and said, "One thing I should add here, I would like to introduce a new character in my story. He is Sahadev Roy, whom you carefully avoided in your story. You wanted to suppress the truth that you had a suitor, and went on indulging him till you married Asit."

"But believe me, I never loved him". "But you used him as a means to an end. Didn't you?" Mrs. Sen did not answer. The hostess continued, "One day Sumita came to know that Labanya was avoiding Sahadev Roy. She spent her time with Asit and stopped seeing Sahadev in the evenings. It made her rather suspicious. And is it not painful for a young girl like Sumita to spend the dark hours of the evening alone in her room knowing fully well that Asit was now spending his time with Labanya? Sumita was slowly getting frightened of Labanya. She was aware of her overpowering influence on Asit.

"The last time I met Sumita before her marriage, I found her quite unbalanced. She was nervy. When I called on her she was lying on the bed. "What happened to you Sumita?" I asked her anxiously.

"Sumita took my hands into hers and requested, 'Please do me a favour, dear". Meet Asit and tell him that I just can't wait anymore. Tell him to take me out from here. Then she began to muse, as if she was talking in her sleep. 'Last night I had a dream. I saw Asit driving in a car in the countryside. I saw somebody seated beside him but that was not me. I stood on the road. I waved franctically to Asit. But he did not care to stop.'

"Sumita clasped my hands and said, "The dream must have an ill omen you know."

" 'Dreams are only dreams, Sumita! They never come to reality." I tried to console her.

"Within a month Sumita eloped with Asit. At first they drove to a small hilly town at Bihar. When they reached the inspection Bunglow at Palaspur, Sumita was asleep on Asits' shoulder. Asit shook Sumita gently and she came to her wakefulness, smiling happily at Asit as her eyes opened. Sumita liked the bungalow and the hills around. She exclaimed, 'I did not believe we'd ever manage it. It does n't seem quite real even now.' They sat quietly in the balcony for some time and watched the evening fall.

"Sumita said, 'now tell me, when your relatives are coming here?"

"To-morrow," Asit said.

"Labanya?" Sumita enquired.

"She too will come with them." Asit said.

"Next day, Asit's father, sisters and near relatives came to attend their marriage ceremony. But Labanya did not come."

"But she promised that she would be present at our marriage ceremony", Asit grumbled to his sister.

"Labanya was not feeling well when we started", His sister said.

"The marriage took place on the following day. That night Asit returned to his room earlier. He wanted to avoid the noise and crowd. When Sumita entered the room she found Asit standing near the window. She drew near him.

'Why? What happened to you?'

"Nothing, in particular".

"Sumita silently stood by his side and gazed at the moon.

"Suddenly Asit asked Sumita. 'Do you believe that Labanya is really ill?' Sumita's heart jumped. So Asit was thinking of another woman on the first night of his marriage!

"After a few days of holidaying at Palaspur, they all returned to Calcutta. The newlywed couple settled in their new flat at Ballygunge. Everything was pre-arranged for Sumita. Before her marriage Sumita's favourite pastime was planning for her future household. But when she first entered her flat she saw that Labanya left nothing for her to do."

"But do you think Sumita was expert in housekeeping?' The guest enquired.

"Expert or not, every woman has her own ideas and dreams about her own household. Sumita too had her own ideas. But nothing was to be changed in that flat of Sumita. Everything had been arranged by Labanya, nothing was to be done to hurt her feelings. 'Labanya bought that bed lamp,

isn't it smashing ?' or Asit would say, 'Look, this carpet is real Cashmere stuff, Labanya suggested that we can use it for our bedroom'. 'It is queer household', run by two housewives'. Often Sumita would think.

"While preparing the reception party list the first quarrel crop up between the couple. Sumita was scanning the list of invitees. She stopped, when she came to Labanya's name.

"Now tell me one thing, why Labanya wants to avoid us ? She never came to see me after our marriage. Is it not rather peculiar ?'

" 'Somebody may have hurt her'. Asit said rather stiffly.

"But we did nothing to hurt her, did we ?"

"Of course, we didn't. But you should have told her to come here. You should be grateful to Labanya after what she has done for you and me." Sumita suddenly got furious.

"Yes, I should be grateful to Labanya for allowing you to marry me."

"Of course without Labanya we could not have got married."

"Labanya, Labanya and Labanya, would you kindly stop uttering that name." Sumita cried hysterically.

"The reception party was cancelled."

"That evening Labanya paid an unexpected visit to Sumita. Sahadeb Roy was with her. Sumita noticed that Asit somehow could not like Labanya's growing intimacy with Sahadev Roy. He behaved rudely with Sahadev".

"But you know I did not love Sahadev". The guest chipped in.

"I know, I know. You only wanted to make Asit jealous. You kept Sahadev waiting till the date of your marriage with Asit.' Mrs. Sen lowered her face. Mrs. Roy continued, "From that day Asit started coming home late at night. Sumita had to spend her evenings alone. Slowly Asit changed to a moody person. Sometimes he was jovial, sometimes he was ill tempered. And Sumita hated to adjust herself with somebody else's whims. She too became indifferent.

"The whole thing became completely clear to Sumita, when she came to spend a week end at her sister-in-law's place. The truth dawned on her. Yes, her husband was in love with another girl. Asit loved Labanya. He could not hide it now. Sumita was then expecting. But it did not prevent her to take her own course of action. Sumita left Asit. She made up with her father and started living at her father's place. After some months a daughter was born to Sumita. When her daughter was two years old she took a job in a girl's school outside Calcutta and started her life anew with her daughter.

"Now I will come to the strangest part of my story. Mrs. Sen, I don't think even you can guess this part of this story."

The guest looked up and watched her hostess curiously. The hostess began, "Do you know that after a year of his second marriage Asit paid a visit to Sumita ?"

Startled, Mrs. Sen, tossed an enquiring look to her hostess, "Are you telling the truth ?" She demanded. "Yes, but why not ? Have I not told you before that the last part of the story is unknown to you ? Do you know that Asit spends his week ends with Sumita and his daughter ? Sumita and Asit are now excellent friends. Only a year ago Sumita and Asit married their daughter to a decent young man."

Mrs. Sen began to falter clumsily, "but, why I could not dream of it even. Yes, Asit goes outside Calcutta, every week end, but how can I guess that he goes to see his former wife? why? I never asked him where he goes. We have nothing to ask, nothing to tell to each other nowadays."

"Then you cease to live for Asit and for that matter for everybody else. Perhaps this lack of warmth on your part drove Asit to Sumita or maybe his own guilt complex led him to Sumita."

The guest got up from her chair slowly and mumbled.

"So long my own guilt complex turned me cold to everything. But now I am warming up. I am rather relieved to know that at last Asit could make up with Sumita.

My days of atonement is also over. I can now face my husband with equal terms, with a clear conscience. I can now renew my relationships with everybody around me. Thank you Mrs. Roy, you have helped me much. . . ."

"I knew I could help you, Mrs. Sen. I have told you your own story, but in a sense it was not yours. Your guilty complex stood between your story and the truth. You could not face the truth. You had to lie when you were telling me your story the other day. You painted Sumita as black as you could just to pacify your own complex. All the time you were telling the story you knew that you had ruined at least two lives—Sumita's and Sahadeb Roy's."

Mrs. Roy's voice was calm. She watched her guest sobbing between her palms. After a while Labanya Sen lifted up her eyes. A few shafts of golden sun fell on her face. The tenderness of the twilight trempled like two dew drops in her dark big eyes.

Deep in her heart Mrs. Labanya Sen felt the peace of the evening which was then dying gloriously on the western sky.

Labanya, Labanya, Labanya, would you kindly stop uttering that name.

WHEN YOU NEED
A RESTORATIVE
YOU NEED

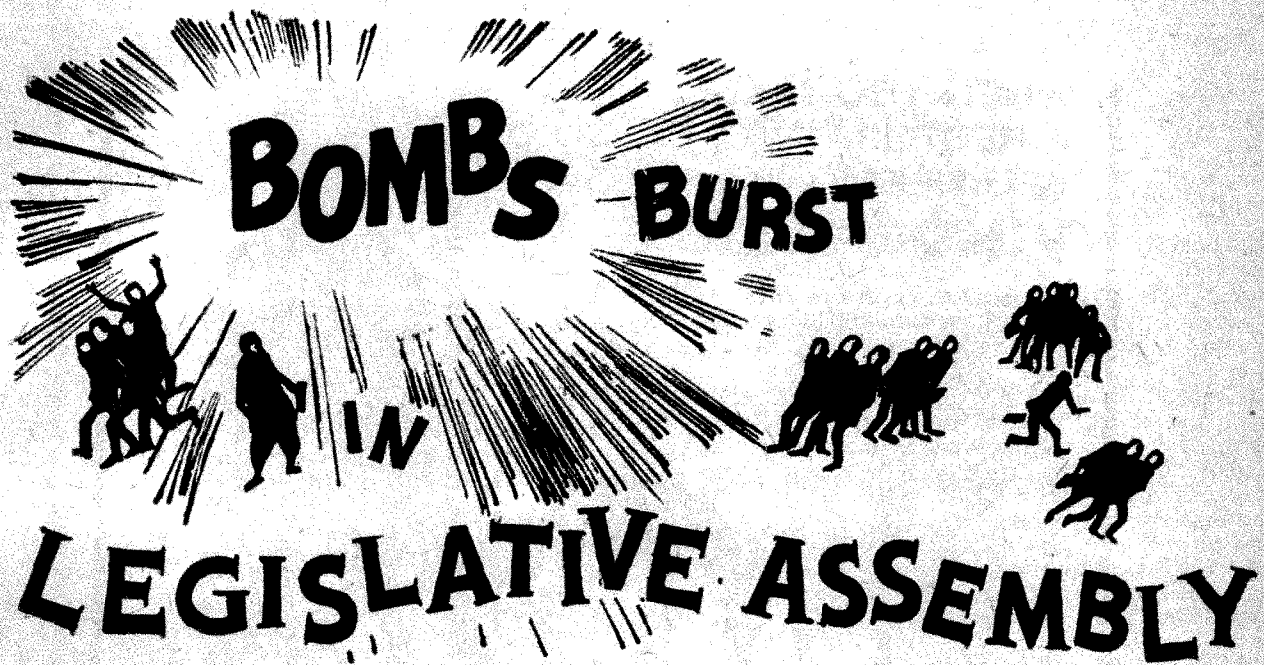
VINO-MALT

Vino-Malt stimulates appetite, promotes digestion, provides nutrition and tones up the system. Pleasant to take, Vino-Malt contains nourishing ingredients that are needed most for quick recuperation and vigourous healthy and joyful life.

VINO MALT

THE TONIC THAT KEEPS YOU FIT

A BENGAL IMMUNITY PRODUCT



By JATINDRA M. MUKHERJEE

THE recent death of Batukeswar Dutt recalled to my mind the famous incident, which made world news, in which he along with Sardar Bhagat Singh was involved - throwing of bombs into the Indian Legislative Chamber in New Delhi in 1929.

I was an eye-witness of the incident and had to report it for the outside world, being then in charge of the New Delhi-Simla office of the Free Press news agency and as such reporting the proceedings of the Assembly was a part of my duties.

A sort of a lull before the storm of civil disobedience burst out a year later was then prevailing over the land, broken occasionally by acts of terrorism by revolutionaries in Bengal and the Punjab. In Lahore a short time ago a senior British police officer, Mr. Sanders, had been shot under the belief (mistaken, according to official sources) that it was he who had struck Lala Lajpat Rai, while the latter was leading a demonstration against the Simon Commission. New Delhi was making news for the political battle which the Swarajists under the leadership of Pandit Motilal Nehru were fighting against the then rulers on the floor of the Assembly.

The redoubtable Mr. V. J. Patel was then the President of the Indian Legislature Assembly. He frequently stole the lime-light by his rulings from the Chair and was a constant source of embarrassment to the Government which, though commanding a majority in the House, did not quite know what to do with him. President Patel, at the time I am speaking of invited an almost open clash with the Government. To curb the activities of the revolutionary terrorists, the Government brought forward a Bill—a harsh measure—amending the existing Security Act. At the instance of Mr. Patel—it was no secret—Pandit Motilal Nehru, leader of the Swarajist Party, opposed the introduction of the Bill and asked the Chair to throw it out, declaring it out of order, exercising the inherent right of the President of the House. The "inherent right" claimed for the President was hotly challenged by the Government side, who contended that the President of the Indian Legislative Assembly was a creature of the constitution and the Indian constitution, as it then was, gave no such power to the President, who must allow consideration of any measure which the Government brought forward.

The spokesman on behalf of the Government was Sir B. L. Mitter, the newly appointed Law Member. It was his maiden effort. Faced against a galaxy of talents, who occupied the Opposition benches in front of him, and interruptions from the Chair, the former Advocate-General and veteran of the Calcutta Bar had a harrowing experience. Mr. Patel reserved his ruling on the issue whether the President had any inherent right and allowed the discussion on the Trade Disputes Bill, the next item of business, to go on in the meantime. The Bill was discussed for three days.

In the lobby rumour gained currency that Mr. Patel was determind to disallow the Security amendment Bill and was prepared to face a showdown on the issue. I was told by Mr. Lancelot Graham, Secretary, Legislative Department (later Knighted and Governor of Sind) that they were also prepared for a fight. Mr. Graham said : "We have endured long enough. If this time Mr. Patel disallows the Bill, we will go to the length of bringing in a censure motion and have him removed. As we have the majority there is no doubt that we shall succeed."

On account of the tremendous interest over the expected ruling of Mr. Patel, galleries of the Assembly were crowded to their utmost capacity on

the day he was to deliver it. In the Distinguished Visitors' Gallery were present Sir John Simon and all the members of his Commission, which included among others Major Attlee, the future Prime Minister of England, Sardar Vallavbhai Patel, who had long moustache then and took no part in legislative politics, with his daughter Miss Moni Ben and other prominent persons were also in the same gallery. The Press Gallery, as is now, was just above the President's chair. Less than a dozen persons used to report the Assembly then, Associated Press-Reuter staff men forming half the contingent.

A THUD & SMOKE

After the question time, Mr. Patel, with his white wig, with which his white beard matched, and black cloak — a majestic figure — rose to give his ruling. Pin-drop silence prevailed in the House as he proceeded to read out his written statement. Just as he said : "Now that the discussion of the Trades Dispute Bill is over, I am giving my ruling..." there was a thud. As I looked up from my short-hand note book and looked down, to see what it was, there was another explosion. smoke covering the Treasury Benches. Hardly had I realised what it was, there was another explosion and more smoke. My colleague Sri Biren Sen Gupta, who was sitting by my side, gave me a push in the mean time and whispered "bombs, bombs." Fearing that the upper gallery where we were sitting might be blown up, I jumped out of my seat as did other occupants of our gallery and began to run, some being knocked down in the process. After I had gone a few steps I remembered my reporting obligation. As I turned back and looked ahead I saw in the Visitors' Gallery in front the figures of two youngmen. As soon as the explosions started there was a mad stampede in the gallery which became empty as if in a flash, barring these two youngmen. Both of them were wearing khaki half-shirt and shorts. One of them had a felt hat on and the other was bare-headed. They were shouting "Inquilab Zindabad" in the empty gallery without making any attempt to run away, which they could easily do by mixing with the crowd. When the police came they allowed themselves to be taken into custody without any resistance, as I later learned.

V. J. Patel

When the second explosion took place, I saw Sir George Schuster, the Finance Member, bending over the desk with an arm round his head before he ran out. Sir James Crerar, Home Member, and other occupants of the Treasury benches also ran out as did Pandit Motilal Nehru and others. The Assembly Chamber like the galleries became empty in a matter of seconds. President Patel also left without having the time to announce the adjournment of the House.

As I was leaving the Chamber to file my messages of the incident, I saw Sir John Simon and other members of the Commission, who had left their seats, gathered together in the inside corridor, visibly agitated. Evidently apprehending attack on themselves, they were looking around helplessly, not knowing where to go. It was not considered safe to go out through the corridor outside, as crowds were still running along it. At that time Mr. Byrt, Times of India special correspondent, an Englishman, came up and offered to Sir John, with our help, to take them to the Press Room we occupied. They accepted the offer, but immediately after they came to our room, the police came running and took them away to a place of greater safety.

Motilal Nehru

Batukeswar Dutt

Within a couple of minutes, the two youngmen I saw shouting in the Visitors' Gallery were brought under arrest before our room by the police, who told us that they had given their names as Bhagat Singh and Batukeswar Dutt. Now I had a closer look of them. Bhagat Singh, wearing the felt hat, was about 25 years old, while the other, bare-headed, of darker complexion, 3/4 years younger, was Batukeswar. Both of them had clean features and were handsome youngmen. Both of them were clean shaved, except Bhagat Singh who had a thin line of moustache. They were absolutely calm, but had defiant and determined looks.

While drafting our message, Mr. Biren Sen Gupta and I decided that we should describe the explosives as crackers and not as bombs, as both of us from our reporting experience in Bengal knew that live bombs were of much more destructive character. Here in the present case the grenades did not explode with deafening sound associated with bombs, but had only a dull sound, besides nobody was visibly hurt and they did not cause much damage either. As news agency men we could not afford to take time over our draft and had to send our message in the quickest time so as not to be beaten by our rivals. Our messages went saying "crackers thrown in the Assembly etc."

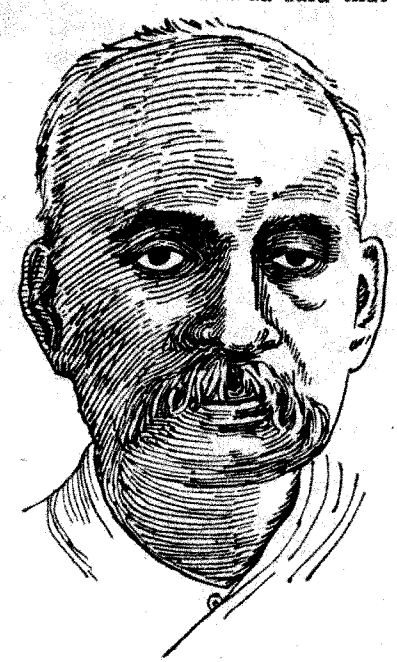
After sending our messages I checked with other correspondents. Reuter, Associated Press and other correspondents had made great play with the word "bomb" in their messages. So our message suffered

in comparison. On reconsidering the situation I concluded that their messages might be more colourful, but factually we were more correct. So I decided to stick to our original message.

A PUNGENT SMELL

After sending the first flash message I went down to the chamber to find out the actual damage caused by the explosives. As I entered the chamber, a pungent smell still hung about. Of the three explosives hurled, two hit the front row of the Treasury Benches, the third hitting the second row. They did not directly hit anybody. Two fell on empty space in the benches and made small holes on cotton-padded cushioned seats. I met Sir George Schuster in the lobby. On my asking him if he was hit, he smiled and said that he had nothing, except a small burn mark in one cuff of his shirt sleeves. Sir James Crerar and Sir George Rainey, Commerce Member, who were in the front bench said they were unhurt. Mr. S. N. Roy (later knighted) who was the Government whip and was sitting in the second row, said that a "bomb" fell by his side, without causing him any injury.

When I went into the non-official members' lobby, I found an exciting atmosphere, every body talking about his experience. Hara Vilas Sharda, author of the famous bill bearing his name, was surrounded by a group of M.L.A's. Mr. Sharda, an old man of about 70, who usually walked with a limping gait, was trying to run out when the "bombs" exploded, fell down in the passage and a number of members ran over him and Mr. Sharda said that he had the feeling that he was being crushed to death. His white shirt on his back bore the footprints of the fleeing M.L.A.'s.



Sardar Vallavbhai Patel

At that time Sir Abdul Halim Ghuznavi came. He was all wet with water dripping from his coat and trousers. Sir Abdul Halim was then the General Secretary of the Muslim Association — Moslem League was then in a moribund condition — and as such he was prominent in championing the Muslim cause. On my asking Sir Abdul Halim what the matter was, he said that he thought that the bomb-throwers would kill him. So he ran out for safety and took shelter in a bath room. Such was his tension that the thought that he would die of sheer anxiety, so to cool himself he turned on the shower on him.

The gates of the Assembly building, which were closed immediately after the "bomb" throwing, were reopened at about 5 p.m., after thorough checking of all visitors. When I was coming out, I met Mr. Philby, S.P., Delhi, whom I knew, sitting on the ledge of the stairs at the main gate. I asked him about the explosives, "Were they bombs or crackers?" He replied that if they were live bombs, there would have been a terrible havoc in the closed chamber, where people sat so close to one another and assured me that I was right in describing them as crackers.

After the "bomb" incident, the session of the Legislative Assembly was adjourned sine die and within a few days exodus to Simla began. Shortly after my arrival in Simla, Mr. Patel one day met me on the Mall Road, while he was out on a stroll with Sir B. N. Mitra, Mr. K. C. Roy, (chief of Associated Press and Reuter and also an M.L.A.) and some others. Accosting me Mr. Patel said, "Youngman, what have you done? You are in for trouble". To my surprised query, "Why", Mr. Patel said that it was very indiscreet of me to describe the bombs thrown in the Assembly floor as crackers. Sir B. N. and Mr. Roy also expressed their agreement with Mr. Patel, who finally asked me to be careful as the police were enquiring why I described bombs as crackers, which appeared to them to be a deliberate attempt to minimise a very grave crime.

Bhagat Singh

MERE CRACKERS

Some time later during the trial of Bhagat Singh and B. K. Dutt before a Special Tribunal in Delhi, Mr. Asaf Ali, who defended them (Sir Muhammad Zafrullah Khan was the prosecuting counsel) took the plea that the grenades thrown by them on the Assembly floor were not live bombs, but mere crackers. The purpose of the accused was only to make a resounding demonstration and they had no intention to kill anybody and as such they could not be convicted of the grave crime of attempt to murder, with which they had been charged. And in support of his contention the counsel produced the newspapers which had published the Free Press agency report of the incident, sent by me.

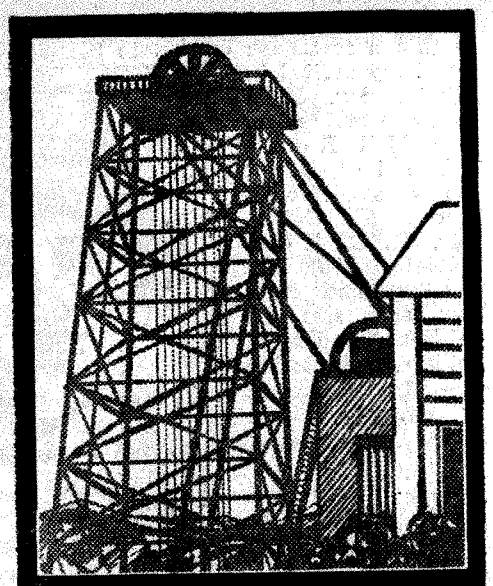
Dr. Sheldon, the explosive expert from Bengal, who had examined the explosives and was called as a witness, however, testified that they were live bombs and contained the most dangerous type of explosives and it was sheer luck that they did not explode with the violence expected of them.

Mr. Asaf Ali's plea was brushed aside and both Bhagat Singh and Batukeswar Dutt were sentenced to transportation for life.

Years have rolled by. I am still wondering if they deserved such heavy punishment for their offence. It was significant that after throwing the explosives they made no attempt to run away. They were dressed in khaki uniform, by which they were easily identifiable. If they were hurling dangerous types of bombs they must have known that they might kill not only the Government members, but also the national leaders only a few feet away. This could never have been their intention. In the prejudiced atmosphere then prevailing, it is no wonder that justice became a casualty.

Bhagat Singh, it will be remembered, was later tried in the Lahore Conspiracy case and was sentenced to death in connection with the murder

(Continued on page 223)



WATER from DEEP DOWN THE PIT

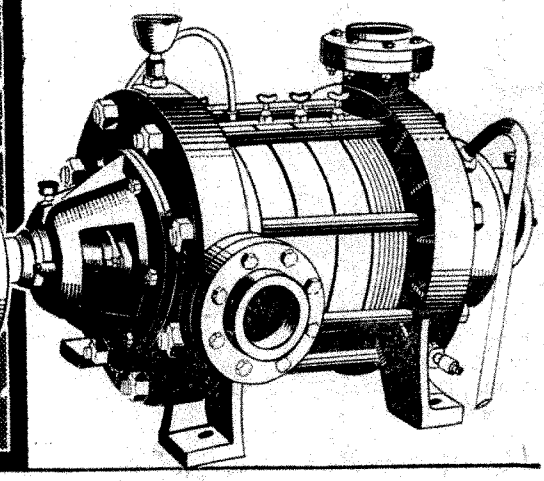
Kirloskar

MULTISTAGE CENTRIFUGAL PUMPS

In the Mining Industry, Kirloskar Multistage Centrifugal type 'MN' Pumps have achieved remarkable success because of their high efficiency and low operational costs.

These pumps are especially suitable for Mine Drainage, Booster Service, Filter Presses, Boiler Feeding, Water Works etc.

Available in sizes from 2" x 2½" to 4" x 5" for capacities up to 42 litres/sec (550 g.p.m.) with a maximum head of 300 meters (1000 ft.).



Constructional Features

★ Designed on latest principles of hydraulics.

★ Precision assembly.

★ Grease lubricated cylindrical roller bearings for radial load.

★ Axial thrust is taken up by hydraulic balancing disc of bronze.

★ Stuffing boxes are easily accessible making the packing easy to fit.

★ The two grease lubricated bearings are arranged outside the body of the pump so that the pumping medium is nowhere in contact with bearings. If the temperature of water to be handled exceeds 80°C, the stuffing box and bearing housings are provided with water cooling arrangement.

Characteristic: Completely stable & steadily rising characteristic ensures smooth operation.

For further details, please write to

KIRLOSKAR BROTHERS LIMITED, Kirloskarvadi, Dist. Sangli.

Sole Distributors :

WESTERN INDIA INDUSTRIES PRIVATE LIMITED.

10, Clive Row, Calcutta-1. Telephone : 22-4843 & 22-9755.

La Touche Road, Kanpur * Dak Bungalow Road, Patna.

Goleghar, Gorakhpur.

The Vision of Dante

By H. M. WILLIAMS

NUMEROLOGISTS should ponder the significance of the number 65, particularly in the history of literature. 1865 was the birth year of W. B. Yeats and Rudyard Kipling; T. S. Eliot died in 1965; add one year to 1564 and you have the birth year of Shakespeare and Kit Marlowe.

Seven hundred years ago, in 1265, was born a writer who was, many believe, greater even than Shakespeare. In that year Dante Alighieri was born into the petty nobility of the great Italian City-State of Florence, the home of some of the greatest visual artists of all time.

Thirty-five years afterwards, "Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita" (in the middle of the journey of our life), Dante began the great work (The *Commedia*) which has made his name a household word even among the non-literary. The *Commedia* tells in lines of astounding poetic beauty and vividness, Dante's vision of a voyage through the three after-worlds of Catholic belief: Inferno, Purgatorio and Paradiso. But it is more than a dream epic of a medieval space-time excursion. It is a deeply personal poem, a confession and an autobiography of Dante himself; it is a sharply political exploration in which Dante's convictions of how human life should be organised are given notable and permanent expression; it is a philosophical poem, a poetic version of Catholic-Aristotelian philosophy as codified by the other great Italian of Dante's time and country, St. Thomas Aquinas; it is an allegory (like Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*) of man's pilgrimage from birth to death—and beyond into the unknown; it is a profoundly searching analysis of man's being and destiny in the world.

What was the poet like who came to write this many-levelled masterpiece of Italian poetry?

Dante was born into a century of great brilliance, great piety, and great violence. It was the golden age of medieval Catholic Christianity studded with the names of St. Thomas, St. Francis, and St. Dominic. Piety, learning, the Holy Bible, Aristotle, Averroes and the other Arab commentators, were knit together in a harmony which was never to be recovered in the centuries which followed. In fact there were signs that the synthesis was beginning to break down even in Dante's century. But politically the most dangerous situation had arisen, one which Dante recurs to in his *Commedia* with obsessive regularity; the problem of the relationship between Church and Empire, between the spiritual and the temporal spheres, between the clerics and the laymen. Dante believed that the Western world would only know happy Government when the functions of the Papacy and the Holy Roman Emperor were sharply and clearly distinguished. He thought that the turbulent state of Italy was the direct consequence of the Church's usurpation of temporal power which rightly belonged to the Emperor. With passion, Dante plunged into politics; and it was in practical terms the greatest tragedy of his life. Yet, had he not entered politics so passionately, there would probably have been no *Commedia*.

His mother died when he was 5, his father when he was 17. At the age of 9, he met a girl one year younger called Beatrice, identified with some uncertainty with one Beatrice Portinari. Even then she was beautiful. Dante fell in love with her, and as he grew older swore eternal fidelity in the manner typical of the cult of Courtly Love then fashionable among young educated men. There was, it seems no physical consummation of that love. Beatrice died aged 24. By this time Dante had married someone else (again consistent with the Courtly Love practices) and ultimately fathered four children. His consuming love of Beatrice (at a distance) and his fertile but ordinary marriage did not however prevent him from indulging in several passionate and physical love-affairs with women to whom he wrote some of the most sensual and passionate poetry in the history of erotic literature. His devotion to Beatrice was meanwhile celebrated in poems (and prose) collected under the title, *Vita Nuova* (New Life). In this work Dante deliberately chose to write in his native Tuscan (Italian) instead of Latin.

But Dante's other passion (apart from women) was politics. Like John Milton, he was extremely ambitious, aggressive, idealistic and obstinate. He allied himself with the Guelfs (the party of the Empire against the Papacy), and was elevated to high office in Florence. A year later (1301) he underwent a catastrophic reverse of fortune. With the help of invading French troops, the Papal party

(the Ghibellines) overthrew the Guelfs. Dante was condemned to death in his absence after being exiled. Like many a modern politician removed by a coup, he tried to return to power by revolution. The sole result was that he was condemned to permanent exile.

In the remaining twenty years of his life, he never returned to Florence but lived the bitter wandering life of a political emigre (another situation strikingly familiar to our dear twentieth century!)

Cut off from the political power he craved, exiled from the city he loved, parted from his wife and children, with his beloved Beatrice dead, Dante turned inward (like Milton after the collapse of the Puritan regime in England) and began a process of intense learning, study and meditation which culminated in the *Commedia*.

Into this great poem Dante poured the experiences of his political career, his love of Beatrice, his hopes, his aspirations, his sins, his weaknesses. But he joined these personal experiences to the great religious and political visions of the Christian middle ages. He set to music, as it were, Catholic philosophy, the history of the Christian Church, and like St. Thomas attempted to sum up ancient and medieval learning in a vast "Summa" or synthesis. He translated his private agonies and ecstasies into allegories and analogies of man's eternal search for truth, beauty, and wisdom, into man's longing for union with Perfection and the Absolute. Finally the *Commedia* is the climax of Dante's loving manipulation of the Italian language, in which to use Mallarme's words (so often echoed by T. S. Eliot), he purified the language of the tribe, and gave to Italian a standing in European literature which it has never lost.

Virgil guides Dante through purgatory....

The *Commedia* though usually classified as an epic, is totally unlike the epics of the ancient world, the Iliad, the Odyssey and the Aeneid. These are essentially heroic poems which celebrates the founders and guardians of the race. Milton's *Paradise Lost* and the Indian epics have something more in common with Dante's poem, since they too have a rich spiritual meaning and are related to religious beliefs and practices. The *Commedia* is only indirectly and incidentally heroic (in so far as it celebrates the heroes of the Church and has some Classical heroes in Hell); it is personal and allegorical (like Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*), psychological and philosophical. Essentially it dissects the heart and mind of man. The title *Commedia* or Comedy (the adjective "Divina", divine, was added by a later admirer) indicates that it is a poem which starts in sorrow and ends in bliss. Dante describes in the form of a vision how in 1300 between Good Friday and Easter Sunday, he was guided through Hell, Purgatory and Heaven. These three great canticles, as they are called (they are three because the Church recognises three "states" of the soul after death, and three is a sacred number) are divided into 33 cantos each. Adding one introductory canto, the total number is 100. Each canto has roughly 142 lines divided into groups of three which are intricately rhymed. The first and third lines rhyme and the second line rhymes with the fourth and so on (aba, bcb, cdc, etc.). If there are 142 lines, there will be one spare line at the end of the canto. This form is called "terza rima".

HELL—A MOUNTAIN TURNED UPSIDE DOWN

Dante plunges straight into the story. Finding himself in a dark forest and gripped by fear, he tries to get out by climbing a great hill, but is turned back by savage beasts. Beatrice his beloved in Paradise, sends the Latin poet Virgil to guide Dante through Hell and Purgatory. So the first Canticle begins. Hell is an inverted cone at the centre of the earth with vast galleries descending to the lowest depths. It is vividly and frighteningly alive in Dante's narrative. Perhaps there is nothing more acutely terrifying in European literature. A few painters like Bosch have caught the atmosphere. Hell is a craggy volcanic mountain upside down, full of precipices, boiling lakes, mazes, caverns, pits, rain, snow, hail, fire, ice, mud and stinking morasses of excrement—and presided over by all the monsters and "Things" which have ever appeared in the literature and folk-lore of the ancient and medieval world. But the Inferno is no mere Horror Comic region. Dante bases his Inferno on psychological and physiological logic. Sins are punished by the logical consequences or associations of those sins. Those punished for lust (in the higher circles where the punishment is less terrible) are blown about by the winds of their own passion, like Paolo and Francesca whom Dante interviews in one of the loveliest passages. For these and other victims of natural sexual passions, Dante is humanly compassionate; and this is quite in accord with orthodox Christian ethics which regard the sins of the flesh as less horrible than those of the spirit and will.

In the same appropriate way, the Gluttons of the third circle are forced to live like pigs wallowing in their own dung, guarded by the three-headed Cerberus.

Unnatural sins, like sodomy, are punished lower down still, by unnatural means. The sodomites are forced to run all the time and an unnatural fire rains down upon them. Amongst them Dante meets

with sorrow his old teacher Brunetto Latini. In mitigation Dante tenderly suggests that Brunetto is "singed" rather than burnt by the rain of fire. Amongst the sodomites is also Dante's own Bishop. This is Dante's sorrowful commentary on the prevalence of sodomy among teachers, lecturers and clerics in the thirteenth century.

The journey through the Inferno is somewhat dangerous even for visitors like Virgil and Dante. It is full of appalling monsters taken as a rule from classical sources (Titans, giants, centaurs, cyclops, gorgons, the minotaur of Crete, serpents and griffons), and the way is often along narrow ridges and slippery paths above burning lakes and bubbling mires. The hideous demons when asked the way tell lies as is their nature, and evil Virgil gets lost at one point. But all these things add human interest, a human interest which palliates somewhat these scenes of appalling horror and pain, and which makes this Canticle the best known, most quoted and (by some) the best-loved of the whole poem.

The punishment of the sinners gets more frightful as we reach the spiritual sins of hypocrisy, fraud, discord, murder and treachery. The creators of discord are friendishly mutilated, their heads cloven with swords and their dislodged entrails hanging down between their knees. The most ghastly punishment of all is reserved for traitors. In the last circle they are submerged at various levels appropriate to their treachery in a sea of ice; and at the centre of the earth, the lowest part of Hell, the three greatest traitors of history, Judas, Brutus and Cassius (symbolic of treachery to God and the State) are being slowly chewed up in the three mouths of triple-headed Satan whose wings send out a freezing blast of ignorance, impotence and hatred.

SATAN—A MONSTER

The figure of Satan is Dante's only imaginative failure; a pantomine monster, or more like a "Thing from Outer Space" in Science Fiction Comics. Here John Milton's touch was surer; his Satan has dignity and nobility which make him a fitting opponent for God and Christ. But let us give Dante credit on the other side: his God is artistically superior to Milton's "Divine Schoolmaster."

Dante's own psychology and his prejudices come out clearly in the Inferno, which is on one level an allegory of his own life and sinful soul. Before he can be purged of sin, he must be shown what sin means, and what its consequences are. In many instances these were Dante's own sins as they are ours. He had been lustful, passionate, angry and proud—though never disloyal. In the Inferno he even shares in these sins as he watches them being punished. He pulls out the hair of one traitor, reviles and insults others. Virgil justifies these as outbursts of righteous anger, but Dante may have been showing more than he realised about the depths of the human psyche. The Inferno is a place of neuroses and psychoses (as they would now be called) as well as of physical torture for deliberate unrepented sins, and Dante responds sensitively to the atmosphere of nervous hysteria.

Dante puts some of his political opponents into the Inferno, but not as many as you would expect from such a vindictive man. Many of his own party are there too. He is thus able to discuss the past, present and future of Florence. Here the wounds of his failure and exile are re-opened, and his anguish and bitterness are only too evident.

One of the most moving and terrible stories which Dante re-tells is that of Count Ugolino who was imprisoned in a tower where he and his children starved to death. His face carries the scars of rat-gnawings. Is there anything more chilling than Ugolino's account of hearing the door being nailed up:

> "ed io senti chiavar l'uscio di sotto
> all' orribile torre . . . . .?"

Poor Ugolino! After all that, to be tortured eternally in Hell seems excessive punishment. But Dante thought that he was a traitor—and Dante loathed treachery.

Virgil and Dante escape through a passage leading through the earth and come out on the other side of the world where stands the mountain of Purgatory where the sins of those who repented and received God's grace are removed. Around this mountain in a spiral runs a path with seven bends, each representing one the seven deadly sins. The mountain unlike Hell towers up to a peak, and the sins run from the most deadly to the least deadly at the top: pride, envy, anger, sloth, avarice (and its opposite, prodigality), gluttony, and lust.

Once more Dante uses a subtle psychology. The sinners are slowly purged by the process of confession; they face up to their sins (almost literally because many of the sins are depicted in frescoes and sculptures) and they see examples of the opposite virtues, e.g., the proud are shown humble people, like the Virgin Mary receiving the Angel. As he climbs up Dante himself is purged of the seven deadly sins. At the top where Purgatory opens out into the Heavens, Virgil (Reason) leaves him, and Beatrice (Revelation) arrives in the dazzling beauty of holiness. At this point Dante suffers his greatest agony. Beatrice reproaches him for his sensuality, even for the *Vita Nuova* which though it celebrated Beatrice's beauty was dedicated to profane love. Dante confesses and is contrite. He drinks of the waters of Lethe, forgets his past life, and is then ready for the supreme revelation of Paradiso.

PARADISE

In accordance with Ptolemaic astronomy, Paradise is shown as a series of spheres leading from the Moon up through the planets to the fixed stars and the Primum Mobile. Beyond that lies the supreme Paradise of God's Presence. Since only God is unchanging and perfect, there are degrees of perfection, even in the Heavens and this gives tension and dramatic interest to this final Canticle. It is the most abstract and philosophical part of the poem, in which all the great problems of Christian theology morality, history, and human destiny are discussed much in the manner of Scholastic teaching. Dante's language reaches the supreme heights of what St. Thomas calls "radiance" and the Beatific Vision of Canto XXXIII is justly considered to be the noblest utterance of European religious thought. T. S. Eliot classed this with the Bhagavad Gita as the greatest religious poetry of mankind.

What is the relevance of Dante's *Commedia* to 1965? Naturally a poem which has been read deeply for nearly 700 years must be rich indeed. Apart from its religious content, it has appealed to people of widely diverse cultures and faiths. It is first and foremost a poem. It is a stupendous and exciting exploitation of the Italian language; this perhaps is chiefly why Dante has been loved and admired by poets as different as Chaucer, Milton, Wordsworth, Browning, Rossetti, Swinburne and T. S. Eliot.

Many readers have gone to Dante for the music and language. Many have revelled in the pictorial and narrative splendours of the poem. Others find in the *Commedia* a magnificent portrayal of the

(Continued on page 223)

* All sorts of machinery for Cable Industry
* Castings (Ferrous & Non-ferrous)
* Machining of all sorts

Contact :

BALILIAS ENGINEERING COMPANY

Office : 137, Biplobi Rashbehari Bose Road, Calcutta-1
(Phone — 22-6667)

Works : 70 & 75/5, Benares Road, Howrah.
(Phone — 66-4285)

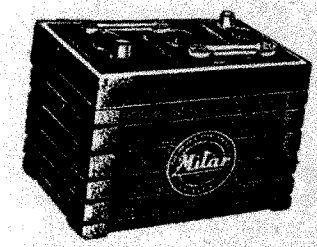
Gram : BALLENGKO.

FAMOUS SINCE 1934

INSIST

ON

Milar



STORAGE BATTERY.

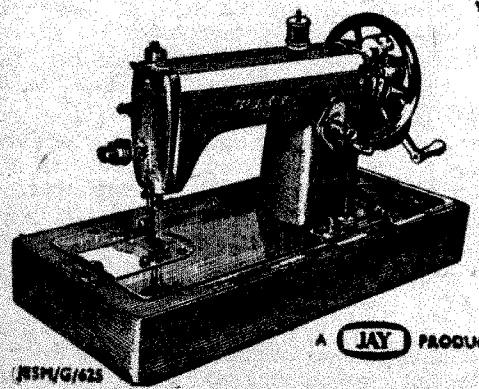
THE INDIAN BATTERY MFG. CO. (P) LTD.

1-A, Acharyya Jagadish Bose Road, CALCUTTA-20

PHONE : 44-1183

AN OUTSTANDING GIFT FOR THE FESTIVE SEASON

USHA Sewing Machines make enjoyable gifts. Give her one and you will see—nothing could make a better gift.



Attractive Usha Sewing Machines are very strongly built. It's a pleasure sewing on Usha while its economical for the family. There is a wide range of models and prices to choose from.

Sew with ease — sew with

USHA SEWING MACHINES

A JAY PRODUCT

JAY ENGINEERING WORKS LIMITED, CALCUTTA-31

JESPM/G/625

Quest in the Dark

DAKSHINA RANJAN BOSE

THE porter puts down the luggage and disappears. The train has not yet got in.

She has come a bit too early. Still, it is better than the last-minute rush. Only she is feeling a little lonely.

Sprawled on the easy-chair, she looks at the table at the centre of the waiting room. Two big mirrors are hanging on the walls. The powerful electric bulb swinging. Karabi sits and watches the bulb swing. Her mind is swinging too. She picks up the newspaper from the table and starts reading.

Just when she comes to the editorial she hears the sound of somebody pacing up and down. The footsteps sounded familiar.

She looks up. Why, isn't that Rina going away, her back turned towards her. But how could she get to the Howrah station at such a godless hour? How could she go away without greeting her even? Maybe, she never saw Karabi. But that again is not likely. The thoughts at the back of her mind float about like a solitary cloud".

No, her eyes must have played her false. For Rina's presence at the station cannot be explained away in any other way.

Samaresh, the Gwalior Palace, the Fort and the various stray incidents during their stay at Gwalior —all these come crowding into her head.

Eight long years. When Rina came over to Calcutta with Samaresh three years after her marriage she went back to Gwalior with Karabi—almost forcing her to come along with them.

The scenes fleet. The trip to the Fort. Still vivid in Karabi's mind. Samaresh at first was reluctant to go to the area in his new car. He even went so far as to comment that it was not right to take such risks with ladies. But Karabi's protest at last had made him yield and they went off in the car. Of

course, nothing happened and they came back safe.

Samaresh and Rina. Well, Karabi is grateful to them for giving her that wonderful chance to have first-hand experience of that far-away historic kingdom. But even now when she remembered the couple's strained relation at that time she felt unhappy.

The actual cause of the trouble was very simple though. The pet cat. All those quarrels for a mere a pet. And the unhappiness that followed!

"Tell me, Karabi, how I'm going to spend the whole day without any companion. Throughout the day he is busy looking into his office files—and he comes back home so late. If I can stay happy for a few hours with the cat why should he object to it?"

She cannot turn her back upon the stray incidents of the Gwalior days. Only two days before she came back from Gwalior, they were all sitting at the table, having tea. Just when Karabi picked up a piece of buttered toast Samaresh broke in: See, Miss Sen, your friend's daughter won't even let me have my tea in peace.

It was like adding fuel to fire. "Why don't you kill, Suva if you hate her so much", Rina shouted. "Tea or poison! I am not going to have tea in this house till the day I die". She pushed back the cup, went into her room in a huff and threw herself on the bed. Karabi could not placate her though she tried her best.

"You are to blame, Rina. Really! The poor fellow cannot even crack a joke ? No, no, this is not right. How are you two going to live together if you feel cut up rough on such trifling matters"—that was how Karabi tried to reason with Rina. But she would not listen to her.

"Why don't you go and live with your 'poor fellow' if you really like him so much", Rina retorted.

"Will that make you happy? Won't you feel jealous?"

Rina did not answer. Karabi too stopped joking and became silent. The cat, the cat that caused all this unhappiness. But what could she do? Rina loved Suva like her own child. Short of flying in the face of fact Karabi could not deny this. "The cat should go", she thought she would have a word with Samaresh about it before she left for Calcutta. But she did no get the ghost of chance to raise the matter at all. After all she came to know Samaresh the other day, so to speak. It was an ill-wind that blew nobody good. Rina cooled herself. But Samaresh could not rid himself of anger. Karabi did her best to take them to the cinema.

Samaresh's servant bought tickets. They were in a dreadful hurry. But the moment Karabi stepped out of the room she heard a thud. She turned back and saw Rina biting her tongue. "What is the matter? Did you fall down?" She asked.

"Oh, no. But I cannot go". Look, Rina showed Karabi the edge of her sari torn to shreds.

"So what? You must come".

"But how can I go? See, how Suva is trying to pull me back".

The cat was really tugging hard at Rina's slippers. Karabi felt fed up.

"How long are you going to take? We are sure to be late for the show", this time Samaresh addressed Rina.

"Listen. You two go to the pictures. Suva won't let me go today. Look, what a big tear she has made in my sari".

"Why, we have already got your ticket and still you will not come?"

"That's no problem. You can take Paresh along". At last they really had to take Paresh, the orderly, with them to the pictures. When they came back from the show Karabi felt that it would have been a good thing if they ceased to fly at each other's throat. "Karabi, this is the last night. We would not go to bed but talk".

"Samareshbabu will be staying in his room all alone and we shall be chatting the whole night? You must have gone off your head". But she would not listen to her.

"Don't bother about that. He often keeps late hours looking into files. He won't mind. Really, Karabi, I just can't think of you going away".

"Why are you talking like this, Rina ? Samaresh-

"Oh, no. But I cannot go." Look, Rina showed Karabi the edge of her sari torn to shreds.

babu is a very good man—almost God-like. You should not have any trouble with him. I have a feeling in my bones that we let ourselves get into trouble a trifle too needlessly. You have Suva to deal with". "Yes, Suva—that is the rub'.

"Well if that is so, why don't you get rid of her? I know you want to play the mother because you have no child of your own".

As Karabi looked at Rina she saw the tears streaming down her cheeks....Karabi's train got in at 8 o' clock. So they came to see her off.

Now, eight years later, it all comes back to Karabi like a dream. The station suddenly comes to life. Passengers have started streaming in. The whistle of the train suddenly catapults her back to reality. She got on to the train.

At Cuttack all the passengers got down and Karabi was alone in the compartment. After some time the train reached Bhubaneswar. Just when the train was leaving the station, a middle-aged gentle man got into Karabi's compartment.

She seemed to have seen him. But she could not make quite sure.

'Samareshbabu! Really! Where do you live these days?

The questions coming in quick succession through a familiar voice hushed Samaresh in silence. "Aren't" you Karabi? he asked.

'Right, thank God you have recognised me. Oh, who could ever dream that I would run into you like this. Do sit down please'.

'All right. But why alone?'

"I'll answer your 'why' later. First tell me where you are living these days".

'It is difficult to say where we are living. I was transferred to Bhubaneswar two and a half years back. I have opened a new office here and am getting along somehow'.

Samaresh's tone reflects the old sadness. May be his relation with Rina got worse. So all her efforts to bridge the gulf ended in smoke.

'Is Rina visiting her mother now?' Karabi asked. "Let me know when she is back. Will you? You are going to Puri now, aren't you? You must stay with us. It will be great fun, My husband will make friends with you". 'Is that so? All right. But not now. Some other time. I'll let you know beforehand'. Samaresh evaded her questions regarding Rina. 'O.K., then keep our Puri-address".

'Now, let us hear something about yourself. How did you get married ? Why you never wrote to us'.

'Why, I wrote to you. I wrote to you when I got married to Professor Dasgupta.

You know, Samareshbabu, Rina also knows Prof. Dasgupta well. We both were his pupils. How happy we all would have been if Rina had been present at the ceremony.'

'That's true. But how could she know'. 'Samaresh replied. 'Why'?

'She never received your letter. In fact, she disappeared from Gwalior just after you left'.

"Oh, no!" Karabi said.

"Yes, she only left a short note: 'I can't live with a cruel, heartless creature like you anymore. I'm going to look for Suva and find her again. I searched her for five long years but drew a blank. When I received your letter I knew that you too didn't know her whereabouts. I don't believe that anybody knows where she is now. So I've come to Bhubaneswar. Every Sunday I go to Puri. There, standing before the boundless sea, I try to think of the infinite where Rina has her home now, maybe. Maybe, this is her protest against my heartlessness. She thought I had killed Suva'.

'What are you saying, Samareshbabu? Are you paying like this for my sin? It was I who threw the cat out of the window the day I left Gwalior. I thought it would end all your troubles. An ' it came to this!' Samaresh, overwhelmed with grief, thought of Rina, his head pressed against the window.

How sad and bad and mad? But how true!

THE VISION OF DANTE

(Continued from page 219)

mind and heart of medieval Europe. Yet others are fascinated by the character of Dante himself.

No apology should ever be offered, I hope, for the religious framework of the poem. Catholic thought is at the very heart of the poem. But the *Commedia* has also the universality of great art. It is not primarily a poetic version of theology, but a profound exploration of the human soul. This keeps it as fresh today as it was in 1300. Perhaps the Inferno and Purgatorio are more "human". This is because they deal with man as he is, or as he struggles to become better. The Paradiso is however the climax, the true synthesis, for it explores the aspiration to perfection without which according to Dante, life is totally meaningless (as it is to many without religion today). The three Canticles allegorically represent three features of human life: Failure (Hell), Striving (Purgatory) and Success (Paradise). In these features we all share Dante's experiences.

Allegory is not as fashionable as it was, and Dante like Bunyan and Swift was primarily as allegorist. Yet unlike many other medieval allegories, the *Commedia* lives on and still burns with an intensity of reality and sincerity which make his poem so fresh and memorable even today. The fundamental problems of Dante's poem are still with us: the problem of human evil (call it what you will in scientific jargon), the problem of political organisation, the problem of how to improve ourselves and our world. The *Commedia* written by a political refugee from totalitarianism is pretty relevant to our unhappy world of cold war, nuclear bombs, and persecution of minority opinion.

Bombs Burst In Legislative Assembly

(Continued from page 215)

of Mr. Sanders. After the sentence was announced there was widespread agitation all over the country for the commutation of the death sentence on Bhagat Singh. Gandhiji himself appealed to the Viceroy — Lord Irwin — to spare his life. But the authorities were in no mood to listen to such appeals and executed him in hot haste just on the eve of the Karachi sessions of the Congress in 1931 in a gesture of difiance of the national body.

We were on the way to Karachi to report the session of the Congress when we heard the news of the execution of Bhagat Singh in the train after we had left Lahore. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was also travelling in the same train. When approached for an interview, he expressed the national mood in his inimitable language: "Whenever there will be talk of settlement with Britain, the body of Bhagat Singh will lie between us".

Renaissance AND *Synthesis* IN ART FORMS

By SADHANA BOSE

THE traditional forms existing in various parts of our Bharat provide valuable material to the artistes who had worked hard to raise the Dance-art to the position of pre-eminence which it once enjoyed in this vast Sub-continent. For instance in our four "major schools" 1) Bharata - Natyam 2) Kathakali, 3) Manipuri, and 4) Kathak, the different forms have their own beauty, symbolism, movements and gestures comparatively equivalent in their interpretations and their varied expressive power and depth of emotion and sentiments which finds expression in their fine demonstrations and executions, although they belong to different regions of India i.e. South India and the Malabar coast, North India and North East India etc.

URGE

Mastery of mere technique is not enough for a true devotee of art without creative abilities and talent. Every great work be it "painting", "sculpture", "music", "literature", "drama", or "dance" should also bear the impress of the artist's individuality though technique should be a "must" to provide true foundations to the artist. To what extent the purity and authenticity of the classical technique of the dance world is applicable? None are ignorant of the facts today. They are known in almost all parts of the WORLD. About our famous books and Scriptures (Shastras) i.e. "Bharata Natyshastras," "Hasta-Lakshmana Deepika", "Abhinaya Darpana", "Tandava Lakshmana" "Rama Verma Bulletins" "Dance of Shiva" & "Mirror of Gestures" and heaps of other literatures on the subjects (Indian dancing) including our famous "Puranas" "Ramayana" "Mahabharata" our Myths and Legends and "Fairy Tales" our rich Sanskrit literature of Kalidasa and his contemporaries are all there for the dancers to choose from and fall back upon for their themes for composition inspiration and adaptation.

Technique is the medium of self-expression for the artist. But the artist's heart and soul should transcend the formalism of technique if the aim is to produce the "WHOLE" the ultimate "Synthesis" and new results. The world is moving fast and as in everything else in the world of art also we must move with the times. And this results only if an artist's individuality can offer or give something to suit the requirements and needs of our present-day conditions. We should not hesitate to modify the age-old forms created centuries ago but to the glories of the past we should add something of India of to-day keeping all the fervour but not casting the essential elements to the winds. They are the inner beauty and vitality of India. Beauty must have a touch of reality so that it may win the approval of mankind.

Art MOVEMENT in DELHI

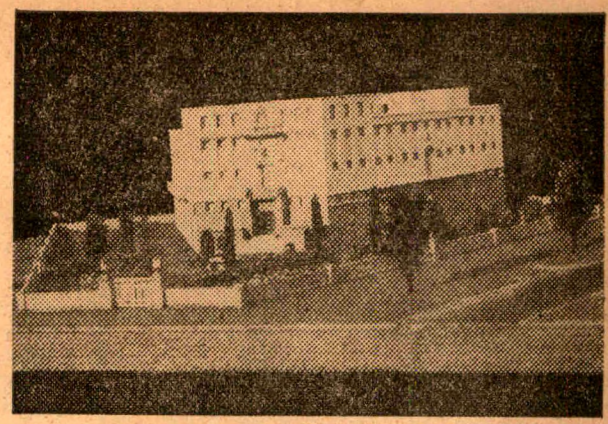
By VIVEK BHATTACHARYA

BENGAL School of painting played a very important role in reviving the art life in Delhi. In fact, the influence of this new school of painting had been noticed throughout India, particularly in northern side. The father of modern school of painting, Abanindranath Tagore built up a band of young energetic painters and brought about the movement throughout the country. Even today, the influence of this movement is very clearly noticed in the field of art in Delhi

However, it will be wrong to say that this school of painting introduced art in the Capital. Long before the birth of this movement some 400 years ago Delhi had a style of painting all its own. It was popularly known as the Mughal School. It was quite popular blending of Persian and Indian Schools of art. The new style of Mughal painting which was popularly known as *Hamja Nama* was quite famous during the days of Akbar the Great. Akbar not only tried a synthesis of religious thoughts, he played an equally important role in bringing about a synthesis in Indian cultural life. That is why we find Akbar's equal emphasis on the finer arts, music, painting and literature. It was under the patronage of Akbar the Great that *Hamja Nama* occupied an important place in the cultural life of the aristocrats. The *Hamja Nama* painting used to be drawn on a large canvas. Only a few of them are to be found in the collection of Indian museum. One of them is preserved in the Baroda Museum and two in Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras. It has been observed perhaps rightly, that at this stage Mughal painting was mainly an art of book illumination and a number of magnificently illustrated manuscripts were made during the reign of Akbar.

Another important phase of this was *Rajam Nama*. Painting in the *Hamja Nama* and *Rajam Nama* today are found in the National Museum. Perhaps, this school of painting was popular even before Akbar the Great.

Among other notable examples of Mughal school of painting are *Babar Namah* and *Laila-Majnun* in the National Museum, New Delhi, and the unique *Tawarikh-i-Khandan-i-Taimuriyya* in the Khudabaksh Library, Patna. The National Library, Calcutta, also has a good collection of illustrated Mughal books.



A view of the All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society Building, New Delhi.

Painting during Akbar's days was limited only to the manuscripts. During Jahangir's reign it was made more popular. Paintings were drawn centering round the contemporary social life. Before the advent of modern Indian art Delhi was the centre of Mughal school of painting.

UKIL SCHOOL OF ART

In the art movement of Delhi Sarada Ukil, a disciple of Abanindranath Tagore, played a unique role. Towards the beginning of the twenties he came to Delhi and started the Ukil School of Art. His equally illustrious brothers Barada and Ranada joined him later. The 'trio' found what may be called the nucleus of modern art movement in the whole of north India.

The three brothers contemplated forming an all India art society in Delhi. The idea took shape only when another connoisseur of art, the late Mr. S. R. Das, a former Law Member to the Government of India, came to Delhi. Mr. Das, Mr. Barada Ukil, Mr. A. M. Stow, R. B. Sultan Singh, Dr. Sen and others founded the first Delhi Art Exhibition Society in 1927. Mr. Barada Ukil and Mr. Sarada Ukil founded the All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society in 1929-30 with Sir K. N. Haksar, Sir Sobha Singh and others. By and by the new Society earned so much popularity that its first exhibition attracted more than two hundred artists from all over India. About two thousand paintings were sent for the exhibition which was opened by the then Viceroy of India, Lord Irwin.

The Standing Finance Committee granted one lakh of rupees for decorating the Viceregal Palace in Delhi with paintings. That was in 1929. In that connection Mr. Ukil submitted a scheme to the Viceroy and the Chief Commissioner of Delhi Sir John Thompson. The object of the scheme was to ensure that at least some Indian artists might be employed to execute the work of decoration and thus earn part of the grant. The scheme was accepted. The Viceroy directed the Delhi Arts Society to collect paintings from Indian artists. It was mainly with this object in view that the Delhi exhibition of 1929-30 was held on such a large scale.

Mr. Ukil was then the Secretary. Mr. Atul Bose and Mr. Lalkaka were sent to England to paint portraits of King George V and Queen Mary, King Edward and Queen Alexandra for the Viceroy's House, New Delhi.

Mr. Ukil organised regular exhibitions of paintings in the Ukil's Art Gallery. These exhibitions were sources of inspiration to the art lovers of Delhi.

Young talents were attracted from outside the Capital. Among them were the late Sailoz Mookerjea and Mr. Nagen Bhattacharya. Some of them made name and became heads of art institutions. Mr. Bhuban Varma, Anil Roy Choudhury, Indu Ghosh and Mr. Sushil Sarkar, to name a few.

The Viceroy and Lady Willingdon were some of the frequent visitors to this famous Ukil's Art Gallery.

The paintings which were exhibited in London, New Burlington Galleries were also shown in the Ukil Gallery.

In the art movement and art education this institution played a unique role.

Till the beginning of the 20th century, Indian Art had hardly earned any popularity abroad. As narrated in Sir William Rotherstein's 'Men and Memories' Indian paintings were "little appreciated". They fetched "insignificant" prices. Rotherstein recalls how Campbell Dodgson wrote to ask him "whether I cared to take some Indian drawings offered to the Print Room for 3 shillings each, which they did not wish to acquire"!

Later on Rotherstein discovered "these were among the finest in my collection. I could never understand the lack of interest in Indian art. I had heard vaguely of a man called Havell, who in India is purchasing its significance. but here in London Mrs. Herringham alone supported me in my estimate of Indian painting and sculpture."

Except limited art connoisseurs like Rotherstein, Havell and Coomarswamy, Indian art meant very little to the Western world. In fact, one day while delivering a talk on Indian art Sir Birdwood went to the length of "denying fine art to India". It was sheer blasphemy. Yet there it was. That was how the West looked at Indian art. It was after listening to Sir Birdwood that Rotherstein, Havell and Coomarswamy were determined to found an India Society to popularise Indian art and culture. The first meeting took place in Havell's house. Those present included Dr. and Mrs. Herringham, Thomas Arnold, W. R. Lethaby, Roger Fry, Dr. Thomas and T. W. Rolleston. It must be incidentally mentioned that it was this India Society which first published Rabindranath Tagore's "Gitanjali".

Gossip — by Sailoz Mookherjee

This Society organised an exhibition of more than five hundred paintings. The artists belonged to Bombay, Madras, Madhya Pradesh, Northern India, Baroda, Lucknow, Bengal. Some of the ruling princes from Indore, Patiala lent some valuable paintings from their collections. The Duchess of York opened the first exhibition in December 1934.

By 1934 as many as three exhibitions of Indian art were held in London. In this great movement to popularise Indian art besides Rotherstein, Havell and Coomarswamy there was an Indian artist who stole the day. He was Barada Ukil of Delhi.

Introducing the first ever held exhibition of Indian painting in London, the Marquess of Zetland, the President of India Society observed, "Indian art had certainly been affected by contact with the art of Europe — more so in the West of India perhaps than in the East — and there had been occasions on which it had been in danger of becoming little more than imitative; but when such a tendency had shown itself the movement had always languished.

SPIRIT OF REVOLT

"Recent art in India remained true to what, broadly speaking, might be said to have been throughout the centuries the distinguishing characteristic of Hindus as compared with European art, namely this, that the artist had aimed at giving expression to mental concepts rather than at reproducing the objects of the external world around him. The main impulse behind the art movement set on foot at the beginning of the present century, particularly in Bengal was the outcome of a growing realisation that not politically only but in the matter of culture also the people of India had fallen under the domination of an alien ideal.

"It was the same spirit of revolt against the Westernisation of India which had been playing so large a part in the nationalist movement that inspired the little circle of men, headed by two brothers of Sri Rabindranath Tagore, who brought into being the new school of painting in Bengal. The work shown in the exhibition was a thing of the spirit and was therefore of high significance."

The Marquess inspired the Indian artists. He needed to be corrected in describing the architects of modern school of painting. Abanindranath Tagore and Gaganendranath Tagore were not Rabindranath's brothers. They were the Poet's nephews.

In the same exhibition the President of the Royal Academy Sir William Llewellyn laid stress on the originality of the Indian style. "The tendency today was to universalise everything and art had not escaped. They hoped that in India they would always find work entirely characteristic of that country and not what was characteristic of western countries. Of course, it was possible that good could come to Indian art by the introduction

After the day's toil — by Sarada Ukil.

of western principles—Indian students might come here to learn technique—but they did not want to see Western influence carried too far."

The success of the Burlington Exhibition was due mainly to one man, and luckily for Delhi an artist from Delhi—Barada Ukil. Barada Ukil held an exhibition of Indian painting in 1931 and had already introduced the Indian painting to the Western World.

Mr. Ukil held another exhibition of painting in London Fine Art Society Gallery in 1933. Unlike the previous one, this time Mr. Ukil took with him a large number of paintings done by different Indian painters. It was more or less a collection of representatives of different schools of painting. The third exhibition of Indian painting in London, though held by the Indian Society, was successful mainly because of the organising capacity of Mr. Ukil.

In the beginning of the thirties Mr. Ukil held two exhibitions of modern Indian art in London and Paris. In London Rotherstein was present. He liked the exhibition and observed, "The sensitive and disciplined work of Mr. Sarada Ukil has something in common with the lyrical poetry of Rabindranath Tagore. Refined and pensive, it gives us, like Indian music an insight into the delicate moods of the Indian spirit."

Among the pioneers of art movement in Delhi besides the Ukil brothers, were Sir Maurice Gawyer, Sardar Bahadur Mohan Singh, Sir Kailas N. Haksar, Sir Usha Nath Sen, Dr. M. S. Randhawa, Sardar Bahadur Sobha Singh, Nawab Sir Mehr Shah, Dr. S. N. Sen, Dr. K. M. Panikkar, Mr. G. D. Birla, Rai Bahadur Sultan Singh and a band of young artists like Anil Roy Choudhury, Sushil Sarkar, Indu Ghosh and others.

The Society's main aim was to foster a knowledge and love of art among the people of India and to enlist the sympathies not only of the well-to-do but of those of moderate means as well. Barada Ukil made it clear that the new 'drive' was to bring art to the people. So long it was restricted only to the palaces and the rich. Barada Ukil emphasised that the treasures of Art ought to be for the delight of the many, not for the privilege of the few and the Society were convinced that only if their plans rest upon a broad and democratic basis will they attract the interest and arouse enthusiasm of the people of India. Accordingly the Society launched a one-anna fund at all art centres in the country and with the object of enlarging its ordinary membership has reduced the annual fee.

Mr. Ukil thought of conducting research on contemporary painting. But, how to conduct research in fine arts? How to discuss comparative schools of painting? Barada Ukil started the art journal *Roopa Lekha* himself taking over the responsibility of editing it. The editorial board consisted of Dr. Anand K. Coomarswamy, Dr. James H. Cousin, Mr. Ajit Ghosh, and G. Venkatachalam. Mr. Karl Khandalavala was the Associate Editor.

This new art movement by Barada Ukil found a number of patrons from the rulers of States. The Maharaja of Patiala came out with a statement on March 3, 1939, in which he welcomed the proposal which had been sponsored by the All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society for the creation of a national gallery of Indian Art in the Capital. This, the Maharaja emphasised, would constitute a permanent exhibition of the best and most representative achievements of the different schools of Indian paintings through all ages.

The different schools that India boasted of were but the facets of the national mind. While therefore there was ample room for local and regional museums and art galleries, for the collections of individuals and States and administrations, there was imperative need for an All India gallery where the rich and varied heritage of the past could be seen and studied and the work of the present collected and preserved. It could hold annual exhibition on the line of the Royal Academy in England or the *Grand Salon* in France.

For cultural and emotional integration the unity in art was an impelling factor. Spiritual experience being the basis of all art, an emphasis on the collection of different schools of art on one platform was an essential pre-requisite for the realisation of this basic fact.

NATIONAL GALLERY

The lovers of art emphasised that for such a national gallery no other city in India had the claim that Delhi undoubtedly had. Its own artistic heritage is second to none in the whole of India. The Mughal and Rajput Schools flourished in this city. Some of the noblest monuments of the Mughal period are to be found here.

Sir Sobha Singh was another patron of the movement. Barada Ukil submitted to Lady Willingdon the plan for the gallery. The rulers of Princely States were certainly custodians of the artistic heritage of India and in this new 'art drive,' as it was happily described, they did not lag behind. Besides the Maharaja of Patiala, the Maharaja of Bikaner, the Maharaja of Jam Saheb of Nawanagar opened an exhibition at the Taj Mahal Hotel, Bombay, in

(Continued on page 239)

CHANDI CHARAN NAYAK

PRIVATE LIMITED.

[illegible], BEPIN BEHARI GANGULY STREET

Telephone : 34-3574 (2 lines)

CALCUTTA-12

●

DECORATIVE PAINTS OF ALL INDIA FAME.

●

Branch :

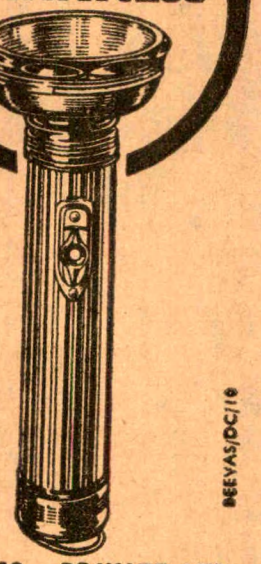
GONESH PAINT MART

[illegible] TAGORE ST.

CALCUTTA-7.

COMET

sees right through DARKNESS



BEEVAS/DC/10

DOZ & CO., PRIVATE LTD.

CALCUTTA-14.

RAJ JYOTISHI

World Famous Astro Palmist and Tantrik RAJ JYOTISHI Mahopadhyaya Pandit Dr. HARISH CH. SHASTRI, Examiner Govt. Board of Astrological Studies.

HOUSE OF ASTROLOGY

45A, S. P. Mukherjee Rd., Calcutta-26 (East of Hazra Park) Phone: 47-4693

This all-powerful yogi of International fame can tell the past present and the future accurately. The sure effect of the Kavachas and Santisastyayana, which he makes in course of his religious duties ensures brilliant success, because he gained a special spiritual and Tantrik power by deep meditation. Thousands have honoured him with unsolicited testimonials.

SHANTI KAVACHA :—To gain mental peace, happiness in family, ensure success in examination and in promotion Rs. 5/- Special Rs. 20/-.

BAGALA KAVACHA :—For over coming enemies, and for winning complicated law-suits, to secure services & to prosper in business—Rs. 12/- Special Rs. 45/- only.

Read — JEWEL OF PALMISTRY (in English — Rs. 7/-) and **SAMUDRIK RATNA** (Bengali—Revised & Enlarged 2nd Edition—Rs. 6/-). Written by Panditji to remove the long felt want of up-to-date books on Palm-reading.

IN SERVICE OF THE NATION FOR DEFENCE & DEVELOPMENT

Conserve resources. Travel only when you must. Save man-hours by following simple hints.

Detention hampers Defence efforts. Pull chain only when you must.

Advance booking of tickets saves last minute worry.

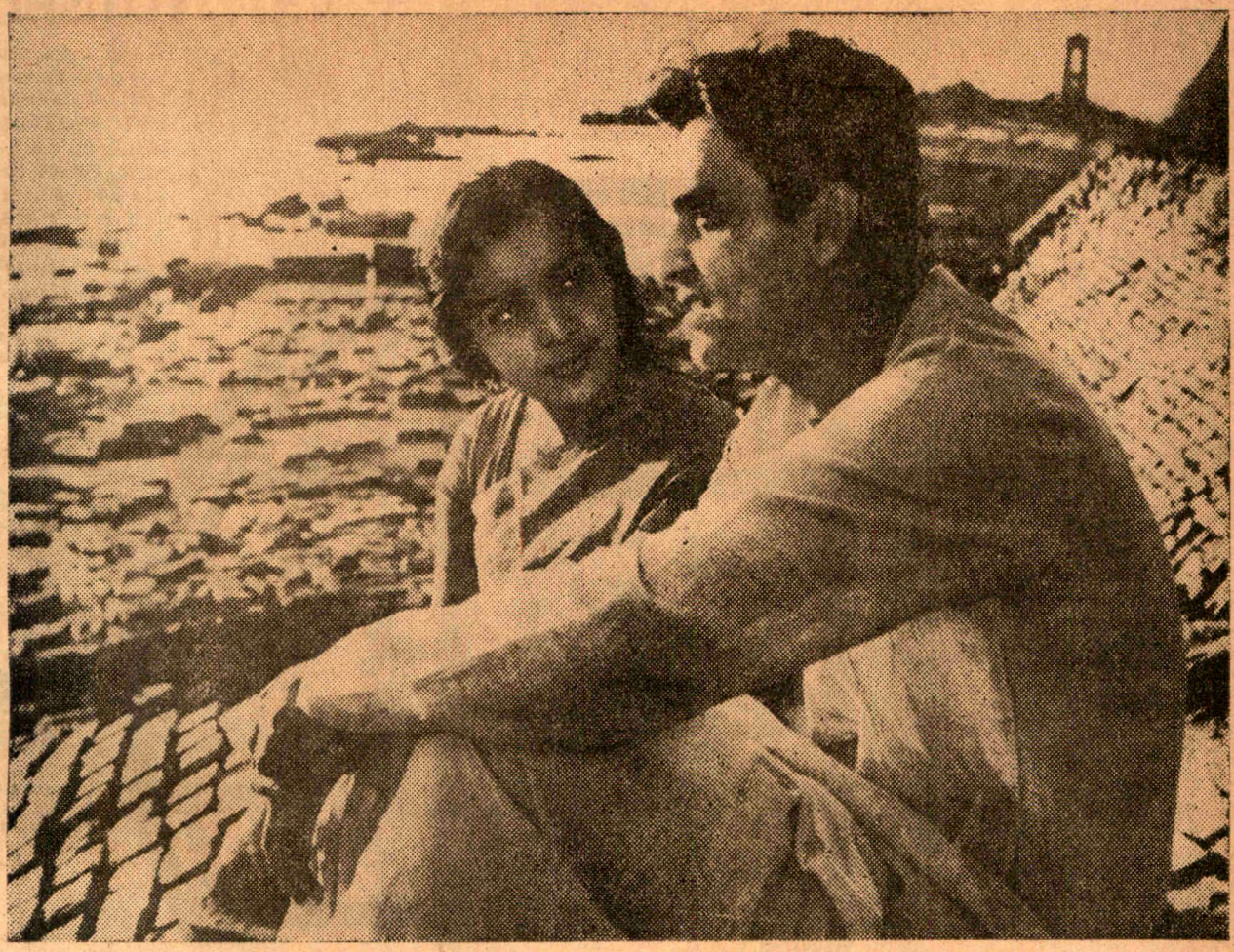
Minimum luggage means more accommodation.

A queue helps—whether in buying tickets or showing tickets at the gate.

Keep Station premises clean. Nation's health is important.

In step with the accelerated pace of a marching nation.

EASTERN RAILWAY



Lily Chakraborty and Soumitra Chatterjee in R. D. Bansals big Bengali presentation "Kanch Kata Heerey" directed by Ajoy Kar.

THOUGHTS ON COMEDY

By SATYAJIT RAY

I WAS in a Hollywood studio, six years ago, watching Billy Wilder shoot a scene from *Some Like It Hot*. There was a pause between shots, and I approached Wilder with a question. 'Your last three films were comedies, and the one you're making now is a comedy too. Have you lost your taste for dramatic films like *Lost Weekend* and *Sunset Boulevard*? Wilder said, 'I find comedies more challenging. It's much harder to make them well than dramas'.

The truth of Wilder's statement can be fully understood only by those who have actually made comedies. A comic subject is not necessary funny on the screen—at least not to the extent that the director had hoped it would be. A great deal depends on the telling and this telling is largely a matter of cold and unfunny manipulation of camera and cutting.

We can say, roughly, that there are in the main three types of film comedies. The first is the comedy of words, the second that of situation, and the third the purely visual comedy of slapstick. These three admit of all manner of permutations and combinations. The first type of comedy could be funny on the screen, but does not belong exclusively to it. In fact, its rightful place is on paper, to a slightly lesser extent, on the stage. Here the audience (or the reader, as the case maybe) perceives the fun through an intellectual process of grasping the meaning of words. The second—which is a staple of the social comedy perfected by Hollywood—could also well exist on paper as well as on the stage. Wodehouse uses both types of comedy with great invention. Impersonations, mistaken identity, ticklish encounter fraught with explosive possibilities—these are stuck elements of the situation comedy. And these have remained more or less unchanged right from Aristophanes and *Mrchchhakatika*, through the comic opera, the Victorian drawing room farce (which were the model for our own early stage comedies, down to the stick sophisticated Hollywood comedies).

It is of the third genre that one can truly say it is a genuine product of the cinema. This is also

SEE WEST BENGAL IN AUTUMN

Autumn is the time to see West Bengal. Nature wears a festive look, and there is festivity in every home.

This season of gaiety is ideal for visiting numerous charming spots in West Bengal, for seeing the eclat with which the Durga Pujah is celebrated throughout the State, for enjoying the calm of the casuarina-girdled sea-beach at Digha, the grandeur of the Himalayas at Darjeeling.....

TOURIST BUREAU
GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL
3/2, Dalhousie Square (East), Calcutta-1. Telephone : 23-8271

the genre that is hardest to make, and, if well made, is the funniest. Bad slapstick like bad clowning in the circus—is plain horseplay—and aims only at the belly, while genuine slapstick can rise to the topmost heights that the film is capable of. In its highest form—in the best of Chaplin and Keaton—it has the aesthetic validity of the best abstraction that any art can achieve. The era of Chaplin and Keaton has vanished and will stay vanished unless artists of the calibre of Keaton and Chaplin appear again. It is important to remember that in the heightening of reality that is involved in the best slapstick—the human materials involved play a major part. There is a definite aspect of clowning here—the clown being an abstraction of certain human traits—physical and emotional. When Chaplin, running from pursuers, turns a corner, he does it with the combined precision of a great clown and a great dancer. When Keaton rushes to rescue his sweetheart from the clutches of the Heavy, he is the nearest appropriation of a human machine, or a Superman—but a comic Superman because he has the physical attributes of the Little Man.

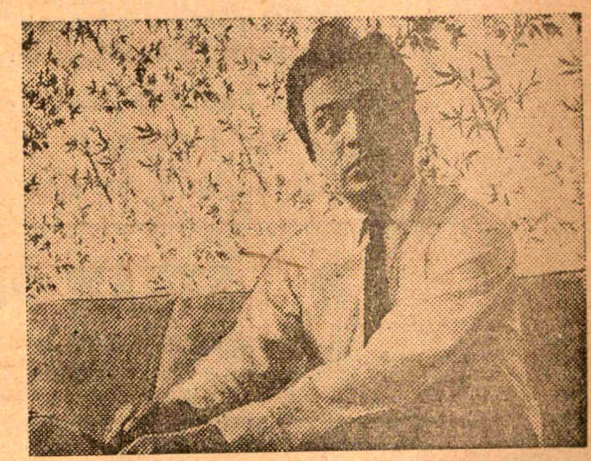
Laurel, Max Linder, Harry Langdon, Harpo Marx—all were gifted with this extraordinary combination—physical agility and the appearance of a clown. In recent times, we have had the Frenchman Jacques Tati who is both agile and inventive, but who is hampered by a height which acts against the Little Man image. If Tati fails to survive, it will not be through lack of imagination, but because he is not built to last. One reason, I suspect, why Chaplin gradually shifted to a more sedate style of comedy from *Verdoux* onwards, is that with age he had lost the physical agility that his earlier slapstick demanded.

Hollywood knows it has no great clowns left, and the direction in recent times has been towards what is known as 'sight gags'. This is a branch of the slapstick, and has the virtue of being an entirely visual thing. But have the inanimate objects play a much greater part (they *have* to, because of the lack of clowns). The invention of 'sight gags' needs a very special sort of flair. Anyone who has seen a Jerry Lewis film knows how it works. A vacuum cleaner in a department store suddenly goes berserk. It sucks in not only dust, but any small object that falls within its constantly widening range. Hooks, buttons, shoes, hats, gloves, bags—even a small gapping dog which it unleashes from the grip of its owner. In fact, the main comic ingredients in this sort of visual comedy an the machines and gadgetry of modern life. Cars, lifts, telephones, typewriters, escalators, computing machines—these have replaced the custard pie of an earlier era. Just as pie-throwing was funny because it put man in an unmanageable and illogical situation and dared him to cope with it, so here too man is up against the unpredictable. The comedy depends both on the quality of the director's imagination (mechanical, and not human behaviour is what he needs to study have), and on his ability to decide on just how far he can go on exaggerating without crossing the point where it ceases to be funny or credible, or both.

No country can beat Hollywood in this particular genre, and no slapstick has ever been produced anywhere which hasn't made any use of the formula devised by the Americans. And you do need a formula for this particular type of comedy, because the fun—as I have said before—is in the telling. It is the same with a comic story told by a person. Some can elicit laughter, while others can't. A tragic or dramatic story generally has universal, easily recognisable elements, and creates its own emotional impact, no matter how ineffectually it is related. But a comic situation may well involve elements which are not comic in themselves but become so by fortuitous juxtaposition. Unless it happens to be on the crude level of a man slipping on a banana skin, the comic situation can well comic only to the person who is able to perceive the comic aspect of it; and this not everybody can do. That is why there has always been a scarcity of genuine wits.

We in our country havn't yet produced a true film comedy. This is not to say that we haven't made funny films. But we haven't made a funny film which uses the full resources of the cinema. Perhaps it will come with time, with experience. There is no reason why we shouldn't have a natural growth here. The sources are there in our own tradition. Visual comedy of the finest type can be met within our literature, both old and new, classical and folk. Duryodhana's plight in the Pandava's crystal palace is pure visual comedy, replete with the sort of detail that's godsend to a film maker. In fact, most of the Indian classics contain detailed scenes of comedy and not just the comedy of words. In folk literature, perhaps the finest source is the 'Mymensingh Gitikas'. Passage after passage of debatable description of comic types in comic situations fill these wonderful folk ballads.

Coming down to more recent times, a great source book of visual comedy is *Hutom Panchar Naksha*. Hutom's contemporary—Tekchand Thakur—also shows real flair in his *Alaler Gharer Dulal*. Bankim, generally verbal and intellectual—has fine passages of visual comedy in *Muchiram Gur*. The real luck arises when we come to the writers of our own times. We seem to have lost our flair for visual comedy, and can think fun only in terms of puns and witticisms. Outside the world of Sukumar Ray's *Abol Tabol*, there is very little that Bengali literature has to offer by way of comic images. The maker of film comedy today must train his own visual sense and pick his material from his own living surroundings.



Uttam Kumar, Bengali screen's idol, as he will be seen, for the first time in his colourful screen career in a Satyajit Ray film. He will be the hero of Ray's new film in the making, 'Nayak'.

J. K. Board is the best board in Indian market. Made from the imported pulp, J. K. Board is specially designed for quality packing jobs. J. K. Board and Box Board can be used for making of cigarette boxes, cover boxes for medicine and for the making of Flat and Box files.

STRAW PRODUCTS LTD.

SOLE SELLING AGENTS: **NAV BHARAT VANIJYA LTD.**

18, RABINDRA SARANI, CALCUTTA-1

KALPANA. NBV. 2/65

Fifty years of BENGALI FILMS

By N·K·G

THE recent 'Festival of old Bengali Films' organised by Calcutta Film Society has brought into renewed public focus the romantic history of the birth of the Bengali film, its struggle for growth along a craggy path, its problems and prospects, its achievements. With the survey of the Bengali industry's pre-occupations and with the winds of change that have blown through its more than fifty years of existence is closely linked the question of its future, the question of the unbroken continuation of the momentum of progress that was generated half a century ago.

Roughly speaking, the film industry of Bengal may be called a total of three phases. These are: (1) the period between the early pioneering days and the birth of the "talkie", (2) the next two decades covering the existence and preponderance of New Theatres as the representative film-making agency in Bengal, and (3) the current phase which started as the post-N.T. epoch and which reached its high-water mark in that great movie from Satyajit Roy, "Pather Panchali," which revolutionised our whole concept of film-making.

"Film industry" in India means the production wing, around which the entire business moves. The last word has not yet been said about nor the last "shot" taken of the all-time best Bengali film. The evolution is still going on apace, as it must, and who knows whether another film surpassing "Pather Panchali" is not round the corner? That will be a glorious day if it comes. But, if we have to remain content with the greatness of "Devdas" and "Pather Panchali" as the best yet achieved, there is nothing to be sorry about because any country can be proud of these two epoch-making films from two geniuses.

A historical retrospection takes the inquirer nearly half a century back to the beginning of the bioscope in Calcutta. Controversy as to who should be called the true pioneer film-maker in Bengal is still hotly pursued in film circles. I shall make short work of controversy and give the credit for beginning silent dramatic films for public consumption to a number of persons. In this connection, the names of Hiralal Sen, Anadi Bose, J. M. Madan, Nitish Laharry, Hem Mukherjee, Ahindra Choudhury, "D.G", Devaki Bose and so on should be mentioned with reverence and honour because they and their colleagues, who must for ever remain shrouded in non-recognition, were really the founders of the silent Bengali film. Names like P. N. Ganguly, Jyotish Banerjee, Amar Chaudhuri, Kaliprasad Ghosh, Naresh Mitra, Modhu Bose and Haren Ghosh must also crop up as persons who shaped the silent dramatic film with sufficient entertainment values for the audience. One still remembers with nostalgic thrill how avidly one fought for one's ticket in those days when a torn shirt or a sprained wrist almost always accompanied the daring ticket buyer.

EARLY PIONEERS

One who saw full-length silent films of the early 'twenties like "Jaidev", "Chandidas", "Krishnakanter Will," "Kapalkundala", "Shasti ki Shanti," "Durgesh Nandini," "Nishiddha Phal," "Dalia," "Bhagyalakshmi", "Abhishek", "Swami", "Sarala", "Devdas" (earlier one), "Aparadhi" (the Barua film that was "shot" inside a studio) and a few others will not hesitate to agree that, even in those far off, unsteady days, they registered very high standards of direction and acting. It is quite well to suggest that those film and some others became so popular because a string of handsome and capable artistes had emerged. These artistes were Durgadas Banerjee, Patience Cooper, Rene Smith, Effy Hippolette, Sabita Devi, Tulsi Banerjee, Jiban Ganguly, Chandravati, Uma Shoshi, Dhiraj Bhattacharya and many others. It will be no exaggeration to say that silent-films of the early and late 'twenties really paved the way for the "talkie" of the next decade. They built up a school of film-making with all its appendages and a new style of acting (acting being then confined to the stage and to some extent to gramophone records). In that sense, one does not know how adeuqately to express one's admiration for the early pioneers, who not only worked sometimes almost for a song but experimented with an art form with which they had no earlier acquaintance.

ROLE OF NEW THEATRES

When New Theatres was formed out of its nucleus, International Film Crafts, the stage was set for making films not only on improved lines but making them also in Hindi so as to have all-India audiences for its product. Equipped with the latest gadgets for film production and having the best acting and technical talents available in those days, New Theatres soon went right into the business of making extremely relishing films. As years went by, the company's product began to wear a new look of

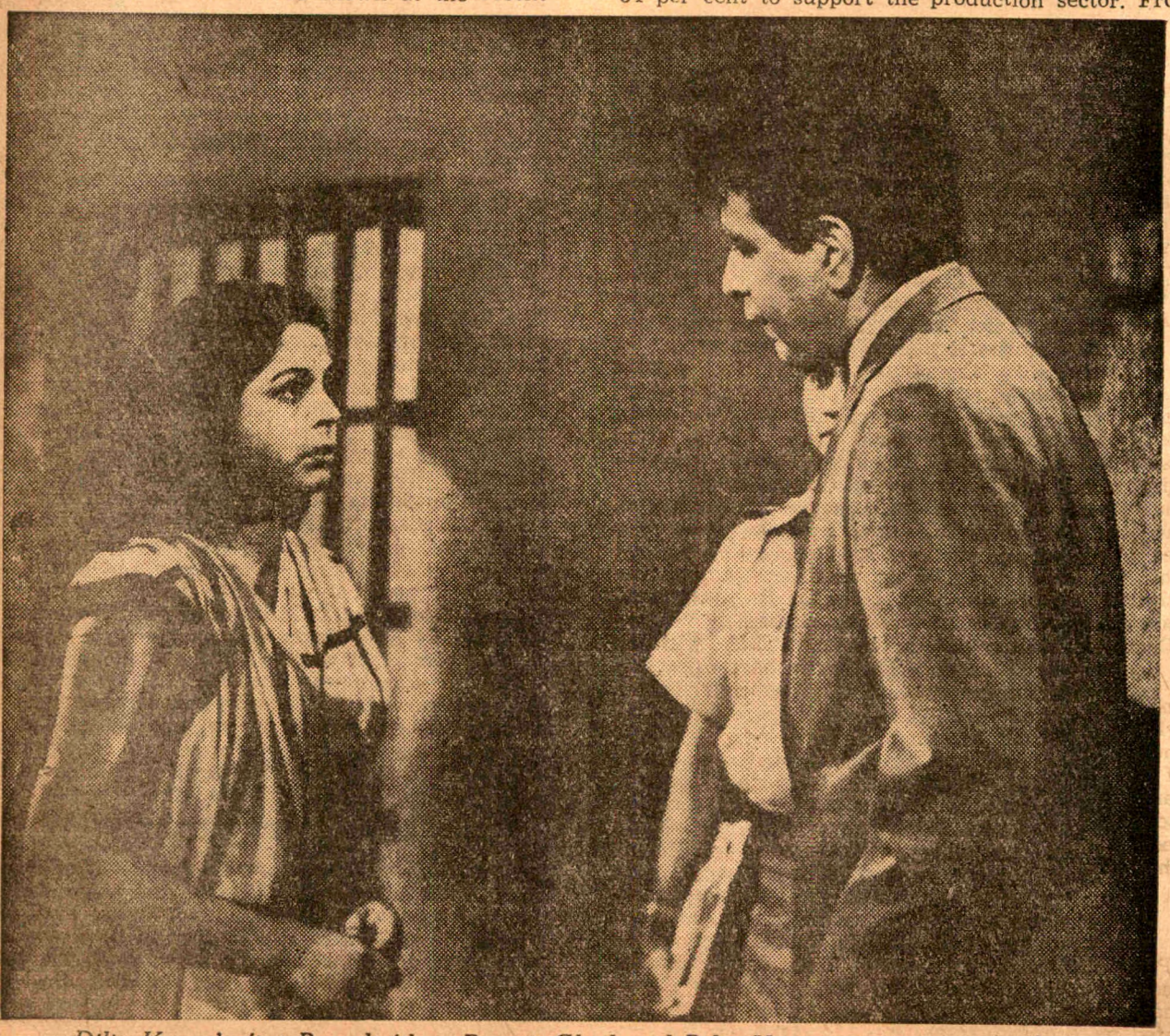
excellence, credit for which must go to the smart band of artistes, directors, cameramen, musicians, sound engineers and studio hands who seemed to be imbued with a high sense of duty and competence to take Bengali films on a higher and higher plane of excellence. Among these, respectful mention must be made of names like Premankar Attorthy, Devaki Bose, Nitin Bose, Hem Chunder, P. C. Barua, Phani Majumdar, Mukul Bose, Bimal Roy, Kanan Devi, Uma Shoshi, Jamuna, R. C. Boral, Pankaj Mullick, A. D. Mullick, Bharati Devi, Ashit Baran, Souren Sen and so on.

OUTSIDE N. T.

However, it would be unfair to forget others who worked outside New Theatres. But it will not be unfair to say that few among the studios or producers were able to catch up with the effective pace of New Theatres. Thus, although films like "Sonar Sansar," "Taruni", "Ranga Bau", "Talkie of Talkies", "Sita" (Hindi), 'Alibaba", "Nandini", "Garmil", "Abhinoy," "Sahar Theke Durey", and some more were not N. T. products and they proved very popular opuses, New Theatres films like "Chandidas", "Vidyapati," "Devdas", "Bhagya Chakra", "Didi", "Kashinath", "Udayer Pathey" and "Protishruti" (some of these were shown at the recent 'Festival') were held in admiration by the public and continued to be looked upon as models by other film-makers. During two decades, New Theatres had on its pay-roll directors like Barua, Devaki Bose, Hem Chunder, Phani Majumdar and Bimal Roy, while the stellar build-up was constituted by artistes like Kanan Devi, Durgadas, Saigal, Prithviraj, Nawab, Kamlesh Kumari, Najm-ul-Hussain, Leela Desai, Bharati Devi, Sumitra Devi, Ashit Baran, Jyoti Prakash, Radhamohan Bhattacharya, Debi Mukherjee and Bhanu Banerjee (Sr.), each of whom meant something to the box-office.

Outside New Theatres, artistes like Sadhana Bose, Chhabi Biswas, Ahin Choudhury, Jahar Ganguly, Naresh Mitra, Robin Majumdar, Sandhyarani, Satya Mukherjee, Dhiraj Bhattacharya and a few others had earned collateral popularity. Altogether an impressive line-up of artistes had come into being, making film production a thriving business.

The period between 1935 and 1947 may be called the climactic period of popularity and affluence for Bengali films. After that came the partition of India (and of Bengal), when 65 per cent of the exhibition area of Bengal went to the new State of East Pakistan, leaving the remaining 34 per cent to support the production sector. From



Dilip Kumar's first Bengali film: Pronoti Ghosh and Dilip Kumar in an important dramatic sequence from the forthcoming film 'Pari', based on Jarasandha's real-life story.

the terrible wound of partition, the Bengali film industry has not yet been able to recover and the many debates and discussions about how to augment its present sorry revenue are a consequence.

It is a pity but an understandable happening that New Theatres started its climb-down practically at this time. Several causes can be ascribed to this sudden fall from public grace. New competitors had come up. They could make films at a far lesser cost than New Theatres. As New Theatres gradually began releasing artistes from its contractual hold, these already popular performers gravitated into the fold of independent film producers. And a time came when New Theatres entirely closed its doors and was no longer in active production business. The company's able hands had either grown old and retired or gone to Bombay or were engaged in other concerns.

That no producer, who representing an individual measure of energy and ability would follow in the footsteps of the premier film-producing company, has yet emerged may be presumed to be due to the paucity of necessary capital and the fear that he might repeat the mistakes of New Theatres or the realisation that production business on that scale in truncated Bengal is no longer feasible. Indeed, that last apprehension must be appreciated in view of the staggering artistes' fees of today and proportionate increase in the price of other item of production.

It denotes the undying creative capacity of the Bengali film that, with the closure of New Theatres productions, a number of very high quality films was made. Such films not only reflected the progressive thinking on the part of their makers (as considered then, of course) but denoted that the audience had become ready to appreciate their new tone and new content. But by far the greater emphasis was laid on devotional and domestic themes by the audience, whose patronage of pictures like "Rani Rashmoni" and "Ma-O-Chelley" was staggering.

A NEW CRAZE

Then came the phase of Suchitra-Uttam starrers. These two artistes first teamed in "Sharay Chuatter" became a tremendous craze with "Agni Pariksha". M.P. Productions made a number of films with these two fine stars and others eagerly availed themselves of their popularity. A dozen pictures in the least followed in the course of the next five years and the pair is still on unassuaged craze. Though each of the two has made films without the other as the stellar opposite, few films will ever exceed the revenue collected by "Shapmochan" or "Chandranath".

Among new artistes who emerged after Suchitra and Uttam are a string of young men and women who have achieved a good measure of success. Among them Soumitra Chatterjee, Sharmila Tagore (both of whom Satyajit Ray introduced in "Apur Sansar), Aparna Das Gupta, Anil Chatterjee, Sandhya Roy, Kanika Majumdar, Dilip Mukherjee and only recently Subhendu Chatterjee may be named. Arundhati and Supriya were already popular.

RAY STYLE

The phase that started with Satyajit Ray's "Pather Panchali" is running itself out in slow cadence. Ray's style of holding on to a mood and magnification was imitated and is still being emulated by young directors but the result has yet to be effective and popular. It seems that the fascinating Ray style belongs to Ray exclusively and others are not just capable of emulating it. It is also true that the greater part of the audience is still in love with pictures portraying the triumph of perennial family virtues. Devotional themes are avidly seen in the rural parts of the State. This predilection for domestic and devotional pictures poses a great problem for film-thinkers who wish to show the vast complexity of our contemporary life in our films. In this distinguished category of film-makers of the new generation of Bengali films, who dared defy the conventional angle of story telling and thought in lucid film terms, one must pay tributes to men like Tapan Sinha, Mrinal Sen, Ritwik Ghatak, Ashit Sen, Ajoy Kar, Agradoot, Agragami, Tarun Majumdar and a few others.

NEW WRITERS

While the crisis of thought and the complex absurdities of life are such an indisputable fact, few producers and directors dare burden their films, meant for the entertainment of adolescents, with heavy things. The film-goer is notoriously shy of ponderous or complex things. He wants simple, if not cheap, joys from the film. The current accent is, therefore, once again on making films of easy content. But a new awakening is there, too, of the especial value of the scripter's pen to light up the horizon of Bengali films. Apart from our literary gems, new film writers are emerging to portray in vivid cinematic terms the mood and thoughts, songs and sorrow, hopes and fears of this day and age. The glory of Bengali films is largely a matter of their rich story content.

The years ahead of the Bengali production industry, therefore, should be years of intensive cultivation of new creative urges.

Basanta Choudhury wears a perfect make-up for the name role in Aurora film's big biographical film drama 'Raja Rammohan'.

A case for MYSELF

by MRINAL SEN

"I had been to movies last evening, it was awful,' said a habitual film-goer, referring to a Bengali film which by that time had collected a fat figure at the box-office.

'I am sorry I haven't seen your film as yet,' he added, apologetically. 'It's a very good film, I'm told,' he made an effort to be enthusiastic.

Good or bad, he won't see my film. Of that I am sure. With his money and time he will probably take no chance.

And that is exactly where I stand now with a number of films to my credit produced under different banners, for, I had never had a second experience with the same producer.

NOT THAT.....

Not that all my films failed to fetch back the money that was employed, nor was it that I had always been at logger-heads with my producers. It was some kind of attitude, if I have correctly estimated my producers, not very much dissimilar to the filmgoer's who, as I mentioned, saw a popular film and did not like it and who did not see my film but supposed he would like. My producers had always been extremely kind to me, had always regarded me with a certain kind of interest; but in regard to a second deal they would not certainly take a chance with their money and 'future.'

My 'future,' as a result, remains somewhat uncertain where a new 'prospector' appears to back me with money. So, before a production is afoot I have an additional task of finding a suitable name for the company.

NEW PROSPECTOR

The new 'prospector' (hereinafter called the 'producer') puts in his money, the distributors employ a bigger amount and the theatre-owners remain dubious and yet make some advance-payments to the distributors—and the 'System' or the 'Establishment' is set in motion.

'Business is a ruthless business,' said Chaplin, through Monsiur Verdoux. And living in such ruthless atmosphere my conscience asks me to freely operate my reason and imagination. It is no easy job.

As I continue rolling my film, my producer and my distributors keep silent watch on me only to become vocal when they must and the thought of box-office returns at the theatres reminds me of that headless monster called 'popular taste.' Between two shooting programmes I, therefore, pause and think—alone in my room, with the shooting script beside me—and suddenly there appears before me arrayed in columns, a host of situations and characters from the pages of my script. They look deep into me, defying everything, refusing to be corrupted.

A battle, so to say, takes place within me and everytime my characters win the battle. The money-backers, after they suffer a 'defeat,' feel a little insecure but keep on hoping. Hoping against hope.

CONTINUOUS BATTLE

It is a continuous battle—for six months or more. It is a nerve-breaking, soul-killing job—fighting, shooting and assembling. The shooting is over, the film is ready and the technicians feel happy about it while the Censor bosses recommend the film for showing abroad. Outside, the cineastes wait anxiously for the film to come out.

The distributors fix up releasing houses, ads come out in the press and my producer and my technicians and I go through exciting activities.

KEEPING AWAKE

A week before the release, at the dead of a night, suddenly I wake up and remember a sixth reel or a tenth or a third and detect a minor or a major fault in the visual or in sound or in both. For the rest of the night I keep awake. Early in the morning I ring up my producer, collect my technicians and do the necessary repair at the editing table or elsewhere.

'We must always be vigilant,' I say, 'Lest our own defaults defeat us.'

'You must learn to check and double-check your own inspiration,' I advise, importantly.

For seven days my tetchnicians and I and my producer live in a world of our own trying to estimate the profit the film is destined to fetch till comes a certain Friday.

A good Friday? Or a bad one?

THE CRITICS' DAY

The spectators are there to decide the fate of the film. And also mine. And while my people and I are in suspended agony, the critics, at the after-show tea party, feel enormously important.

The critics bring out their comments on the next Friday. Those wanting to be 'different' and conspicuous postpone their publications till another Friday. Some write quite flattering lines about me and my film and I consider them intelligent, and I try to ignore those who write unkind words.

And then, one day, I run into a habitual film-goer who begs apology for not being able to see my film which, he has been told, is very good.

Good or bad, I wish he saw my film.

THE CAMERA and I

by DILIP RANJAN MUKHERJEE

THE place — a cinema hall in south Calcutta.

The Time — Godhulibela, when the evening shadows are falling. The evening crowd is slowly and silently trickling out of the hall. Here and there people are wiping the dust from their eyes, was it dust? I wonder! A few audible murmurs reach me where I stand concealed behind one of the pillars, "Apurba", says one. "Brilliant" another. A third one says "Did you see that scene where the boat moves down the river?" I prick my ears for the reply. "Yes", I saw it. I tell you that was a painting. A visibly moving painting. "Hats off to the Cameraman", emphasises the fourth. And so on. The crowd flows down the stairs and soon melts away. I come out of my concealment, my ears echoing with the sentiments and paens of praise I have just heard. I felt a warm glow grow within me, and as I plodded home through the muck and the slush, the atmosphere could not quite dampen my spirits. I felt lifted on the airy surge of my own feelings. You see, I am the Cameraman of the picture the audience was raving about. I had indeed come a long way since that day in 1952 when I entered the M.P. Productions as a Camera Apprentice under the veteran Cinematographer, Bibhuti Laha.

NO SET METHOD

My friends keep asking me what method I use in order to capture a theme in the lens. Well, the truth of the matter is, I have no method and I have gone from picture to picture with a wide variety of shots. I have photographed different themes in as many different ways as the colours of the spectrum. I have never consciously used the same shot twice in any film or for that matter used the same kind of shot in every film. I know this sounds rather hyperbolic and my claims may be dismissed as being tall and baseless. I know what I am saying is the truth because I consciously strive to photograph not merely the locale on the moving images, but to capture the emotions and feelings that animate the theme.

Yet, I am no intellectual. I don't frame my shots according to the rules laid down by the great authorities. This is not to suggest that I can afford to dismiss the methods of the grand masters, but I merely say that having had to depend entirely upon my own-self. I have developed a knack for training the camera in the most effective way desired by the Director. I read, but desultorily, as I have no time to relax. The kleig lights take up my time. I envy those of my colleagues who spend their leisure hours poring over Cardiff's methods or Eisenstein's theories.

I am not a scientist, meaning that academically, I never qualified for Science. Professionally, I deal with the science of Cinematography and I wonder why people call it the art of photography. Perhaps, because so much art is involved in the making of a film that the end of product is always known as an artistic masterpiece. I am happy to say that I contribute that much to the end product as any other device used to heighten the colours. In this of course, I am not alone. There is the Director whose eyes I am. He maps out the course, charts the topography, fixes the locations and lets the Camera rove over all of them. The Camera captures the scene and depicts it on the screen, exactly as the Director devises it. The camera can hardly operate without the commanding tone that alternates between "shoot and cut". Yet, the task of the Photographer is none too simple. It is not, as it were, that the Cameraman is merely a pliable instrument of the Director. The cameraman stands in the same position in relation to the Director as the Players. Both have to interpret the thoughts and ideas of the Director. It is in this interpretation that the skill of the Photographer is brought into play. He must create the mood and convince the spectator of the authenticity of the locale and the genuineness of the emotions involved. Particularly now, when the art of the camera has been so highly specialised, one can ill afford to imitate the Hollywood Cameraman of the early "Movies", who gripped a Cigar in one hand, while with the other he cranked the Camera manually.

Everything takes dimension when seen through the eyes of the Camera. The simple gesture, the walk down the lane, the dejected figure, the silhoutte of the lovers, the stirring of the cup of tea with a tea spoon, all acquire meaning and add significance to the unfolding of the drama on the screen. The camera must be able to capture these varying moods efficiently and effectively. To that extent, the visual images caught up in the lens of the camera must be clear and well defined for the spectator to feel interested in them. Only then can the Director of Photography congratulate himself upon his work.

THE 4 FACTORS

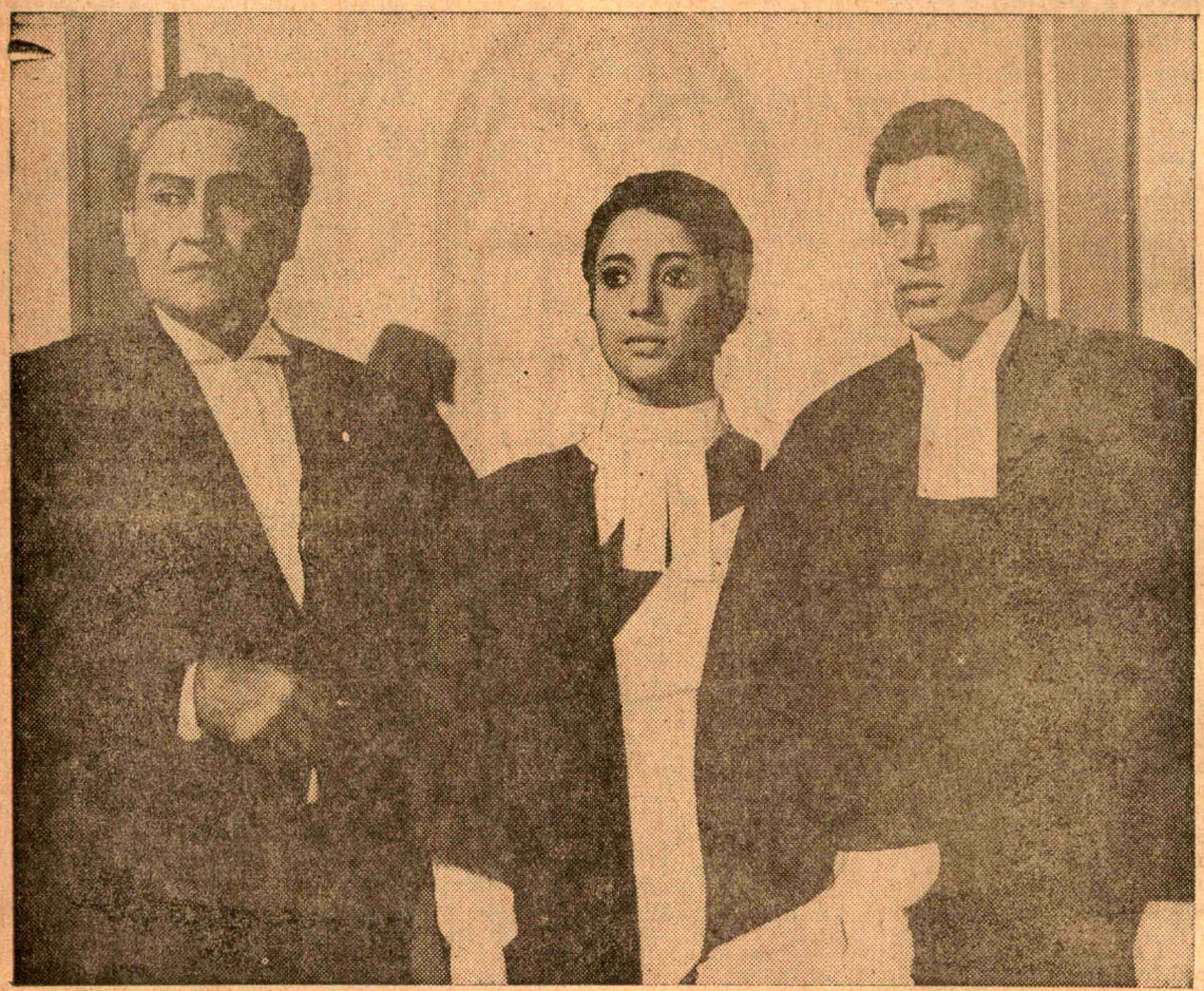
When I was called upon to crank the camera for "Atithi" I was visibly nervous. But the reputation of the director of the film caused my fears to subside. I was acutely conscious of the risk involved as there were no sure box-office ingredients involved in the film. Only four things

counted. Tagore, the Director, the Photographer, and the fresh faces chosen for the film. I had to capture the rural splendour of the Bolpur countryside and make the players convincing. That I succeded was in no small measure due to the genius of the Director and the support I received from the scenic beauty which had inspired another great artist, Rabindranath Tagore.

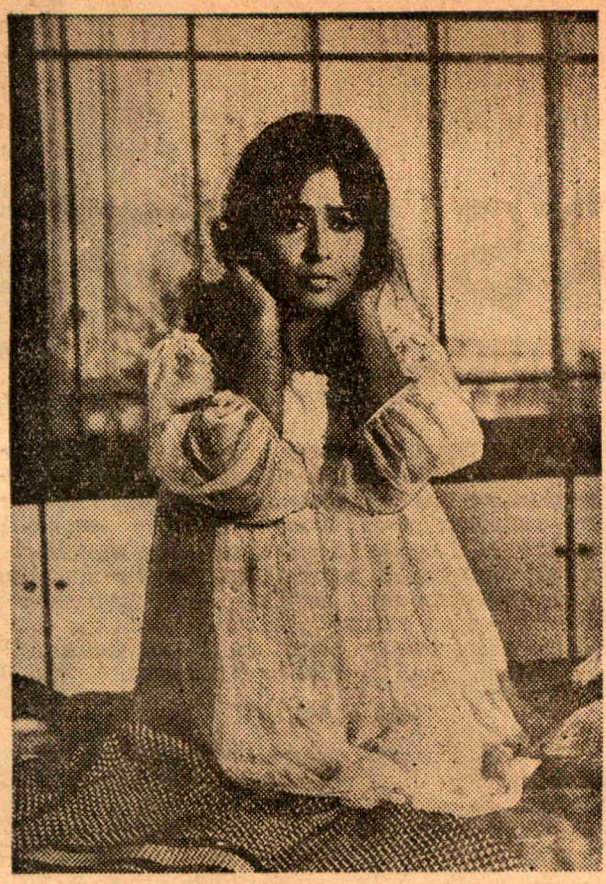
When I was filming "Subarnarekha" I was faced with another locale where I had to capture the craggy splendour of Ghatsila. Against this background and along the flowing waters of the Subarnarekha I had to trail my camera. The film was made in Black and White and yet once again the ingenuity of the Cameraman was put to test. It is not easy to match the elegance and strength of nature with the fragile courtesies of human existence. Yet, this was what had to be attempted. A final sequence from the film comes to my mind. The suicide of the heroine. Of course, the actress portraying the role was emoting powerfully, but it was only when the camera moved in to take over that, I realised here were the makings of an epic cinematic shot. The scene called for a dark and sombre background with the accent on stark realism. The harsh lines were to be brought into sharp focus and the tragedy of the character had to be emphasised. Technically speaking, I had to shoot the sequence on a Double X film without a filter. I had to create so many effects without the help of a filter. This was no mean task. I had to experiment over and over again. I can truthfully say that my experiments came off. The scene was according to the specifications of the Director. Though the film has not yet been released in the Cinema halls, I feel that my own participation in it has been both satisfying and educative.

I recall with a lot of pleasure one of my recent efforts in camera work. "Anustup Chanda" was a film with a different kind of a subject. I had to project through the lens the sensetive longing of a man for a woman he could not marry. The camera followed the wonderings of the hero and attempted to correlate the natural scenery with the inner turmoil of the man. I think I was greatly interested in the theme and some of the shots taken by me I treasure as rich memories. I can always count this film as a rewarding experience.

It is with a great deal of wonder and amazement that I look back upon my first efforts at craking the



A delightful threesome composed of the versatile stars of the Hindi screen, Ashok Kumar, the fast-rising romantic hero Dharmindra and the Bengali screen's 'First Lady' Suchitra Sen, who constitute the stellar attraction in the forthcoming Eastman color film 'Mamta', Bengal's big contribution to Hindi screen after years.



Supriya Choudhury seen in a straightingly powerful registration of a dramatic mood in the forthcoming Bengali film 'Sudhu Ekti Bachhar'.

camera independently. The picture was "Komal Gandhar". It was my first picture and understandably I was worried about the outcome. I may not have proved brilliant at my work, but the Director was satisfied. To-day I am more confident of my ability than I was a decade ago, but the thrill of the first film, the first independent effort has so far not been duplicated.

I cannot conclude without referring to the film which brought me an award for my camera work. "Kumari Mon" was the film and no Ulysses ever undertook such a hazardous trip in search of adventure. The modern Cameraman is called upon to take shots from every angle and in every corner of the world. Sometimes in search of realism, one has to undertake hazardous treks and my trips to the home of the Royal Bengal Tiger was one such. Space does not permit me to give a fuller account of the trip, but suffice it to say, that I was called upon to perform all kinds of acrobatics, on water and on land.

I am busy with a few films now. As the days roll by I am getting more and more conscious of the role I am playing. Sometimes, the magnitude of the task ahead frightened me and sets me thinking. My limelight is behind the aperture, shrouded in black and to the few who appreciate the difficulties involved in this weighty task, I dedicate this, my humble effort to convey to the reader the measure of work I and men like me do.

ART MOVEMENT IN DELHI

(Continued from page 227)

order to raise funds to establish the National Art Gallery in New Delhi. The exhibition was, of course, sponsored by Barada Ukil, founder-Secretary of the All India Fine Arts and Crafts Society.

To gain support for the National Gallery of Modern Art in New Delhi, Barada Ukil visited important art centres throughout India. It was indeed a herculean task for the handsome art connoisseur to get in touch with the different schools. "We are glad to find that the different dissenting Art Schools of India with different art centres at Lucknow, Bombay, New Delhi, Calcutta, Madras, have at last agreed to disagree in unison under one Society, representing what is best in Indian art culture." The mission was successful indeed. Schools of art never agree as two women never agree.

During the middle of the thirties the All India Fine Arts Society organised for the first time All India Travelling Art Exhibition. It covered Simla, Bombay, Hyderabad, Travancore and Allahabad. In due course the Travelling Exhibition visited Madras, Ambala, Ootacamund, Rampur, Calcutta, Jabalpur, Rajkot, Ahmedabad, Simla, Chandigarh, Jaipur and Patna. And this became a regular feature of the Society's activities.

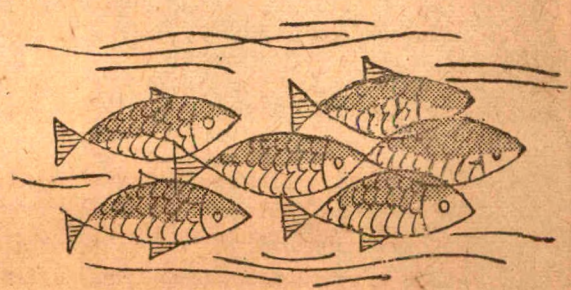
The most popular exhibitions were perhaps the International Contemporary Art Exhibition. So far four such exhibitions were held. The Press and the public in Delhi welcomed this move of the Society wholeheartedly.

The co-operation with foreign art associations and governments and with the patronage of the Government of India the Society invited foreign art delegations and exhibitions from different countries. Likewise, the Society sent art delegations with Indian art collections to various parts of the world.

Along with Barada Ukil, two more names will be recorded in the history of art movement in Delhi. Sir Ushanath Sen and Dr. M. S. Randhawa played a great role in piloting the schemes of Mr. Ukil.

The sappling of the other day has sprouted into a huge tree today. The Silver Jubilee Exhibition of the Society forms an epoch in the art history of India.

Inaugurating the Silver Jubilee Exhibition Dr. Radhakrishnan observed, "The walls between nations are crumbling, they are cracking down and the world is today one single family. If that goal is to be achieved, we must understand other cultures, other civilisations. What great medium is there for the understanding of other cultures than the medium of arts?"



THE ACTOR'S MASK

by SOUMITRA CHATTERJEE

I have been asked to write something about acting in films. But so much has already been written about it that it hardly needs anything more to be added. Should I then try to write something about ourselves—the actors? But I am not sure which aspect of our life would be of any interest to others. The huge fan mail that pours in everyday or the fan magazines that cater to a large section of the public should have given me some idea of what people want to know about us. But I confess I am a little confused as to what they really want us to tell them.

Nonetheless the numerous variety of fan letters and fan magazines, and the hysteria so often displayed towards a filmstar, make me rather curious about my own public image. I try to find out what it really stands for. But there again I fail to understand it.

WIDE VARIETY

It is about six or seven years I am in this profession and although I have actually lost count of them, it should be about 25 or 30 films I have acted in. Most of them are so different from each other. I have played as an idealist in one film, a villain in another, a good natured poet in one and may be an illtempered taxi driver in yet another. (Here, I might confide to my readers that no love was lost in the process of portraying this wide variety of human species). Because all the roles I have played were almost invariably, in the true tradition of Bengali films-lovers! When I think of all these characters I played, I seem to be lost in a whirlpool where I cease to recognise my own self. I feel my own identity has been completely mixed up with others', whom I have been trying to represent or recreate.

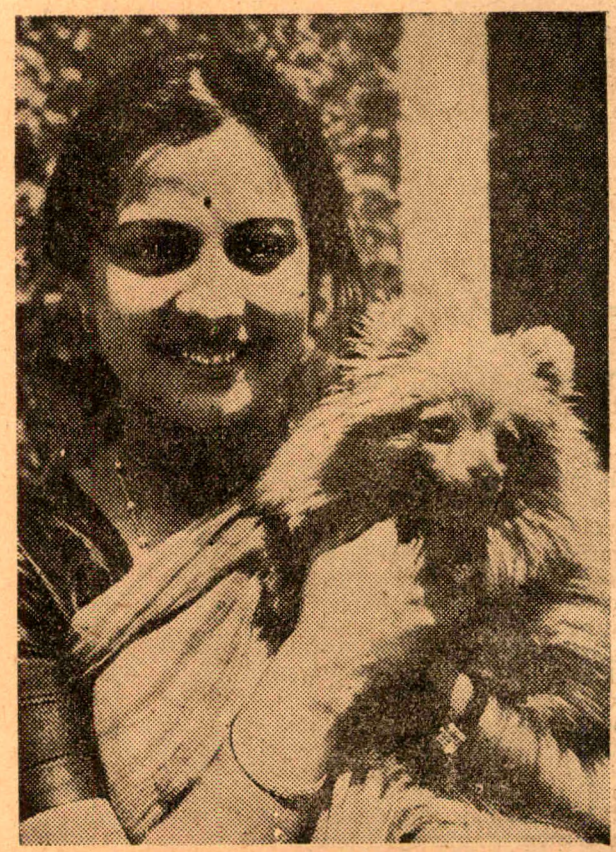
TWO IMAGES

This, to some extent, also seems to be true about the moviegoers. They mix up the images of the characters with that of the actor, just as I do. And then with a desire to understand the actor they start asking questions about the performance. To them the performance is the actor. But then these are so many of the performances. Which one will give them the clue to the actor's personality?

Now they all seem to have their own special sets of likes and dislikes about the actor, and they all want their actor to conform to their own idea of him. Yet they are not so sure. So they keep asking the actor which character resembles him. This is why I am so often asked which of the roles I have played gave me most satisfaction, or which is my best performance. I wish I knew the answer. May be I shall be able to name a few films which I enjoyed working in, and a few others which were enjoyed by those who went to see them. But to single out one film and say that this is the one I like most, or this is the one which is most like myself—well, that is something beyond my capabilities. If I could do that I would probably be able to find out what kind of a man I am. But I admit I am not so sure of myself. So I keep on guessing about the riddle which constantly exists between the actor and the characters he plays, and I look forward to a day when I shall be able to decipher it.

THE MAN WITHIN

I would, however, very much like to know what the moviegoers think of it. Do they bother to find out who this actor is? Do they ever care to rip open this public image and search for the man within ? It must be even more intriguing for them to try and find out through which crack of the mask the face is likely to show.



This beautiful young lady with a winsome smile in her lips and a pet pup in her arms is Tanuja of Bombay, who will be seen now as the heroine of the new Bengali film 'Dolna'

SPORTS after independence

by SUNIL BOSE

THERE may appear doubting creases on the brow while trying to assess the common man's economic lot after eighteen years of our cherished freedom but there will never be two opinions that the impact on sports has been substantial.

This impact has been chiefly due to the inspiring leadership of our immortal leader, Sri Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of India. Sri Nehru is no more but his ideal is being pursued with the same honest zeal by his equally talented successor, Sri Lal Bahadur Shastri.

The successful staging of the first Asian Games at New Delhi in 1951 and the subsequent formation of the Rajkumari Amrit Kaur Coaching Scheme were an open acknowledgment by our National Government that it was only people fit physically that could preserve their hard-won independence. The establishment still later of the All India Council of Sports with its constituent units in the States and the replacement of the Rajkumari Scheme by the National Institute of Sports, chiefly manned by foreign experts to train up coaches in India, were sincere efforts meant to develop games throughout the country.

The present tight foreign exchange position apart, money within the limitations of our Government's coffers, has never been a restrictive factor in the pursuit of this objective. The seriousness with which our Government seems dedicated to its task is proved by the fact that sport is recognised as an important part of education to the country's teeming millions and is appropriately placed under the Education Ministry. The "Arjuna Award", which has of late become an annual feature, is a further incentive to the young generation while the Railways, one of the biggest employers, have solved the bread and butter problem of many a sportsman by throwing open their door to promising talents in various games.

PARADOX

It is a paradox, however, that with all this liberal provision of money, coaches, tournaments and other trappings needed for the development of games the standard during these years has hardly registered the rise that one has a right to expect. I am not critical but surely the boys and girls of today do get opportunities that we could never have dreamt of under alien rulers before Independence.

Not that there have been no historic achievements since 1947. Our country maintained its world supremacy in Hockey in the Olympic Games in 1948, 1952 and 1956 and though we lost it to Pakistan at Rome 1960 we again snatched the laurels back last year at Tokyo. Individually some of our boys have achieved what we had never done before. Topping the list is Wilson Jones, the present world Billiards champion. An Indian as a world champion in any games seems almost a dream but Jones has done it not once but twice. Then comes Ramanathan Krishnan whose Tennis achievement of reaching the semifinal of Wimbledon twice has never been performed before even once by any Indian. Similar are the athletic feats of Milkha Singh who finished fourth in that fantastic 400 metres final in the Rome Olympics in 1960 and of Gurbachan Singh who stood fifth four years later at Tokyo in the 110 metres hurdles. All these certainly are symbols of our progress.

Then in Shooting there is the brilliant feat of Maharaja Karni Singh of Bikaner who was just edged into second place in the world Clay Pigion contest in Cairo two years ago after tying on the first day with the ultimate champion. A Wrestling medal earned at the Helsinki Olympics in 1952 by K. Jadav, be it bronze, is also something to speak about.

FREAK CASES

But it is not the freak individual cases of brilliance that prove a nation's advance. A Krishnan at the top of Indian Tennis for 12 years or a Wilson Jones being streets ahead of the rest of his countrymen is no argument in support of the dynamic character of Indian sports. Remove Krishnan and we are nowhere on the Tennis map of the world. A Milkha Singh now over the hill and we have no gold medal prospect within sight in the future Olympics. This is not the case with other progressive countries which follow a meticulous sports programme.

Take Australia, a country much smaller than ours both in size and population; yet consider its sporting achievements. Ever since it took up the game of cricket it has remained a force by regularly producing players of exceptional calibre. In Tennis it seems to be a factory turning out talents year after year to make good the loss sustained by the drainage of its wealth by professionalism. In athletics it has produced world champions like Herb Elliott while in swimming it can boast of the won-

der girl, Dawn Fraser, amidst a host of other brilliant stars.

As a single swallow does not make a summer, the presence of a solitary Indian in world class cannot reflect our country's greatness in that field of sports. The true criterion of progress lies in the annual production of talents who would be able to knock the champion off his pedestal any moment. The real answer lies in our ability to create not one but several champions in the same game at the same time. This means that the difference between the players at the top must be narrowed considerably.

STANDARD ON DECLINE

Odd individual cases apart, it is but too true that the general standard of our games in recent years cannot stand comparison with what it was in the past. Take cricket. Can one say with certainty that our present side is superior to that before Independence? It may appear queer but I have a feeling that our best performance ever during our tours of England was in the first expedition in 1932. Where shall we see that wonderful pair of opening bowlers, Nissar and Amar Singh? Where too that majestic personality of C. K. Nayudu? Even the second world war years gave us a team whose batting list appears formidable compared to the present—Vijay Merchant, Mushtaq Ali, Russi Modi, Lala Amarnath, Vijay Hazare and so on. Where is the world class spin bowler of the type of Vinoo Mankad, a product of the old school? Only one Subhas Gupte? And pace? Nil! If Nissar, Ramji and our very own Calcutta boy Shute Bannerjee could learn the art of fast bowling in their days, why is there none now even after so much talent hunting through hired foreign pacemen, Roy Gilchrist, Lester King and Charlie Stayers from the West Indies?

Cast your eyes on football. Calcutta is taken to be the home of Indian soccer due to its high standard in the past. Each year reveals the disappointing fact that individual skill is going down despite the adoption of various techniques and systems. The truth is that a P. K. Bannerjee, Jarnail Singh, Balaram and Chuni Goswami seem to be rare birds compared to the large number of talented stars before Independence. From Asian Games soccer champions in 1962 to second in Merdeka last year and third again this year is eloquent testimony of our decline.

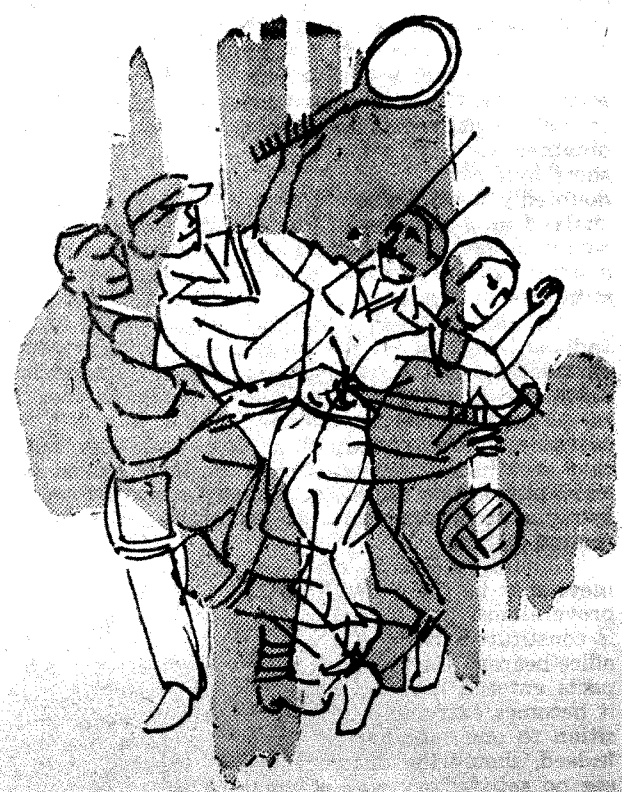
Hockey too tells the same tale and it is admitted that the last of the tribe of the artists of the past has been K. D. Singh (Babu) or can faintly be seen still in the stickwork of the veteran Leslie Claudius. The present is Hockey's bronze age. Would that it does not descend to the Stone, the way things are shaping.

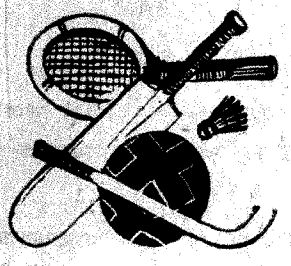
Badminton and Table Tennis betray the same sorry state. Like Krishnan in Tennis the Maharashtrian Nandu Natekar enjoyed a long ten-year reign in Badminton till he was overtaken two years ago by Suresh Goel of Uttar Pradesh. Natekar is back again on his throne on recent performances. This is fine from Natekar's point of view but bad from India's. The position has been that lack of internal challenge over the years has not led Natekar up in world contests despite his great potential. It is also felt that the standard of the game with its over-emphasis on the "back-hand" stroke is not of the class seen before Independence in the eras of George Lewis and Davinder Mohan. And this when the game had only sprung to official recognition in 1934!

In Table Tennis the tremendous advance of Japan and China to the top position in the world during the last 15 years puts our own progress in poor light.

Progress has, therefore, not been commensurate with the wide opportunities made available by our Government. Why? The stark truth is the want of proper dedication on the part of the younger generation. Coaches can only show the right path to the top but it is for the trainees to dedicate themselves with single-minded devotion to their task.

I also feel sceptical now of the wisdom of glittering trophies that are invariably part and parcel of the many junior competitions run in our country. Give them recognition by all means but I am afraid the false glitter of showmanship and of cheap publicity makes the young minds far too obsessed with an "eternally junior" outlook. This is harmful to some who stay as juniors but fade away from the scene the moment they enter the senior fold by lacking the urge to have a more serious crack at the title against their elders which really ambitious youngsters will have been otherwise forced to do in the absence of an easier road to fame.





Stray thoughts

by -PEARSON SURITA

OVER a period of some years now, one of my more pleasant tasks has been to write this annual article for the Puja Special of the Amrita Bazar Patrika. This year, however, I find myself almost wishing that the invitation had not been extended because Indian sport, like Indian politics, is passing through a phase of great uncertainty.

As I write, the question of the West Indies tour of this country in the coming cold weather is upper-most in the minds of sports enthusiasts all over the country. The story of this venture has been a sorry one with a great deal of planning carried out before it had been finally decided whether the finance to back the project was going to be made available. Subsequently the Ministry concerned indicated that it could not incur the expenditure of foreign exchange involved and the Indian Board of Control, rather shamefacedly, had to ask its West Indian counterpart to tear up the invitation card.

Thereafter, valiant efforts were made by several persons in authority in Cricket and elsewhere, but it was not until the Prime Minister himself finally intervened that a percentage of the original figure requested was made available. On this happening a second invitation was despatched.

In the meantime Pakistan, as usual quick to seize a heaven-sent opportunity, brought its full cricketing public relations machinery to bear and obtained an acceptance from the West Indians of a short tour of that country. The Indian Board, undoubtedly nettled by this chain of events, has now chalked up a programme for the West Indians which would permit them to play three Tests and other matches in India while still honouring their commitments to Pakistan.

At the moment, the possibility of the West Indians being seen in India is still fraught with considerable doubt. Certain stipulations are now being laid down by the visitors while in India itself the usual bickering and bartering for Test Matches has already commenced. Most people have assumed that the three Tests would go to Bombay, Calcutta and Madras, but Delhi has now pitched in with its own claims for one of these three important fixtures.

Should the tour materialise the Board will inevitably be faced with a problem which might prove almost insoluble. I say this because the Board is constituted in such a way and its members and office-bearers elected each year generally by compacts entered into on the eve of the meeting, that it becomes extremely difficult to express open opposition to one another on issues such as this one. Indeed, should the deadlock come about, I frankly see no satisfactory way of breaking it.

Against this background would it not have been a better idea to drop the project altogether this time and really start planning for a full length tour in the next year or two? If India is to be fobbed off with this half tour then there will be a lot of disappointed addicts in the country as a result while the other alternative would satisfy the demands of the largest possible number of people.

In 1967, a sort of reverse arrangement is scheduled. This is when India and Pakistan will both be in England sharing the season there in the same way as New Zealand and South Africa are doing this summer. That, of course, is something quite different because English spectators will get six Tests in addition to the usual County and other fixtures. The experiment, originated by M.C.C., will be wished up after a period of examination and study and a decision as to whether this arrangement should continue in future years will be taken only thereafter. But to have the World Champions come here and play only three Tests and a few representative matches is something which I am opposing and I do hope the uncertainty which surrounds this plan to which I have referred will soon be banished by the bold step of dropping the whole thing.

Uncertainty still surrounds the construction of the almost mythical Calcutta Stadium though the Union Defence minister has broken the long silence by assuring that a new site on the Ellenborough Maidan will be handed over to the State Government soon.

Regarding the location itself I am a bit confused because almost at the same time we heard talk of the second Hooghly bridge and this, it appeared, was going to be built at a point on Strand Road which would necessitate the use of large portions of the Ellenborough Maidan for approach roads. How all this was going to be fitted into a space which already has permanent military quarters on it as well as temporary camps which, under the continuing political conditions, can harly be given up, now I do not know.

Why not then some fresh thinking on this issue ? I feel that the Ellenborough Maidan, even if the approach is going to be built somewhere else, would provide very many and very great problems. The chief of these would be the enormous increase in traffic that a Stadium would create, and whether the only main approches to Calcutta's important dock-land should be subjected to possible traffic jams, is something which the authorities should certainly consider. In addition, Kidderpore Road is a favourite and frequent approach of political processions from the industrial areas in the south west of the city to their usual meeting places. Then again, there is the Race Course just across the road and all these put together might combine to

(Continued on page 247)

She looks lovely all the time... do you?

YOU WILL, IF YOU USE

Lacto-Calamine

Because it's more than a make-up... it clears skin flaws

Calamine and witch hazel, the two ingredients so beneficial for the skin, are combined in Lacto-Calamine to give you a *naturally* lovely complexion. Lacto-Calamine clears skin flaws. Conceals them perfectly. Ideal as a powder base, it blends beautifully into your skin, gives it a radiant satin-smooth finish. Makes a soothing sunburn lotion too. *Lacto-Calamine is the only cosmetic that clears skin flaws while it conceals them.* Non-greasy. Light and lovely to use—every day.

Clear the way to natural beauty with CROOKES Lacto-Calamine

Also in the Lacto-Calamine range: Cream and Talc

Changing BADMINTON trend

by PRONOB BOSE

MANY of us might be curious to know if the present men's Badminton standard has improved in comparison with the past. I shall not go into this controversy. Instead, I shall try to analyse the trend of Badminton played in our country for the last fifteen years. However, this article is not from a historian's point of view as this is certainly not the history of Indian Badminton.

I did not have the good fortune of witnessing the old outstation stalwarts like Harnarain Khanna, Kartar Singh, Zahoor, Prakash Nath, Asok Nath, G. D. Patwardhan, Kishore Lotwalla and their contemporaries. Even I did not see the famous players of Bengal, to name a few like V. A. Madgavkar, Tara Banerji, I. N. Deb, D. Mullick, P. Chakraborty and Nikhil Talukdar. Bishu Banerji and Sunil Bose were not at their best at that time because I have been witnessing first-class Badminton only since 1949-50.

The dominant players in those days were George Lewis, already well past his prime, Davinder Mohan, Henry Ferreira, B. Shroff, D. G. Mugwe and Bala Ullal from Bombay, C. L. Madan, S. L. Jaini from Delhi, Gur Prasad from the Punjab and Monoj Guha, G. S. Hemmady and Kesav Dutt from Bengal. With the exception of a few players mentioned here, the game of the other players was based on stamina, speed, attack and accuracy. These players did not have "back-hand" strokes. They used to cover their "back-hand" by sheer speed and executed attacking "round-the-head" strokes with admirable variation. They even did not possess much of the "flicks" that we see to-day. They depended mostly on their smashes. The game was plain and simple, devoid of many deceptive strokes.

Since 1952-53 slowly and slowly power-badminton turned into defensive, slow and stroke badminton. After the gradual departure of some topnotchers of 1949-50, in between 1954 and 1957, new stars shone in the badminton world. To name a few they were Amrit Lal Diwan, P. S. Chawla and Sq. Ld. Majumdar of Delhi, T. N. Seth, and P. K. Majumdar of Uttar Pradesh, Nandu Natekar, C. D. Deoras, D. N. Dhongade, Bhopardikar and R. N. Dongre of Bombay, Shinde and Phalnikar of Maharashtra and Haripada Guha, Vikram Bhatt, Ranjit Banerjee and Pranab Bose of Bengal. Most of these players had an inclination to play a defensive type. This tendency allowed them to develop a variety of strokes and with the introduction of the "back-hand," the game became on the slower side.

The "back-hand" perhaps came into prominence in 1951 when the then unofficial world No. 1, Wong Peng Soon of Malaya visited our country. Peng Soon had a superb "back-hand." Players of those days were tremendously fascinated by this "new" stroke and they started to develop it. Many players learned the "back-hand" but they paid so much stress on it that they practically forgot the "round-the-head" attacking strokes. Generally a back-hand stroke is a defensive one and thus badminton since then lost one of its "killing" shots. The game became full of prolonged rallies, superb deceptive strokes and delightful flicks. More delicacy came in the game but power and speed were practically lost.

From 1958 to 1962, some new players came into limelight. They were Vasant Kalambi, Roncon and A. I. Sheikh of Bombay, Jagdish Lal and P. P. Goel of Delhi, Suresh Goel and Satish Bhatia of Uttar Pradesh, Dinesh Khanna and P. P. S. Chawla of the Punjab and Dipu Ghosh and Romen Ghosh of Bengal. Satish Bhatia perhaps was the only player who developed his game on power, speed and stamina. Unfortunately, he was out of Badminton for some time because of his professional call but he is back again in the game. However, the general type of Badminton remained the same, that is, defensive outlook and stroke-play.

Recently players like Anil Pradhan and Gautam Thakkar of Bombay, Anil Sondhi of Delhi, now settled in Calcutta, Indrajit Bhatia of Uttar Pradesh, Zahooor of Andhra Pradesh and Sukumar Deb and Baidyanath Das of Bengal are quite pro-

(Continued on page 247)

SOME HAVE GREATNESS THRUST UPON THEM

by K.C. AUDDY

I was never a complete dud at outdoor games. In my more vigorous adolescence, hockey was my favourite sport, though I did play soccer rather indifferently in the School's Second Team. In cricket I was only pressed into one of the Junior Elevens of the club when they found it difficult to muster players. No bowler, I batted very low down, never higher than seventh, and although the sting was taken out of the bowling by that time, my entrance into double figures was not particularly far and quite a few times blobs were my hard but not unexpected lot.

In that loveliest of all English cricket grounds, the Parks at Oxford, I lay sprawled on the grass watching a game one day. I have forgotten whether it was a varsity fixture or an inter-club match or a friendly encounter. But when the players had gone in for lunch, I was beseiged by a crowd of boys in their early teens from a near-by School, fierce autograph hunters, all of them, clamouring for my autograph, elbowing each other as vigorously as they could in their efforts to obtain the coveted signature.

To say I was puzzled would be a mild understatement. Had I been the Varsity stroke, or a rugger International, or a new cricket cap for Oxford, I might have understood their hero-worshipping eagerness and no doubt I would have complied with their wishes. But for a painfully undistinguished undergrad to be so lionised was too inexplicable for words. The only reason I could think of at this time was that these clamouring eager boys wished to add a 'dark man's' signature in their autograph albums. Not having the heart to refuse or disoblige, I took the album poised nearest my nose, and was about to append my name when two or three voices imploringly cried, "Oh Learie, take ours as well."

The impact of that name did not immediately come upon me. It was my friend who laughed aloud saying "they're mistaking you for Constantine. Surprise, disappointment, confusion, were on the faces of these ingenuous hero-worshippers, as they scanned every feature of my countenance and let their eyes go several times up and down me with obvious incredulity. So my chance slipped from me—the first that I ever had of signing an autograph album!

Some weeks later during the long summer vac, I was spending a fortnight with a college friend at Todmorden in Lancashire.

My friend's father was the owner of a moderately sized cotten mill and of S—d Hall, a large and lovely Manor House some centuries old with beautiful velvet lawns and variegated flower-beds dotting the garden. He was a radical in politics and the well-beloved of his mill-hands.

It was decided that I should accompany the family to church the next morning—I had arrived late on a Saturday afternoon—sit in the family pew and listen to the fervently eloquent sermon of the vicar of Todmorden. Sunday morn saw us all dressed for church,—black jackets with waistcoats and striped trousers, and we drove down the half mile in good time. As we trooped in, my host and hostess leading, with their son, daughter and myself close

(Continued on next page)

STRAY THOUGHTS

(Continued from page 243)

produce traffic problems beyond the scope of the Calcutta Traffic Police as it is at presently constituted.

Why not then move out from the centre of the city? In the course of my various travels I have seen small stadia in fairly populated parts of major capitals but I do not think an edifice such as is planned for Calcutta exists anywhere excepting on the outskirts of such major cities. When they wanted a stadium to accommodate the Olympic games in London they did not put it in the middle of Hyde Park but built it on the fringe of the city at Wembley.

It might be argued that facilities for reaching such stadia are far greater than can be found in Calcutta and should the Calcutta stadium be built at, say, Barrackpore—which indeed was one of the sites proposed—it could only be reached with the greatest of difficulty.

I do not know. Older readers will recall that when horse racing was held at Barrackpore, the Railways ran a very effective shuttle service for getting patrons there and back. With electric traction and a great increase in rolling stock, surely getting spectators to Barrackpore for, shall we say, big football match would not be a problem nowdays at all.

The other site is the Park Circus Maidan and this also has been considered. This might be the best of them all as it is served from North and South Calcutta by trams and buses and now, with the opening of the new Park Circus Station, getting there has become a very simple matter indeed.

As I have said however, the question of Calcutta Stadium—and how long has it not been before us,'—seems once again to have been buried and Calcutta's long suffering spectators seem resigned to a continuance of watching conditions which went out with the T-model Ford!

* * * *

Speaking generally on Sport, the year behind us has been one of mixed fortunes. India's cricket prestige was maintained against the New Zealanders who passed through here last winter but whether any credit can be taken from victories against international cricket's poor relations is something which I doubt very much. At Lawn Tennis, India has progressed to the Zone Final of the Davis Cup and is to play Japan, the winners to meet Spain who have concluded a most meritorious engagement in which they defeated the mighty U.S.A. No doubt, India's chances of progress in this event will be discussed in more detail in another column in this issue.

Apart from this there is little to report with the possible exception that here in Calcutta the top local clubs, and Mohun Bagan in paricular, continue to carry all before them. One, of course, offers congratulations whenever one of these clubs pulls it off but what is the ultimate and all-round effect of this on sport in the city has led to much deep thinking and some very fearless writing in recent times.

I have started by saying that Indian sport is passing through a phase of uncertainty but if there is "a glorious uncertainty of Sport" then that is something which disappeared long ago in this great city!

SomeHaveGreatnessThurstUponThem

(Continued from previous page)

behind, we found the church full. We were halfway up the aisle, when subdued whispers reached our ears "Learie-Constantine." The suppressed excitement with which the name was uttered would have made Constantine himself self-conscious. For me the whole church service was spoilt that morning. I dared not look above the box-pew to either side of me for fear of meeting curious glances from old and young. I knew that the West Indian cricketer was playing in the Lancashire League, but I was not that much of a cricket fan to memorise his phenomenal scores, his brilliantly anticipated catches and his devastating bowling feats. So all this pother, and in church of all places, was most inexplicable for me. My friend, and the family, sensing my feelings, tried bravely to flank me well and we walked down the aisle as speedily as church-decorum allowed, when the service was over, but for all their efforts those recurrent whispers "Learie, Learie Constantine" could not be made inaudible.

On our return home the telephone bell kept ringing and callers had to be turned away from the door. The parlour-maid's reply to all was the same "It's not Learie Constantine that you saw in Church this morning, but Mr. Harry's Oxford friend who comes from India."

I have since wondered often how I could have been mistaken. True I am near about 5ft. 8ins. in height and had plently of black hair then. But it was all straight. True my nose is rather broad based and though my lips are not parallel geometrical lines, yet they are not full and fleshy. And my complexion is **cafe au lait** not quite **cafe noir!** And then I had an inkling! All Chinese at one time to me had appeared indistinguishable as two peas from the same pod.

Changing Badminton Trend

(Continued from page 245)

mising. But most of them are still following the same pattern of defensive play. They excel in strokes but their "kill" is far below the standard.

I find from my analysis that throughout the last fifteen years the new players who hit the headlines, developed their game which was played by their "idols." It is very natural on the part of the upcoming players to following the foot-prints of their predecessors. When the reputed players of attacking type made their exit, the "back-hand" occupied the mind of the new talents to a great extent. The back-hand certainly made them more at ease on the court, but at the same time, it killed much of the speed in the game. And with the lessening of speed, the players got more scope to develop a vast range of defensive strokes.

There might also be other reasons which transformed power badminton into defensive badminton but the fact remains that at present defensive game is predominant in our counry. This type might be all right for Indian Badminton but it shall not stand the foreign challenge. Whatever little I have seen of foreign badminton, I am convinced that power, speed, attack and stamina are its dominant factors. If we do not develop our game on these lines, I regret, we shall not be able to face the foreign players with confidence and dignity.

QUALITY
STEEL
CASTINGS

...AND NOW STEEL CASTINGS—ONE MORE IMPORTANT ADDITION RECENTLY MADE TO OUR DIVERSIFIED ACTIVITIES. PLENTY OF CAPACITY. QUICK DELIVERY. WEIGHT 10 KG. TO 2,500 KG PER PIECE UNDERTAKEN—ALL TO CUSTOMERS' SPECIFICATIONS.

THE BRITANNIA ENGINEERING COMPANY LIMITED
(Mfg. Agents : McLEOD & CO. LIMITED) 3, Netaji Subhas Road, Calcutta 1

CHAMPION

(NOT BY NAME ONLY)

CHAMPION '71'

PICK-PROOF CHAMPION '65'

CHAMPION '21'

CHAMPION pens are not Champion by name only, with years of smooth, trouble-free and dependable performance it has won it's name.

Moderately priced, available in a wide range of attractive colours with AZGOLD or SILVER cap in ordinary or PICK-PROOF clip.

GUJARAT INDUSTRIES (P) LTD. BOMBAY-2. / CALCUTTA OFFICE : 54, EZRA ST. CALCUTTA-1.

GI/CAL/4

THROWING and JERKING

by RUSI MODI

IN 1959 the following decision was reached and recorded at the Imperial Cricket Conference:

"It was unanimously agreed that throwing and jerking should be eliminated from the game and that each country would do everything possible to achieve this end."

The 1960 Conference resolved to reaffirm this declaration. Surely it is time the cricket authorities realised the harm they are doing by laying undue stress on prestige than about the way cricket should be played.

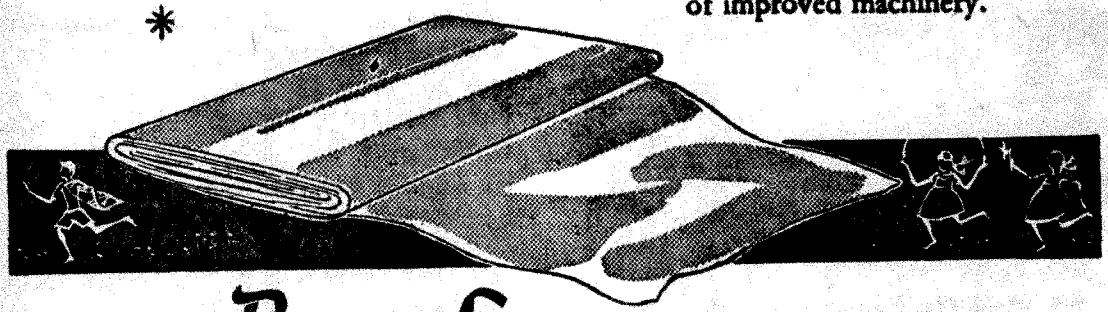
Throwing is no modern trend. Down the decades and even before the turn of the century, steps were taken to check unfair deliveries. Lord Harris started a lone campaign to eradicate throwing in 1885. He even cancelled Kent's fixture with Lancashire because two Lancashair bowlers threw. Unfortunately, Lord Harris's campaign against throwing did not produce the desired result as other counties like Glamorgan and Lancashire refused to sign an agreement not to use bowlers with doubtful actions. However, the real effort by all concerned to rule out unfair bowling from the game came in 1959. "It is the most complicated question I have known in cricket" says Sir Donald Bradman, and he is right. History has shown that umpires can never be relied upon, where the question of calling a bowler for throwing is concerned. Sid Buller called Griffin the South African bowler in an exhibition match in 1960. The South Africans raised an objection and Buller did not umpire in any of the Tests thereafter against South Africa in that series. Wisden has it that Frank Chester wanted to no-ball McCarthy the South African fast bowler for throwing in the first Test at Trent Bridge in 1951. Chester asked Sir Pelham Warner if he would support him, should he no-ball McCarthy. Not satisfied with the answer given, Chester turned his back on the fast bowler. Sid Buller and our own Noss Nagarvala are the only Uumpires I have known who have had the courage of their conviction irrespective of consequences. In fact, Nagarvala called M. R. Rage of Maharashtra for throwing from the bowler's end in the match between M.C.C. and Maharashtra in 1951. Majority of umpires, however, being cricketers themselves in their own days want to be on amicable terms with fellow cricketers and, are therefore, reluctant to call a bowler for throwing. Besides, calling a bowler for throwing is quite different from calling a bowler for over-stepping the line. For, in the case of former, it may even put an end to the bowler's career.

When we raise the question whether Griffith throws or bowls, we encounter the same argument time and again like an oft repeated echo that Griffith was passed in England. The argument, however, lacks force. For, did not the English umpires pass C. McCarthy, and even Lock (before he changed his action)? Meckiff too was passed by the Australian umpires in the 1958 series. Yet, when the authorities took up this question in right earnest, the Australian umpire Eager no-balled Meckiff for throwing in 1963. Why this sudden change in Eager's attitude towards Meckiff's bowling action? In fact, Eager passed Meckiff in 1960-61 against the West Indies!! Believe it or not all this boils down to the fact that the umpires will by and large, act only under the full support of the authorities.

Sid Buller recently called Rhodes in the tourists' opening game against Derbyshire and that has once again started the controversy. Many people are surprised that even after Buller called Rhodes for chucking, he is still playing county cricket. In fact, this is not surprising at all. It has happened before. C. B. Fry, Hardstaff (Snr), and the Australian fast bowler E. Jones were all called for throwing, but that had no positive effect, and they still continued in the game. In fact, Jones after being called in the second Test of 1897-98, went on to take 22 wickets in the series. We are now told that the Derbyshire Committee want to take a film of Rhodes. This is ridiculous. For the film already taken without Rhodes' knowledge at Lord's recently in the knock-out tournament has failed to convince the England Selectors of the fairness of his delivery. A film taken with the bowler's knowledge is of no use. It is very easy to keep the arm straight under observation. The action of Insole the Chairman of the Selection Committee is indeed commendable when he said that Rhodes will not be considered for Australia as his action is suspect. Sir Donald Bradman too has done all he can to purge Australia of throwers. Meckiff has had to go and others like Slater and Brooks are not chosen because they are not considered to be fair bowlers. This is certainly in keeping with the 1959 resolution, and let us hope every one will follow the excellent lead given by Insole *at all levels*. Those in charge of selecting a side, must ensure, right from school level, that no bowler with a suspect action is selected. The game is greater than the player and it has no place for bowlers who do not observe the ethics of this royal game.

Progress in Textile Industry

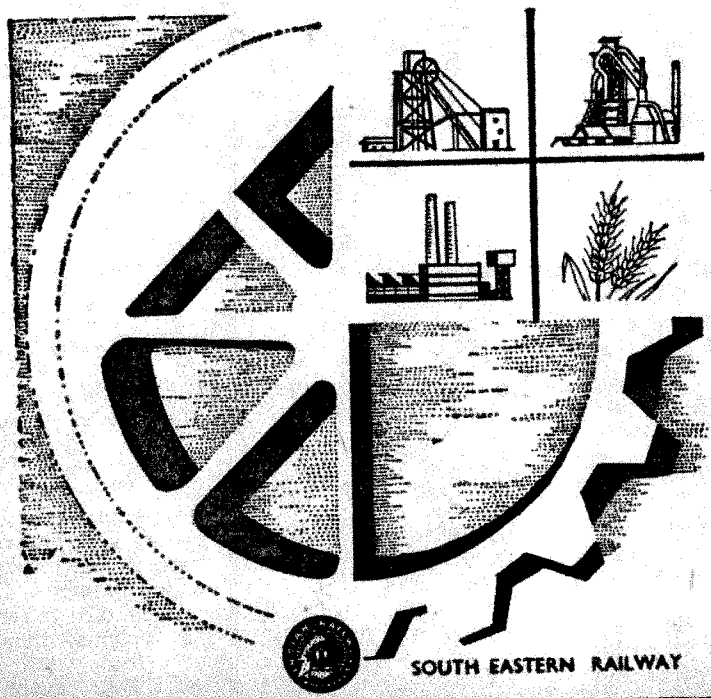
Bengal Luxmi Cotton Mills need no introduction. For over half a century it has occupied a proud place in textile industry of West Bengal. Today, Bangaluxmi has modernised and expanded its productive capacity by the installation of improved machinery.



The Bengal Luxmi Cotton Mills Ltd.

7, Chowringhee Road, Calcutta-13.

[KALPANA-B.L.3



A SERVICE THAT KNOWS NO REST...

WHETHER IT BE SCORCHING HEAT OF SUMMER OR BITING COLD IN WINTER, TORRENTIAL DOWNPOUR OR PARCHING DREARINESS, THE RAILWAYMEN, ON THE ENGINE CAB, OUT IN THE YARD, IN A LOCO SHED OR IN A REPAIR SHOP, ON THE TRACK OR IN A CABIN, THEY ALL CEASELESSLY LABOUR, DAY AND NIGHT, TO KEEP THE NATION'S GOODS FLOWING OVER THE VAST RAIL NETWORK. THEY ARE THERE EVEN IN UTTERLY DESOLATE PLACES AMIDST BARE, BLEAK SILHOUETTES KEEPING THE WHEEL OF PROGRESS MOVING.

SOUTH EASTERN RAILWAY

TENNIS COACHING IN WEST BENGAL

by DILIP BOSE

A definite system for coaching in West Bengal was first started by the Bengal Lawn Tennis Association about 1938 under the late S. J. Mathews. Coaching classes were held at the Calcutta South Club and Mr. Mathews got a good response. Among his students were K. B. Madan, Naresh Kumar and a few other boys, who ultimately did not make the grade of Kumar or Madan.

About 1954 when the Rajkumari Amrit Kaur Sports Scheme, with coaching facilities in various fields of Sports on a nationwide basis came into operation, I was persuaded to turn professional under the Rajkumari Scheme. According to this scheme the services of its coaches were lent to the different provincial associations. In this manner, I was put in charge of the B.L.T.A. coaching scheme in Bengal.

The coaching field was immediately expanded and classes were held at three different centres, namely, Calcutta South Club, Cossipore Club and Shambazar Club. Apart from acutual coaching in the game itself. I started insisting on the pupils attending regular sessions of physical exercises and gymnastics. This proved too strenuous for some students, but the ones who were serious stuck on and later proved their worth. It was at this stage that I was often branded as a very hard and severe coach. But I believe in absolute physical fitness of players and potential players and I carried on with my own principles and ideas, inspite of adverse criticism.

Among the youngsters who came to me and later proved their promise, were Jaideep Mukherjea, Premjit Lall, Akhtar Ali, the Minotra brothers, the Mahajan brothers, and Jasjit Singh.

About 1958, when the National Institute of Sports was established at Patiala it absorbed the Rajkumari scheme and the training of coaches in different fields of Sports started operating.

AKHTAR AS COACH

In 1963, I persuaded young Akhtar Ali to undertake training with the ultimate view to turning professional. Akhtar Ali did this and in 1964 turned professional.

Akhtar is now official coach of the B.L.T.A. Classes are run at three centres—Calcutta South Club, Saturday Club and Govt. officers' Club, Belvedere. Akhtar has about 100 students under him.

I am in close contact with Akhtar's coaching and in a recent talk with him, I suggested that the time had come to start weeding out and eliminating those who show no promise. Ali should now concentrate on the youngsters who promise to be good. Among them are Ajit Lall, Taher Ali Anwar Ali and some others.

However, the B.L.T.A. has always experienced certain basic difficulties in conducting their Coaching scheme in the way it should be done. The first difficulty is that the B.L.T.A. has no tennis court of its own and as such is difficult to plan coaching in a proper manner. The second is that BLTA is not financially strong and as in every sports, you need plenty of finance to organise coaching. I hope the West Bengal State Council of Sports which has been newly formed will come to our aid in these respects.

PROSPECTS

Coming to the prospects regarding our future hopes of tennis in Bengal I am rather disappointed. The materials we have got to-day are not showing the promise they should. Personally I feel these boys and girls who are our hopes in West Bengal should work much harder and concentrate much more. I do not want to mention any particular name but I feel enough facilities have already been given to our top junior boys in this state. But the improvements they have shown are very negligible and certainly they will not fill-up the void which will be left by Ramanathan Krishnan.

There are certain boys who are taking keen interest and want to learn but frankly speaking our immediate future does not show much promise. Akhtar Ali, who is working as our Coach, also feels the same way. I feel we have to take up the policy for a long-term coaching, which is to get the trainees within the age of eleven and work on them. I, as the Chairman of the B.L.T.A. Coaching committee, am trying to put this idea of mine into practice in consultation with Akhtar.

I am also of opinion that whatever junior boys and girls we have got in West Bengal and also in India should be first trained and given enough tournament practice in our country before we send them abroad. After all the juniors must show some results before they deserve to represent India and play in Europe. I find nowadays that it has become more or less a fashion to send junior trainees abroad whether they deserve it or not. Frankly, I cannot agree to this method. My suggestion is to get hold of good eight top junior boys and send them around India to play all tournaments under an experienced Coach-cum Captain and watch their results and progress carefully and then select them if necessary to go abroad and play in various tournaments. I am not mentioning any particular name but generally our juniors are not showing the promise they should. Before, I conclude, I once again would request B.L.T.A. authorities and A.I.L.T.A. authorities to plan out a detailed scheme for improvement of junior tennis trainees' standard in this country who will fill up the gap which will be left by Krishnan, Jaideep Mukherjee and Premjit Lall.

for better

Comfort

"Sankha & Padma"

ESTD VEST 1922

D. N. BOSE'S HOSIERY FACTORY
CALCUTTA

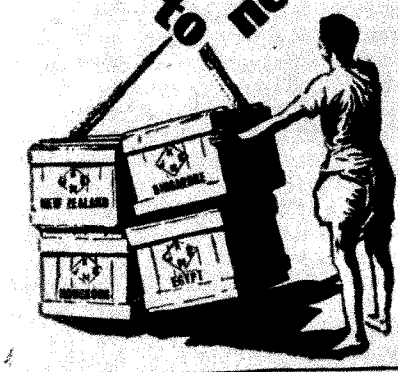
Show Room | Hosiery House | 55-1, COLLEGE STREET, CAL-12

EXPORT EXPORT EXPORT EXPORT EXPORT EXPORT EXPORT EXPORT EXPORT

Yes, efficient JAYKAY portable typewriter has captured new markets in distant lands. For office, home or any personal use, the JAYKAY is the most suitable portable for you. This elegant, swift, smooth, easy to operate and truly portable typewriter satisfies every need.

J. K. BUSINESS MACHINES LTD.
2, MANGOE LANE,
CALCUTTA-1.

on the way to new markets



Kalpana JK83

CABLES
Power
Housewiring
& Welding
NOW AVAILABLE
FROM
READY
STOCK

TROPODUR 1.1 KV

APLSTS 1.1 KV to 11 KV

ALSO
MOTORS
STARTERS
SWITCH GEARS
HOUSE SERVICE METERS
LIMIT SWITCHES
CONTROL SWITCHES
AND
MICRO SWITCHES

Please Contact :

JAMES FINLAY & CO, LIMITED

2, Netaji Subhas Rd., Calcutta-1. Hamilton House, New Delhi. 1, Doranda, Hinoo, Ranchi.

STOCKISTS FOR SIEMENS PRODUCTS.

A PLEA FOR RAIN RESEARCH

By Prof. S. K. GHOSH

MAN has been trying to modify weather and rainfall since time immemorial and there are frequent references in the Vedas and in the book 'The Golden Bough' by Frazer in which various *jagnas* and magical rites have been described for bringing down rains as well as for stopping rains.

Sri Dharam Sheel in his paper on 'Artificial Rainfall' published in the Central Board of Irrigation Journal of October, 1947, was the first to give quotations from the Vedas and he suggested further researches and experiments in the light of modern scientific knowledge. This was strongly supported by Mr. Kanwar Sain, and the present writer in their papers submitted for the consideration of the C.B.I. and actually a sub-committee was established at the Srinagar Session in 1954 for evaluating the possibilities of increased rainfall by cloud-seeding.

Since about 1947, various experiments in weather modification have been conducted throughout the world by more than 43 nations. These were designed to increase precipitation, dessipate clouds, suppress hail or lightining and to disperse fogs (e.g. over airports) and the work is being pursued vigorously. Many of these experiments followed the techniques evolved and developed by Dr. Irwing Langmuir, Vincent J. Schafer, Bernard Vonnegut, E. G. Bowen and others. As early as 1933, Dr. Tor Bergeron had propounded his theory that substantial rainfall could be released from supercooled clouds by the introduction of ice-cystals.

On 13th November, 1946, Dr. Irving Langmuir and Vincent J. Schafer by dropping crushed dry ice (solid carbon dioxide) pellets from a plane flying above supercooled clouds over Pittsburg (U.S.A.) created the first man- made snow-storm. Soon afterwards Dr. Vonnegut discovered that silver iodide nuclei are more effective than natural nuclei, and as these could be dispersed from ground-based generators, a new economic technique was evolved.

In India, Dr. S. K. Banerji conducted pioneering experiments in 1951 at Jadavpur University, using the balloon technique with dry ice, salt silver iodide and ice-cold water as seeding nuclei. Thereafter the present writer started his rainmaking experiments at the Bihar Institute of Hydraulic and Allied Research and evolved a new technique for seeding of clouds by automatically bursting balloons, sending up finely-ground common salt as condensation nuclei. Later his technique was successfully demonstrated during the C.B.I. & P Session at Colombo in 1956.

Dr. E. G. Gowen, Director of the Radiophysics Division of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, Australia has been the pioneer for systematic experiments, both in the laboratories and from his 'flying laboratories in the air for understanding the exact mechanism of rainfall precipitation for inducing rains over draught-stricken areas in New South Wales and Snowy Mountain region.

In U.S.A., U.S.S.R., Japan, South Africa, Israel, Pakistan, Spain, Hongkong, Cuba and many other countries, different techniques have been tried using other nucleating agents e.g. cupric sulphide, kaolimite, Calcium Chloride, Carbon black (soot), metaldehydes and phlorogluinol for weather modification experiments with varying successes.

A large volume of published literature (more than 2500 papers have been listed) is available in different languages claiming more or less success, but all attempting to unfold the mechanism of cloud formation, development, precipitation or dissipation using radars, planes, electron microscopes and other modern instruments according to the facilities available to such organisation.

Looking to the tremendous possibilities of Weather Control, President Eisenhower by a directive of the U.S. Congress set up an Advisory Committee of Scientists, meteorologists, agriculturists, and businessmen. From January, 1954 upto December, 1957, this Expert Committee went into the various aspects of weather modification, analysed the results of experiments already carried out by different agencies, and on December 31, 1957 the Committee submitted their technical reports findings and recommendations. The reports in two vclumes contain valuable scientific data and suggestions for future workers. Its comprehensive bibliography on 'Weather Modification and Cloud Physics', listing 2259 separate papers, books and other publications, is a mine of information. Recently President Johnson has convened a similar body for exploring the potentialities of Weather modification.

The Meteorological Society of Japan also constituted an 'Artificial Rainmaking Committee of Japan' for carrying out co-ordinated experiments and researches at the Hydel Power Stations and Universities and even Taiwan started a 'Rain Stimulation Research Institute' in 1952. Red China also started its experiments at the same time and are still at it.

In India the first symposium on Artificial Rainmaking was held at Delhi in February, 1953, and as a result of its recommendations, the Rain and Cloud Research Unit was first set up at the National Physical Laboratory under Sri A. K. Roy, and now Dr. B. Bh. Ramana Murti, Officer-in-charge is continuing further investigations. A 3 cm radar has been installed recently and seeding from planes is being carried out over Delhi according to a randomized programme. The State of Madras is also continuing seeding experiments from Coimbatore.

In September, 1961, forty leading meteorologists and cloud physicists from 15 different countries attended the International Cloud Physics Conference in Australia and this June a Second International Conference held at Tokyo has again reviewed the progress in different branches of cloud Physics, with the help of experts from different countries. Their reports all reflect the great advances made in recent years and the obvious potentiality of weather modification is attracting serious attention of scientists as well as the public all over the world.

In a vast country like India where climatic and rainfall vagaries occur annually in some region or other in the form of pronounced droughts or floods, the time is ripe for co-ordinated efforts to conduct studies and researches along the lines of the most advanced trends of leading research-workers in the same way as we are trying to minimise evaporation from reservoirs we have to tap the vast reservoirs of water floating above us in the form of rain-bearing clouds.

The American Society of Civil Engineers found this subject of sufficient importance for devoting a whole issue of its Journal (of the Irrigation and Drainage Division) in March 1960 (Vol. 86 No. I.R.I.

(Continued on page 256)

OUR OFFER
IN THE
FESTIVE OCCASION

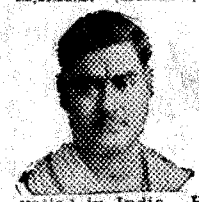
COCKATOO Brand Flour
LANTERN Brand Flour
ROSE Brand Atta
HORSE Brand Atta

MILLED BY
THE HOOGHLY FLOUR MILLS CO. LTD
THE UNITED FLOUR MILLS CO. LTD.

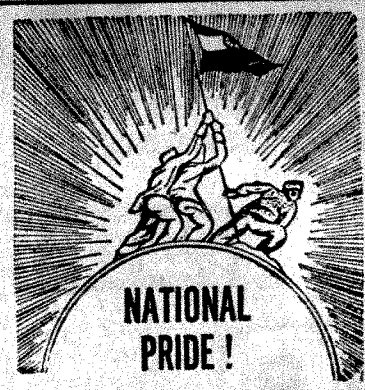
MANAGING AGENTS :
SHAW WALLACE & CO. LTD.

ISSUED BY
CHAUDRI & CO.
45, BANKSHALL STREET,
CALCUTTA 1.

World Famous
ASTROLOGER & PALMIST
JYOTISH-SAMRAT PANDIT RAMESH CHANDRA BHATTACHARYYA JYOTISHARNAB M.R.A.S. (London) of International fame. President of the world renowned **All-India Astrological and Astronomical Society** Panditji's wonderful predictions Palm and Horoscope reading and Tantrik rites are unrivalled in India. He has won unique fame not only in India but throughout the world, **viz. England, America, Africa, Australia, China, Japan, Singapore, Java etc.** Despaired persons are advised to test the power of Panditji.



WONDERFUL TALISMANS
DHANADA KAVACHA:—For vast wealth, good luck, health and all round prosperity, honour and fame in life. Rs 7-10. Special Rs. 29-11
BAGALAMUKHI KAVACHA :— To overcome enemies it is unique. Gets promotion in service and in winning civil or criminal suits and for pleasing higher officials it is unparalleled Rs. 9-2 Special Rs. 34-2.
MOHINI KAVACHA:—Enable arch foes to become friends and friends more friendly Rs. 11-8. Special 34-2.
SARASWATI KAVACHA :— Success in examination, retentive powers and sharp memory Rs. 9-9. Special 38-9
DETAILED CATALOGUE WITH TESTIMONIALS FREE
H.O.: 50-2 (A.B.) Dharamtala St. 'Jyotish-Samrat Bhaban' Calcutta-13. Phone: 24-4065. Hours: 5 to 7 P.M.
Branch: 105, Grey St., Calcutta-5. Hours: 9 to 11 A.M. Phone 55-3685.



HOWRAH KUSTHA-KUTIR
An Institution with
Over 70 Years'
Reputation for
The Treatment of
LEUCODERMA
Anaesthetic Patches, Eczema, Psoriasis, Dermatitis & other obstinate skin-diseases.
Free medical advice obtainable on request

Founder :
PT. RAMPRAN SHARMA.
1, Madhab Ghosh Lane, Khurut Howrah. 'Phone : 67-2359
Branch : 36, Mahatma Gandhi Rd., Calcutta-9.

BRIGHTEN UP YOUR HOME
WITH **CROWN** BRAND
AND **SUN** BRAND
ALUMINIUM, BRASS,
& STAINLESS STEEL
WARES AND
ALUMINIUM ANODISED ARTICLES

They are simply charming !

Jeewanlal (1929) Ltd.
CROWN ALUMINIUM HOUSE, 23, BRABOURNE ROAD
CALCUTTA-1, TELEPHONE : 22-7659

CLOUD OVER CAMPUS

SISIRKUMAR GHOSE

TODAY'S youth is unhappy, uncertain — and dully rebellious, often rebels without a cause. A poet of an earlier age could write: *Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive, But to be young was very heaven.* An Age of Anxiety holds no such promise.

The youth of the race is always a sympto..., a barometer. Today in some form or other the problem of adolescent maladjustment is everywhere. Indeed, one could think of it as an extended metaphor of our culture—or lack of it. The only societies where this does not exist are those fast disappearing small groups which still possess some accepted norms, forms of initiation, what anthropoligists call rites of passage, the passage from youth to maturity. In modern, that is secular and industrial society there is neither norm nor initiation. As for maturity it is conspicuous by its absence. The whole thing is in a state of settled anarchy and vast contradictions. Maladjustment is the price that we must pay so long as conditions remain as they are.

The young are not the villains of the piece, they are its victim, "largely the victims of the inconsistencies and confusions around them". In the life of nearly every adolescent there is a period of storm and stress. Now factors combine to make it more difficult, prolong it beyond the limit. It is perhaps most acute in America, one of whose unenviable contributions to world culture has been that amalgam of pity and terror called the teenager. But the American monopoly has been seriously challenged. Listen to two psychologists: "Youth is traditionally a time of revolt, and in every generation there have always been some people whose defiance of authority has so far overstepped normal bounds as to lead them to unacceptable behaviour. But never before, it appears, have so many youngsters chosen to express their rebellion in anti-social terms, and never before, it appears, has juvenile delinquency been so widespread. The French have their *blousons noirs*, the Germans their *Halbstarken*, the Italians their *teppesti*, the British their Teddy-boys, the Africans *tsotsis*—and so on for virtually every country in the world". (Eastbrooks and Gross, *The Future of the Human Mind*, 92.). The whole thing is a lurid comment on what Irving Babbitt used to call a headless civilization, a "world that has gone wrong on first principles and allowed itself to be caught in the terrible naturalistic trap".

What are you going to do about it?

Regulations, prohibitive measures, or loud wailing will not help. Also quick results are out of the question. The malaise has taken years to accumulate, it is a whole society's curse and failure. Older folk are more involved, and responsible, for this state of affairs than they would like to admit. All that one can hope to do is to create conditions that will keep the evil under control, perhaps in the long run eliminate its *raison d'etre*. This cannot but be a slow process in which all must co-operate. It will be false to think that the failure is localised among the young. The problem is one of personal relation and that involves more than one. One person of the right type,—the ideal elder brother shall we say :—can contribute more to the success of the scheme than a number of conferences and symposiums, or Board of Advisers, studded with *ex-officio* experts whose credentials need looking into. It is not mechanics but psychology that we are up against, psychology in an age of crisis.

The problem of youthful waste is endemic,—proof of the reign of unreason in society. But society is an abstraction. So is university, a much smaller unit. Its chief concern being education of the young it is presumed that it can or ought to help towards the solution of the problem of maladjustment and delinquency. But exactly how? Today there is a feeling that a university should be residential. But few realise the nature of residence. Staff quarters and students' dorms—with nothing in between—do not make a residential university. More is needed, a shared faith or moral continuity. The old ideal of living with the teacher was, from this point of view, utterly sound, but it is too late in the day to revive it.

AN IDEAL COMMUNITY

Today few look upon the university as an ideal community, able and willing to set an example to the rest of an erring world. The modern university is hardly a model of good life or even the life of reason. A factory, as Tagore once described it, it is but a tiny part of society, and does not take the whole of life for its province. To saddle it with more responsibility may well bring it to the breaking point. As a member of a university one is naturally happy to say this. But why harbour another illusion? Especially when one hears, all the time, of 'incidents' in most seats of learning. So, what can the universities do, except perhaps to discuss the problem with due academic sterility and the usual display of statistics or, in private discussion, with that brutal cynicism which is the only safety valve open to the members of the noblest profession? The problem, it is true, has found its way into High Schools, the Universities, and is causing headache to the Authorities, but the motivations come mostly from outside the university. Over these the university or the school has and can have no control.

Among the factors that explain the decline in values are: the disruption of values in modern life and society; the state of politics in the country, pullulating with corrupt practices; the fear and frustration of unemployment; and, finally, the lack of standard and checks in the family. (So far as conditions in India are concerned, the decline of the joint family system must be counted as a major factor). As someone has said, we are living in a society without Elders.

Samuel Butler loved to say that for the waywardness of children parents should be held responsible. How, if at all, can parents be tackled by universities? The very idea is preposterous: And yet unless there is some kind of parent-teacher cooperation the problem will never be solved. To expect the university to be a wet nurse, *in loco paren-*

tis, for all the lost and the lonely is a fond hope that deserves to fail.

A solution, imagining it to be possible, would mean nothing short of a remaking of modern man and society, a new set of values. But which university, in India or outside, is equipped for the task or even thinks in terms of that task? The answer is, None. As Lewis Mumford told me with unconcealed sorrow, the university is one of the last places to change. (He himself had to quit). In India, even after seventeen years of independence, there is no living relation between the university and the life of the people. University staff quarters and laboratories are modern versions of the Ivory Tower. A Professor is a misfit everywhere outside the classroom. If society does not feed him literally, he does not feed society intellectually.

The appalling waste of youthful energy is full of destructive potential. It demands everybody's attention, not merely the university's. In spite of the annual fatuity of orotund Convocation Addresses to guide an erring society towards paths of virtue and meaningful behaviour is beyond the powers and functions of the university. It is better to speak of something that the university is in a position to control, the quantity and quality of teachers and students.

There may be nothing inherently wrong in large numbers, but it is plain that a good deal of higher education in India is a screaming farce because of indiscriminate admission. This is more so in the so-called Arts subjects, the refuge of all the weak brothers and sisters. At a liberal estimate not more than 25 p.c. of the students who are there deserve—or even wish—to be there. Given other openings or opportunities they would never have come to these crowded classrooms. If my memory serves me right, not one of the wives of the Governors or Governor-Generals in India was a graduate. Among the three most prominent women, 'in the public eye', in present day India not one is, strictly speaking, a university woman. The degree snobbery should go and other suitable openings must be found for the non-academically inclined majority. Also the standard at the High School level must be raised and only those that qualify should be allowed to go to the university and not nearly everybody, as happens now. It will be better if admission to the university is based on a public examination. This need not be a long-drawn affair but should be reasonably strict, absolutely indifferent as to how many pass or fail, or who is related to whom. Most of those who are now in our colleges are not only unfit but unwilling horses. The fact that most of them manage to get away with the coveted degree is the strongest criticism of the Establishment. The Indifferent teaching, the Unwilling must go.

So we come back to the old point. It may be said, with strict analytical accuracy, that we are stewing in our own juice.

But students are only half the show. What about teachers? It is as well to remember that any one who is "academically qualified"—this means, in most cases, a dusty doctorate—is not going to be a good teacher. The fact is today the profession is full of people for whom it is a trade rather than a vocation. Bernard Shaw was not far from the truth when he said, Those who can do, those who cannot teach. (Like him, only less brilliant!) A television or tape-recording of what goes on in most Staff Common Rooms would be a revelation.

If the cloud is to lift and the 'conflict of generations' to go, if the universities are to cure themselves, and ourselves, the following measures, among others, have to be taken: cut down the number; draw the right people to the profession; open up useful means of training and employment for the non-academic youngsters, the majority; bring education in line with the ideals of national life, not forgetting the ideal and fact of One World; invite the co-operation of parents and guardians; exercise the right to differ from the powers that be and not kowtow to pressure from above, below or around; utilise the right to lead where the higher values of life are concerned. In brief, if necessary, the university must dare to be unpopular.

When these conditions are fulfilled will the universities give us not only New Learning but a New Life. Tall orders, but failure to supply will mean ruin not only for the universities but the larger unit of which it is but a part, of society itself.

A PLEA FOR RAIN RESEARCH

(Continued from page 253)

Part I) and published 14 authoritative papers by experts on different aspects of cloud seeding. They have recently published another comprehensive 'Report on Water Modification' in the Journal for March, 1964. The World Meteorological Organization also has published three comprehensive Technical Notes on the Artificial Control of Clouds and Hydrometeors" giving details of the techniques successfully employed in different countries.

When agricultural fields are parched and cracked due to drought or delayed rains it becomes certainly imperative to seed all suitable cumulo-nimbus clouds hovering overhead to produce rains and thus save the crop. On rivers which are not snow-fed, reservoirs often dry up on such occasions, and the writer strongly suggests that timely cloud-seeding could economically augment the water resources by tapping storms which would otherwise move on without precipitating over the catchment. Such routine cloud-seeding from planes etc. would soon become regular practice in future.

In April, 1962, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in a letter to the writer expressed his considered opinion on this subject".....

> ".....I was a little disappointed to find that all the efforts in other countries, notably in Australia and, I think, in the United States, had not yielded any adequate results. That of course does not mean that we should not continue with this research work. With regard to the possibilities of rain-making, it would certainly be desirable to have this research done on a wider scale".

Doubtless the Central Board of Irrigation and Power, as an authoritative body having control over so many research stations in India, is the best organization for stimulating and co-ordinating further studies and researches. The Agricultural Research Stations, the State Electricity Boards, Irrigation Departments and the Universities could also actively help and collaborate in this vital national work affecting 45 crores of people of our sub-continent, who have virtually to beg for 'Food Ships' and subsist on foreign loans, while living in a land which was once supposed to overflow with milk and honey.

In conclusion, the writer earnestly hopes that this short note will serve to focus the attention of all serious research workers, Directors of Research Stations, Chief Engineers and Administrators on the gravity of the issues raised and he shall feel honoured to render all possible help in chalking out details of studies and experiments on an all-India basis.

EDITOR — TUSHAR KANTI GHOSH

Printed and published by TULSHI KANTI DE BISWAS, on behalf of the Amrita Bazar Patrika Private Ltd, at the PATRIKA PRESS, 14, Ananda Chatterjee Lane, Calcutta-3.

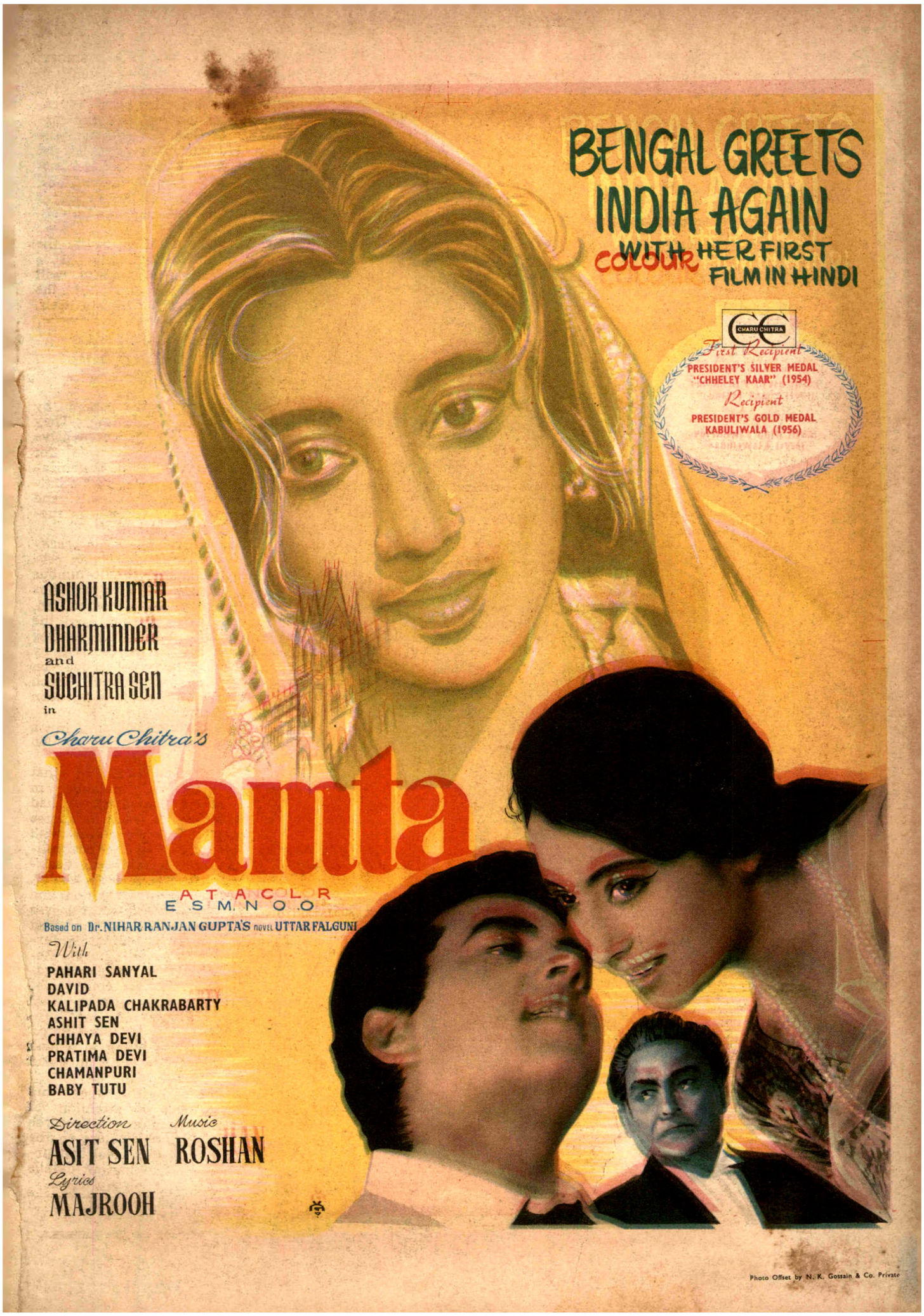
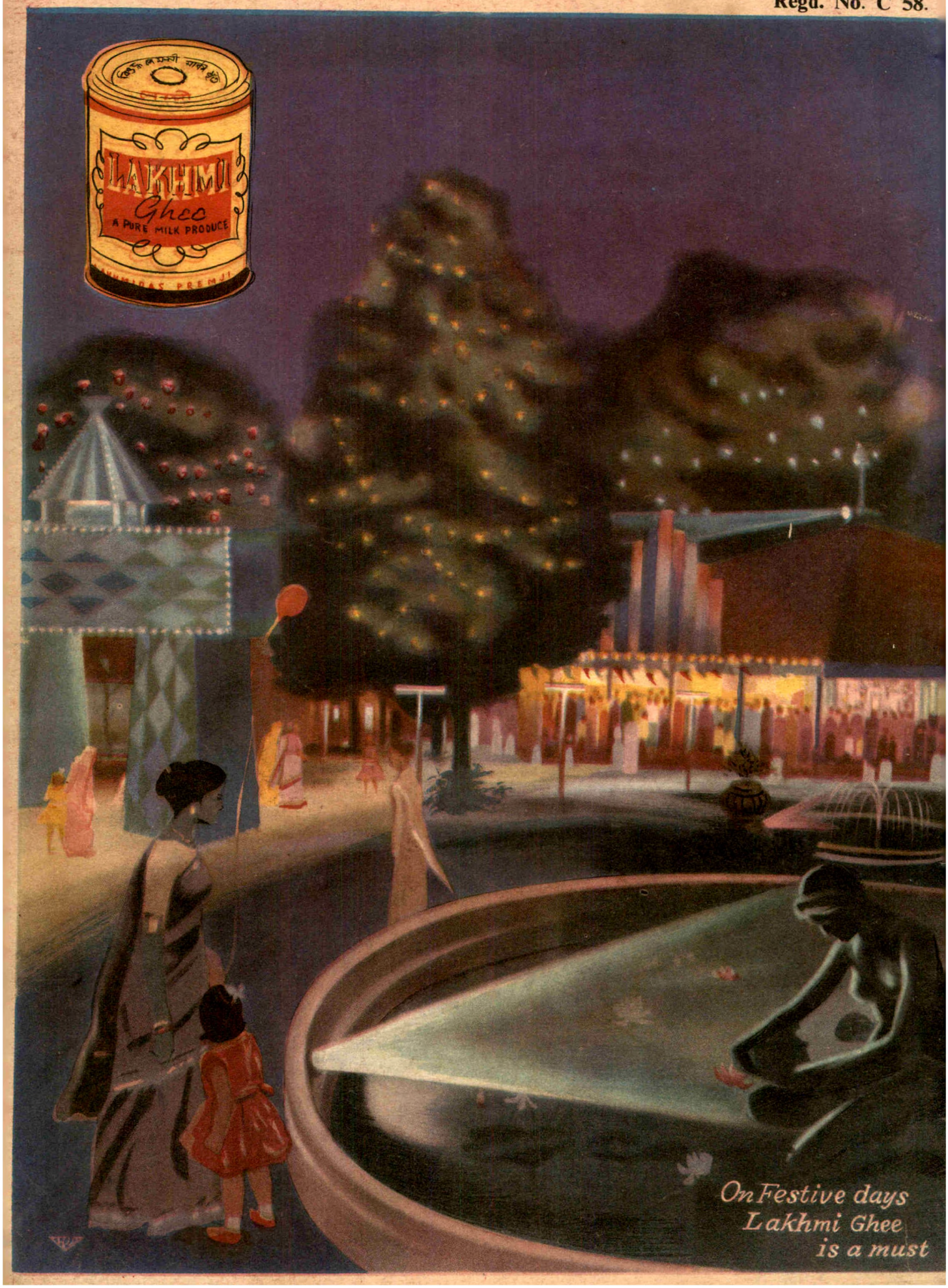


Photo Offset by N. K. Gossain & Co. Private

Regd. No. C 58.


LAKHMI
Ghee
A PURE MILK PRODUCE
On Festive days
Lakhmi Ghee
is a must

Amrita Bazar Patrika

PUJA ANNUAL 1966

Keo-Karpin
HAIR OIL
Promotes Healthy Hair
Dey's
A PRODUCT OF DEY'S MEDICAL

It's never too early to learn

Little boys learn early that plants need water to keep them alive and growing. This simple fact, once learned, is never forgotten.

Another lesson you must teach your children *now* is the regular care of teeth and gums, so that in years to come they will thank you for protecting them from tooth decay and gum diseases.

Teach your children *today* to care for their teeth and gums with Forhan's Toothpaste. Created by a dentist, Forhan's is the only toothpaste in the world containing Dr. Forhan's special astringents for the gums. Used regularly it ensures sparkling white teeth and sound, healthy gums.

FREE! COLOUR BOOKLET ON "CARE OF THE TEETH AND GUMS"

For this booklet, available in various languages, send 10 p in stamps (to cover postage) to Dept. A 1 Manners' Dental Advisory Bureau, Post Bag No. 10031, Bombay 1:

Name .....

Address .....

Please underline language wanted:
English, Hindi, Marathi,
Gujarati, Urdu, Bengali, Tamil,
Telugu, Malayalam or Kanarese.

This is the time to go places. When care is a forgotten word and merry laughter is everywhere. Have the time of your life... Fly **IAC**. We bring people and places together the quickest way.

INDIAN AIRLINES

39, CHITTARANJAN AVENUE, CALCUTTA-12

IAC-74A

RAJ JYOTISHI

World Famous Astro Palmist and Tantrik RAJJYOTISHI Mahopadhyaya Pandit Dr. HARISH CH. SHASTRI, Examiner Govt. Board of Astrological Studies.

HOUSE OF ASTROLOGY
45A, S. P. Mukherjee Rd., Calcutta-26 (East of Hazra Park) Phone: 47-4693.

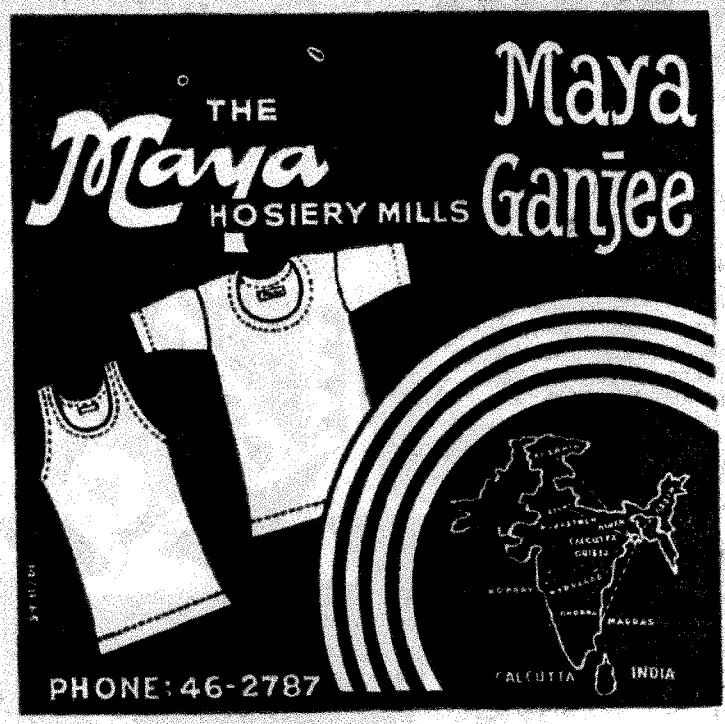
This all-powerful Yogi of International fame can tell the past present and the future accurately. The sure effect of the Kavachas and Santi-sastyayana which he makes in course of his religious duties ensures brilliant success, because he gained a special spiritual and Tantrik power by deep mediation. Thousands have honoured him with unsolicited testimonials.

SHANTI KAVACHA :— To gain mental peace, happiness in family, ensure success in examination and in promotion Rs. 5|- Special Rs. 20|-

BAGALA KAVACHA :— For over coming enemies, and for winning complicated law-suits, to secure services & to prosper in business— Rs. 12|- Special Rs. 45|- only.

Read latest books of Palmistry & Astrology.

JEWEL OF PALMISTRY (English) — Rs. 7|- **SAMUDRIK RATNA (Bengali** — 2nd Edition — Rs. 6|-)
A GUIDE TO ASTROLOGY (English) will be out before Puja.



225A, RASHBEHARI AVE. CALCUTTA-19

For FLAVOUR & TASTE
in BETELS

Ganesh
TABLET & POWDER

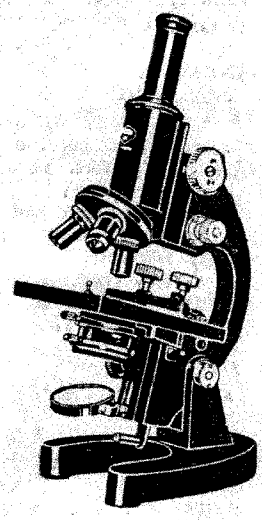
Laxmi & Sons
34/42 CHURI MOHAL KANPUR-1

BHARAT

Contents

	Page
DURGA PUJA AND VIJAYA DASHMI By M. L. Srivastava	9
DUSSEHRA IN MANY STATES By U. C. Chopra	11
CHAND RAI OF NADIA By Bhupendra Nath Sarkar	14
ORIGIN OF THE CULT OF THE GREAT MOTHER THE MOUNTAIN GODDESS 'PARVATI' By Sudhindra Kumar Kavya-Sankhya-Tirtha	15
THE MOTHER FORTUNE OF THE GOOD By Dr. Roma Chaudhuri	17
UNIVERSITY EDUCATION UNDER AN ECLIPSE By Dr. Srikumar Banerjee	19
SPIRITUAL INITIATION OF SRI GOURANGA By Ramani Kumar Datta Gupta	21
RELIGIOUS POETRY OF GEORGE HERBERT & TAGORE'S GITANJALI By Prof. K. C. Dev	25
ALL THIS AND HEAVEN TOO By Shibdas Banerjee	27
WHAT CAN WE STILL EXPECT FROM EUROPE & AMERICA? By Annada Sankar Ray	31

INSTRUMENTS FOR CLINICAL & ANALYTICAL LABORATORIES.



HL-3A

'WESWOX-ADCO' MICROSCOPES & MICROTOMES

BHARAT-ADCO PHOTO ELECTRIC COLORIMETER

ADCO PAPER ELECTROPHORESIS APPARATUS

ADCO INCUBATORS, OVENS AUTOCLAVES

IPI-ADCO CENTRIFUGES.

FOR PARTICULARS & PRICES ENQUIRE TO

ADAIR, DUTT & CO. (INDIA) PRIVATE LTD.

5, Dalhousie Square East, Calcutta 1. 23-8781 (2 Lines)

ALSO Offices at : BOMBAY, MADRAS, NEW DELHI, SECUNDERABAD

At last!

CROWN BRAND Spill-proof MILK BOILER

YOU DON'T HAVE TO ATTEND WHILE THE MILK BOILS

The boiled-over milk goes back into it. No spilling, no wastage.

Made of thick gauge aluminium. Available in three sizes.

Jeewanlal (1929) Ltd.

CROWN ALUMINIUM HOUSE, 22, BRABOURNE ROAD CALCUTTA-1, TELEPHONE : 22-7659

JF-1a-1-66

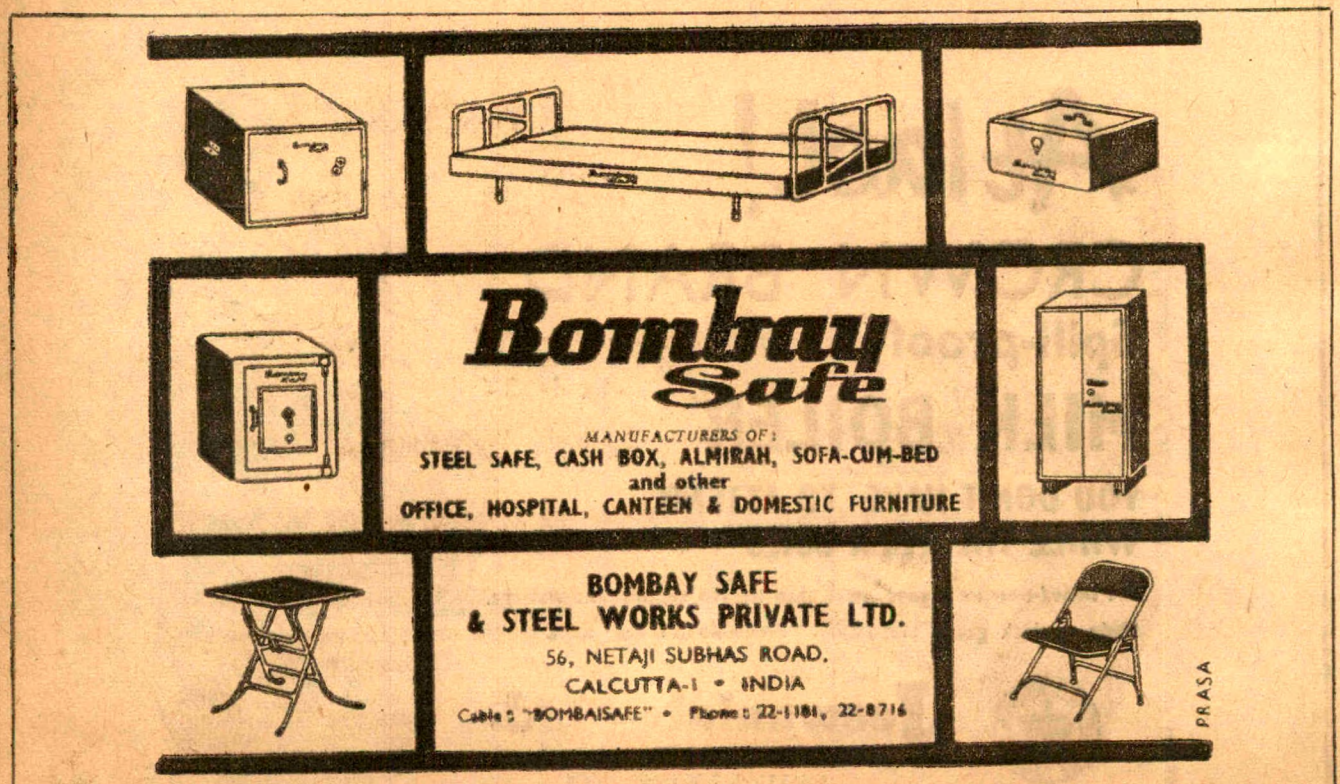
Consult

K·HORE

for beauty aids

Contents

	Page
IN QUEST By Pravasjiban Chaudhury	33
TWO WOMEN By "Dev Das"	49
BHUBANESWAR By Jitendra Kumar Nag	59
THE TEST By Augustus Somerville	61
PUZZLES TO PUZZLE YOU By Mahaveer Saran	63
I WAS YOUR CHATRA SIR By Arun Kumar Banerjee	69
A GOLDEN BOUGH By P. C. Roy Choudhury	82
THE PATHETIC TALE OF BAHADUR SHAH II By K. M. Yusuf	85
THAT LONELY ONE By Rajendra Awasthy	89
A DREAM FIGURE By Sailesh Bhar	93
HINDU SOCIETY TODAY By Dr. Sudhakar Chattopadhaya	97
BANKIM CHANDRA AND THE HINDU REVIVAL MOVEMENT OF NINETEENTH CENTURY BENGAL By Dr. K. K. Ghosh	105
ROMAIN ROLLAND AND HIS CONTACT WITH INDIAN MIND By Sudhansu Mohan Banerjee	109
FORTS FABLES AND FICTION By Prof. S. P. Ghosh	113
FAGO RAM'S FOREST LIFE By A. K. M. Hasan, I.A.S.	117
TOWARDS EMOTIONAL INTEGRATION By Vivek Bhattacharya	119
ETHNOLOGICAL MUSEUM By Bijon Gupta	121
LITERARY QUARRELS By C. R. Banerji	125
THE TIGER — A WIZARD By Dhirendra Narayan Roy	129
THE PRESENT IMAGE OF RABINDRANATH: A PLEA FOR HEARTSEARCHING By Dr. H. B. Mukherjee	133
THE MOON AND THE WITHERED LEAVES By Tushar Kanti Ghose W.B.C.S.	135
THE PILOT By H. P. Basu	137
THE GIFT By Narendra Nath Mitra	139
EVEN THEN By Swaraj Bandhyopadhaya	143
SRI AUROBINDO, THE SEER-POET By Dilip Kumar Roy	147
PENALTY By Dakshinaranjan Bose	151
THE NATION AND ITS SCIENCE POLICY By U. P. Basu	153
EDUCATION FOR INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING By Dr. Purnendu Kumar Banerjee	155



We have opened our **2nd Show-Room at :**
11/1, Bipin Bihari Ganguly Street, Calcutta-12.

Contents

	Page
YOUNG FOLK'S CORNER By Big Brother	161
DANGE' FOR DANGEROUS By Arnabkumar Bardhan	162
KALEIDOSCOPE By Subhendu Ghosh	162
KUMARI PUJA By Prabhu Ram Suman	164
FIGHTERS' CLUB By Shyamal Datta	164
HONEY FOR HALF KINGDOM By Adhir Kumar Bose	165
DISCOVERY OF SHOE By Angshuman Mazumdar	167
NATURE By Basabjit Banerjee	167
INNER PICTURE OF ATOM By Prasanta Kumar Basu	169
BELOVED SHASTRIJI By Banshidhar Parida	170
WHAT A DREAM! By Prasanta K. Chattopadhyay	170
WHO FAIL — THEY OR WE? By Mamata Nag	171
TUKU AND LORD BUDDHA By Debi Bhattacharya	172
MAHA PUJA By Sujit Som	173
SPRING By Tapan Kanti Dey	173
A HOLIDAY FROM WORRIES By Samar Chatterjee	175
DEFEAT TO FRIEND By Sipra Saha	178
THIS IS AN AGE OF INTER-DEPENDENCE By Acharya Vinoba Bhave	179
VOLTAIRE: THE ARISTOCRATIC REBEL By A. D. Choudhury	181
IS CHIVALRY DEAD? By Prof. Girijakanta Mazumder	183
MODEL DEMAGOGUERY MADE EASY By Prof. S. K. Ray	185
SOME PUZZLING FACTS ABOUT CRIME By N. C. Pal, I.P.S.	186
THE BASIC PROBLEM By J. N. Mahalanobis	187
THE POPULATION EXPLOSION AND EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS IN INDIA By K. K. Ghosh	191
SACRIFICE By Jatish Bose	193
WANTED FILMS OF THE SOIL By N. K. G.	197
HIT OR GET OUT By Tapan Sinha	199
A LOOK AT SCIENCE-FICTION FILMS By Satyajit Ray	201
CAMERA BEHAVIOUR IN RAY'S FILMS By Hemanta Bose and Kingsuk Deb	204

For Efficient, Economic & Quick Service

In

Shipping, Clearing, Forwarding, Insurance, Claims Processing and Transport

✱

Please Contact

WATER TRADING CORPORATION

Customs Authorised Agents

7, Ezra Street (2nd floor)

Calcutta-1.

GRAM : "WATREDCO"

PHONE : 22-6988

you cannot avoid ACCIDENTS

A must for all first-aid boxes

NON-GREASY SOOTHING & SAFE EVEN FOR BABIES

but you can PROTECT yourself with

ACRIMENT

A NON-STAINING ALL-PURPOSE ANTISEPTIC OINTMENT

for ■ BURNS ■ SCALDS ■ WOUNDS ■ ABRASIONS

IT HEALS WHILE IT PROTECTS

A Product of BENGAL IMMUNITY

CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY PUBLICATIONS

1.	An Enquiry into the Nature & function of Art — Dr. S. K. Nandi	Rs. 10.00
2.	Arya Manju Srinama Sangiti (Sanskrit and Tibatan Text) — Edited by Sri Durgadas Mukerjee	Rs. 15.00
3.	Bengal Folk Ballads from Mymensingh — Dr. Dusan Zbavitel	Rs. 12.00
4.	British Relations with Hyderabad — Sri Nani Gopal Chowdhury	Rs. 10.00
5.	Catalogue of early Indian coins in the Asutosh Museum — Sri Chittaranjan Chowdhury	Rs. 10.00
6.	„ „ Folk Art — Mrinal Kanti Pal	Rs. 10.00
7.	Critical Theories & Practice in the Lyrical Ballads — Dr. S. K. Banerjee	Rs. 7.50
8.	Elements of the Science of Language — Dr. I. J. S. Taraporewalla	Rs. 20.00
9.	English Literary Criticism in 2nd half of the 18th Century — Sri S. K. Sen	Rs. 15.00
10.	Elements of the Scientific Philosophy — Sri Provash Jivan Chowdhuri	Rs. 15.00
11.	Indian Cultural Influence of Cambodia — Dr. B. R. chatterji	Rs. 12.00
12.	History of Sanskrit Literature — Dr. S. N. Das Gupta & Dr. S. K. De	Rs. 30.00
13.	Indian Feudalism C 300-1200 —Sri Ram Saran Sharma	Rs. 15.00
14.	Kamala Lectures (Indialsm & Indian Synthesis) — Sri Suniti Kumar Chatterjee	Rs. 8.00
15.	„ „ (Indian Culture & Religious Thought) — Sri Ananta Sayanam Ayyanger	Rs. 5.00
16.	Problems of Philosophy — Dr. S. C. Chatterjee	Rs. 6.50
17.	Select Inscriptions — Edited by Dr. D. C. Sarkar	Rs. 45.00
18.	Land System & Feudalism in Ancient India — Edited by Dr. D. C. Sarkar	Rs. 7.50
19.	Selection from Ochterlony paper 1818-1825 — Edited by N. K. Singha & Sri A. K. Dasgupta	Rs. 20.00
20.	Saraswata Satakam (Chitrakavyam) Sri Srijiva Neyatirtha	Rs. 20.00
21.	Technical Terms Technique of Sanskrit Grammar — Sri Kshitish Chandra Chatterjee	Rs. 20.00

For further details. Please Contact Publication Department.

CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY

48, HAZRA ROAD, CALCUTTA-19

Phone No. 47-1766

Content

Page

THE SCREENPLAY AS LITERATURE
By Chidananda Das Gupta .. 205

LET ME CONFESS
By Tarun Majumdar .. 208

YOUNG MOVIE MAKERS OF AMERICA
By Myron Prinf .. 209

THIS IS NOT A LIGHT MATTER
By Tarini Sankar Chakravorty .. 211

DANCE TECHNIQUE OF SHANKAR-COUPLE
By Sandhya Sen .. 213

THE SOUTHERN KACHARI RENAISSANCE OF THE BARMANS AND DIMACHAS
By Amit Kumar Nag .. 217

FACTS AND FIGURES FROM THE MOON
By Sanat Biswas .. 221

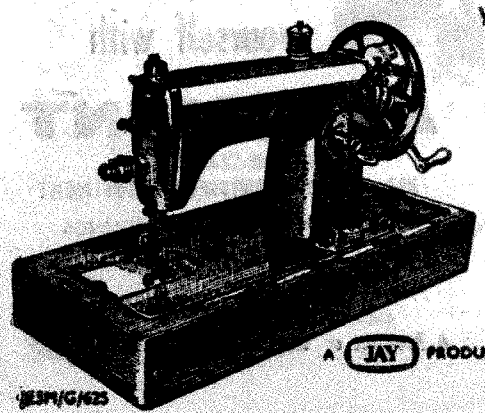
WHY NOT ORGANISED PROFESSIONALISM
By Pearson Surita .. 225

NEW THOUGHTS ON AN OLD SUBJECT
By K. K. Das .. 226

INDIAN FOOTBALL IN RETROSPECT
By Karuna Bhattacharjee .. 227

AN OUTSTANDING GIFT FOR THE FESTIVE SEASON

USHA Sewing Machines make enjoyable gifts. Give her one and you will see—nothing could make a better gift.



Attractive Usha Sewing Machines are very strongly built. It's a pleasure sewing on Usha while its economical for the family. There is a wide range of models and prices to choose from.

Sew with ease — sew with

USHA SEWING MACHINES

A JAY PRODUCT

JAY ENGINEERING WORKS LIMITED, CALCUTTA-31

Contents

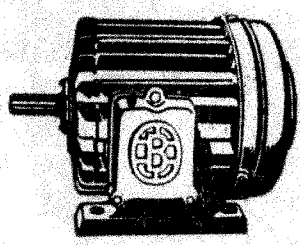
	Page
WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF INDIAN TENNIS ? By Dilip Bose	.. 231
THE INTERRUPTED MAIDEN VOYAGE By Santosh Sengupta	.. 233
SARAT CHANDRA THE WRITER WITH A MAGIC TOUCH By Hiranmay Banerjee	.. 237
HAND TO HAND WITH A LEOPARD By Aruna Sen	.. 239
ON TO MYSORE By J. C. Das & Mrs. Roma Das	.. 241
WOMEN IN ANCIENT ART AND CRAFT By Bela De	.. 245
INDIAN NAMES FOR THE REGIMENTS OF THE BENGAL ARMY By Nakul Chatterjee	.. 247
CHANGING THE FACE OF RURAL INDIA By Mankumar Sen	.. 251
THE TIDE By Desh Chitrakar	.. 253

ART PLATES

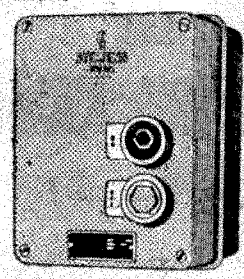
MOTHER DURGA By Prafulla Mitra
LORD KRISHNA
GOOD MORNING By Anjali Das Gupta
SIXTEEN TEMPLES OF INDIA

SIEMENS INDIA

ELECTRIC MOTORS FOR INDUSTRY & AGRICULTURE



A WIDE RANGE OF SWITCHGEAR ITEMS



TROPODUR & APLSTS

AVAILABLE FROM READY STOCK

JAMES FINLAY & CO. LIMITED.

2, NETAJI SUBHAS ROAD, CALCUTTA-1.
NEW DELHI & RANCHI.

Enjoyable Reading....

BICHITRA KAHINI

&

ARO

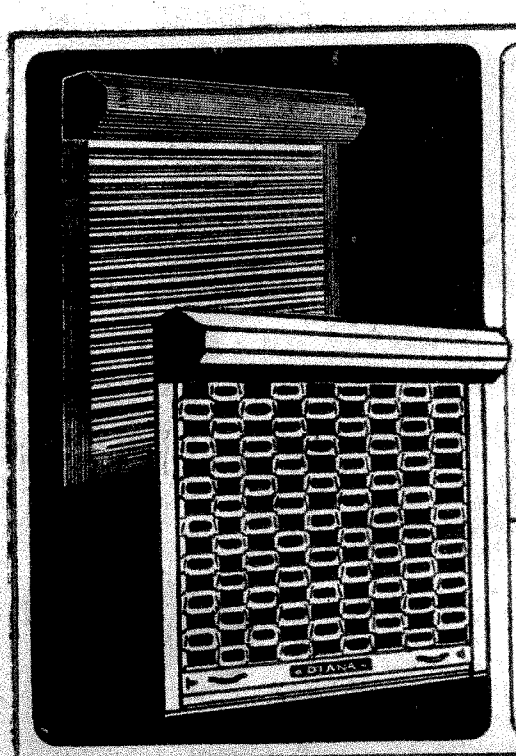
BICHITRA KAHINI

(in Bengali)

By

SHRI TUSHAR KANTI GHOSH

M. C. SARKAR & SONS
PRIVATE LIMITED
14, Bankim Chatterjee St.
Calcutta-12.



DIANA
ROLLING SHUTTERS
and
GRILLS
for
safety and security
MANUFACTURED TO SPECIFICATIONS WITH QUALITY STEEL AND ALLUMINIUM ALLOY

DIANA ROLLING SHUTTERS & ENGINEERING WORKS
8, STEPHEN HOUSE, CALCUTTA-1
Phone : 23-3871/2

DURGA PUJA AND VIJAYA DASHMI

By M. L. SRIVASTAVA

"O Durge ! I bow to Thee.

O Mahadevi, the dweller of the Mandar mountain, Mahakali ! Chandi ! I bow to Thee.

The Vedas sing of Thy greatness.

O Bhagwati ! I bow to Thee.

With pure and untainted mind I pray Thee. May Thy blessing bring me victory on the battlefield!

Thou art Mother, the source of all glory, the splendour of the most magnificent."

Thus, on the advice of Lord Krishna, Arjun prayed to Divine Mother Durga for her propitiation when he reached the battlefield after the armies of the Kauravas had been arranged in battle array. The graphic description of this prayer in the twenty-third chapter of the Bhishma Parva of the Mahabharat bears testimony to the age-old tradition of the Durga Puja which solely engrosses our mind in the blissful autumn month of Ashwin and which is hailed as the greatest festival of the Hindu year with unforgettable and boundless joy and a hallowed spirit of devotion.

The Navratra or the festival (Parva) of the ninth day worship of Goddess Durga culminating in Vijayadashmi on the tenth day is the greatest Hindu festival. The Vijaydashmi ostensibly comme-

morating the immortal victory of Lord Rama over Ravan, the king of the Rakshasas, is regarded and observed as the king of festivals all over India. The blending of the worship of Goddess Durga with the reverential commemoration of the consummation of Lord Rama's mission on this earth is an instance of the remarkable characteristic of the Hindu genius to harmonise and synthesise mundane pleasure with spiritual values and lofty flights of philosophy. Though Durga Puja, as the worship of the almighty Goddess in her various manifestations, is specially observed with eight days of solemn and religiously sanctified festivities in Bengal and by the Bengalis all over India, the gay celebrations of the Vijaydashmi with the preceding nine days of hilarious life witnessing the dramatised scenes of the heroic and chivalrous life of Lord Rama coupled with the invocation of the Great Mother's blessings resound all dwellings from the royal mansions to the humblest hamlets.

It is commonly believed that the Vijayadashmi is the festival of the Kshattriyas and has, for centuries, been observed with great eclat by the Kshattriya Kings. The month of Ashwin selected for the celebrations is most auspicious and opportune when after a spell of two months of beneficial rain the Mother Earth, with soul-stirring magnificence of her charming verdure and standing crops holds out a promise of plenty and affluence. The heroism, valour and prowess of Lord Rama naturally formed the basis of joyful celebrations before embarking upon ambitious adventures for which the blessings of the all-powerful Mother were sought for success as Arjun had done. Even the Puranas enjoin the annual worship of Goddess Durga in this month.

The worship of the Goddess of Power as an embodiment of the cosmic energy of creation, sustenance and annihilation can be traced from the hoary antiquity of the Vedic times. We find mantras in all the four Vedas paying obeisance to Mahashakti Saraswati. But ritualistic worship according to the Tantra system evidently gained popularity in the puranic times when several puranas particularly the Markandeya Puran, the Devi Bhagwat, the Devi Puran and the Kalika Puran vivified the inconceivable divine power and absolute prowess of the almighty Goddess and codified prayer to her in the seven hundred slokas of the Durga Saptashati. A fillip seems to have been provided to the sacrificial worship of the Great Deity by the decline of the ahimsa-motivated atheistic Buddhism when animal sacrifice became associated with the worship of the Goddess in the form of Chandika and Mahakali. A community exposed to the virulent onslaught of the natural and sociopolitical calamities threatening her very existence had to turn her mind to the martial, horror-striking and dreadful aspect of the goddess who could be propitiated by blood for extending her multiple arms of protection to ward off the calamities and destroy the ruthless and heartless enemies.

The Durga Saptashati has been the most favourite religious book of the Hindus for many centuries. As described in the book during the wars waged by Goddess Durga against the enemies of the God she assumes the forms of Mahakali, Mahalakshmi and Mahasaraswati for the annihilation of the demons and showers blessings on the devotee gods who get a riddance from the life of dread created by the demons. An embodiment of unconditioned dynamism Mother Durga reveals her omnipotence for expressing her all-embracing love for the good and the righteous. The reverential prayers that are offered to the Deity very frequently in praise of her noble attributes are so appealing that they serve as a prop for the distressed mind in the vicissitudes of life. This is why most people daily recite the whole book. It is remarkable that in this book the meaning and sense that can be read in between the lines make the quintessence of Vedanta philosophy and Tantric practical wisdom.

Who, then, is our Mother whom we meditate and whose benign grace we invoke during the sacred occasion of the Durga Puja? She is the Adya Shakti of God, the Supreme Being, the Parashakti of Parabrahma or Parashiva, the omnipotence and dynamic power of the unconditional Absolute who, of her own accord, becomes conditioned by the three attributes of Satva, Rajas and Tamas. She is all-pervading and the primeval cause of all creation. She is thus Jagajanani, the Mother of the Universe. Of the All-Consciousness static Brahma she is the dynamic energy and consequently all that has taken form in the illimitable universe is the concrete expression of the Adya Shakti as she herself declares in the tenth chapter of the Saptashati "Ekaivaham jagatyatra dwiteeya ka mamapara" (I am all alone in the world. Who else is there besides me?)

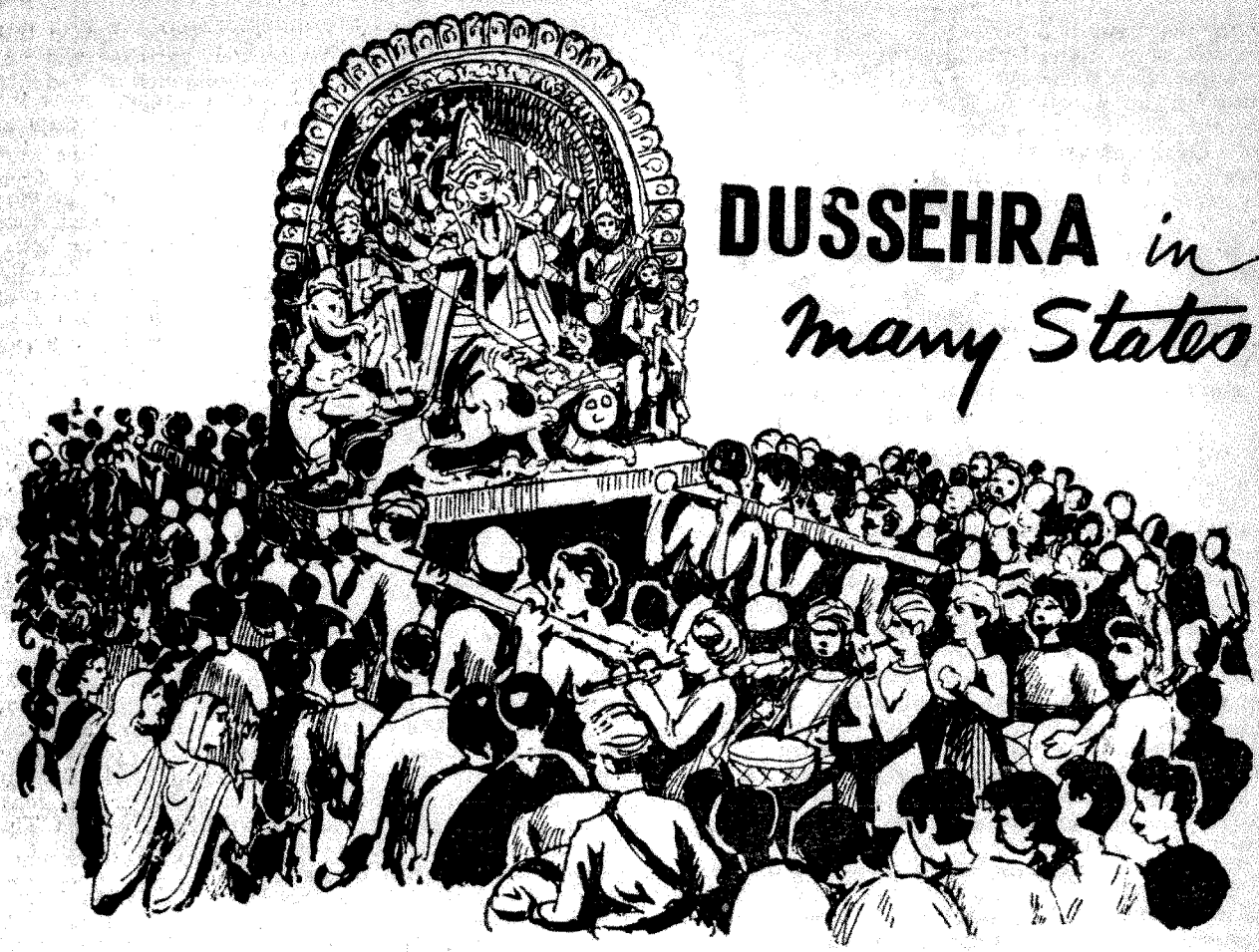
All metaphysical philosophy ascribes the origin of creation to the primeval energy. This dynamic energy lies immanent in the static Brahma which the Vedas call Swadha "Aneedvattam Swadhayatadekam". This swadha or Parashakti then embarks upon the revelry of multiple manifestations. With the associations of her different aspects Brahma assumes different names. Thus wedded to the creative aspect of the Shakti he becomes known as Brahma, the Creator; with her preservative form he becomes Vishnu, the preserver of the universe; and assisted by her annihilative aspect he becomes Rudra, the destroyer. It is this shakti that gives the invisible principle (avyakta) a concrete form (Vyakta Rupa) and is the seed or the Mother of the universe. This fact is revealed by the Sukta of Rig Veda "Yam kamaye tantamugram Krinomi tam brahmanam tamrisham tam sumedham" (on whomsoever I shed my pleasure I make him ugra or Brahma or Rishi or Sumedha.)

In the Durga Saptashati the omnipotent Divine Reality (parashakti) is identified with Mahalakshmi from whom appear Mahasaraswati and Mahakali. These three entities serve as a causative principle of the creation. Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesha and their consorts Saraswati, Lakshmi and Gauri rank first in the order of creation. This genesis of the creation is vedantic in principle. In fact the three entities are the aspects of the same Supreme Power according to attribute. Mahalakshmi is the goddess of secular glory and embodies the principle of sustenance and beauty. Mahakali is emblematic of violence and fury, of destruction, dread and horror and Mahasaraswati is an embodiment of knowledge.

Mother Durga whom we worship in Navratra is eight-armed and assumes a concrete form out of the vital and fiery energy of all the gods. She is the embodiment of all forms of energy that find expression through tender or cruel emotions. She is all-benevolence and grace to her devotees and to the virtuous; but she appears in the most violent form of martial fury for the destruction of the demons, sinners and evil-doers. Her filial affection and love know no bounds. What greater and more sublime concept of supreme divinity can there be than that of motherhood.

On this sacred occasion of Durga Puja when we bow before the pratima (image) of Mother Durga, feel enraptured with ineffable bliss and seek her loving blessing and her motherly hand of protection, it is incumbent upon us that we should make ourselves worthy of receiving what we beg of our Great Mother to bestow on us. It is a time of

(Continued on page 24)



DUSSEHRA in many States

By U. C. CHOPRA

"As long as mountain ranges stand
And rivers flow upon the earth,
So long will this Ramayana
Survive upon the lips of men."

ONE cannot but marvel at Valmiki for the singular confidence he must have had when he penned the above lines more than two thousand years ago, for the story of the Ramayana is still perhaps the most popular epic in the Oriental repertoire, and in various forms it is to this day found in countries as far apart as India and Siam. Different peoples have found different mediums for preserving and perpetuating the message that Valmiki meant to convey. Thus, the Cambodians have the *story of Ramayana carved in strip-sequence form on temple walls*, the Japanese have an ingenious system of puppetry and shadow-play based to a large extent on the Ramayana, the Balinese and Siamese have dances dealing exclusively with episodes from the Ramayana—but for sheer popular appeal and mass enlightenment there is perhaps nothing to compare with the people of North India and their 'Ram Lila'.

"Ram Lila" which literally means 'the play of Rama' is a part of the life of the people of North India, in particular of the Uttar Pradesh, and it is the Passion Play of the Hindus. The difference is that "Ram Lila" does not presage a time for solemnity or mourning but ushers in a period of unrestrained enjoyment, entertainment and relaxation. Indeed, so eagerly is "Ram Lila" awaited by the people every year and so elaborate is its celebration that it can easily be said to be the biggest National Festival of North India.

This colourful festival comes every year at the close of the autumnal equinox—the day following the new-moon—and lasts for full twelve days. During this gala period the entire story of Rama, of his trials and tribulations, his adventures and misadventures, is put up night after night serially on stages that are especially constructed for the purpose each year in every town. On every night people in each place flock in their hundreds to these stages to witness the play that as their fore-fathers had done.

On the last day of "Ram Lila", the epic climax of the Ramayana is enacted by the people. Effigies of Kumbha Karna (with a black face), Ravana (with a red face) and Meghanad (his son) are set up in a public square. The community assembles after a procession of characters dressed as Rama, Lakshmana and Sita and Hanuman. Arrows are aimed at the effigies and they are set ablaze. They burn weirdly as the sun sets. The fireworks stuffed inside explode and present quite a sight. Some people wait for the effigies to be completely consumed and when they are sure that the embers are dead they rush to the place to collect the ashes. These ashes they value much as it is a common belief among them that anyone who wears these ashes on his person on this day gets immunity from all kinds of evil influence for the ensuing twelve months.

In the hill regions of Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and U.P., Dussehra provides an occasion for

The story of Ramayana carved in strip-sequence form on temple walls.

prolonged festivities before the severe winter sets in, making all communal celebrations difficult. Despite the general poverty of the people, their enthusiasm and devotion is unbounded and their celebrations elaborate and colourful.

Against the background of ripening maize in their small fields, villagers in the hills prepare for the nine-day observance of Dussehra. The most outstanding feature of the celebrations is the emphasis on dancing. Unlike in the cities, where public dancing as part of the festivities is unheard of, the rural Hindu population of the hill districts cannot visualize Dussehra without dancing. They dance to express their joy at Lord Rama's victory over the demon king. Their gratitude to the Gods for the summer harvest is also expressed in the form of a dance before the deity.

The most picturesque of all Dussehra dancing is probably done in Kulu. In Kulu, while Lord Rama is the presiding God, a great deal of importance is also attached during the celebrations to local gods and goddesses which number several hundreds. Almost every small group of villages has a God of its own who, the local residents feel, gives them good weather, protects the crops from frost, puts colour on the apples and saves children and goats from being lost.

On the opening day of the celebrations, the local gods are carried in decorated "palkis" and taken in procession to the fair grounds. Following each "palki" come other villagers in their colourful best costumes and playing devotional music on large moon-shaped bugles. The procession is stopped frequently to enable the villagers to dance and sing.

Later, the image of Lord Rama is brought to the fair grounds from the main temple with great pomp and show and placed in an ornate chariot. The chariot is taken slowly round the ground to mark Rama's progress as the victor in the battle against evil forces. Besides dancing and singing, the people offer prayers to Lord Rama and the local gods collectively.

In Kulu, the celebrations end with the sacrifice of a buffalo as an offering to Durga. The poorer sections of the regions sacrifice goats and sheep. The sacrifice of the buffalo is only practised by the warrior classes of Kulu.

IN BENGAL

In Bengal, Dussehra is also known as Durga Puja where the accent is on Durga worship. This has sustained artisans for generations, for every year for the festival new idols of Durga have to be made. Conforming to traditional concepts of idol-making these artisans, however, have supplemented the original ideas by making a number of innovations. The idols produced in Bengal have a distinctive individuality and are extremely graceful. The fact that these idols are immersed on the 10th day has not affected the attention to detail paid in making them.

Man makes God in his own image, goes the saying, and it has been nowhere more true than in Bengal. The Shastric conception of Durga as the slayer of the demon, and upholder of right over evil, has been transformed here as the mother who protects her children from all troubles and dangers. Here we also find traces of the popular belief in the descent of Divinity to earth to straighten the complexities of man, a feature common to all religious faiths. Once a year the Divine Mother descends on the earth to bestow peace and prosperity on her children.

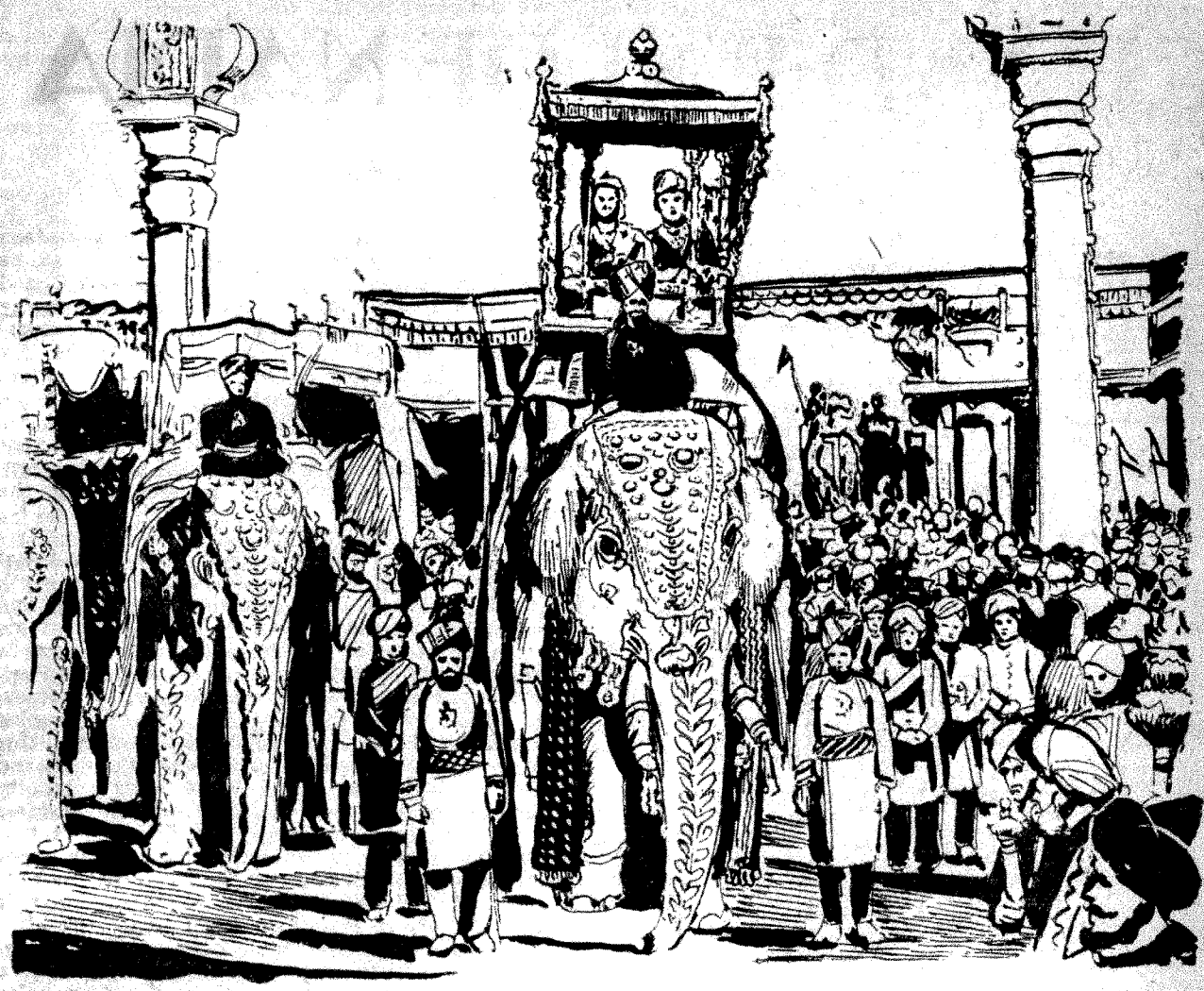
In Hindu mythology Durga is the 'Adya-Shakti', Primal Energy, which creates, sustains and even destroys. She is the Mother of all, not only of the animal world, but even of the whole hierarchy of gods and goddesses. The Puranas are full of references to her performances and exploits.

The Bengalee worshippers of the Mother have effected a synthesis of all the Shastric forms of the Mother Goddess. First we see her emerging out of the navel of Narayana floating on the eternal and endless ocean, seated on a full-blown lotus. Then we trace her through her ten forms—the 'Dasa Mahavidyas—from the pitch-black Kali, naked and adorned with a garland of severed heads dripping blood, killing the enemies of the gods to the graceful, serene Kamala, the harbinger of peace and prosperity. Thus the abstruse ideas of Hindu thought and impulse have been made concrete to the mass mind in the popular conception of the Goddess. This tradition of cultural life has come down to our own days from the distant past.

It is said that Goddess Durga takes leave from her husband to stay with her father for three days in "Kailas". It is a human story with which every man and woman in society is familiar—the visit of a daughter staying with her husband is always reckoned as the most joyous moment in a house.

The rituals and ceremonies associated with the worship of Goddess Durga as currently in vogue

"Some people wait for the effigies to be completely consumed."



His highness the maharaja mounted on a richly decorated majestic elephant goes in procession to the Bani Mandapa for traditional worship.

in Bengal are very elaborate and long drawn. The devotees offer oblation to *pitripurusha* (forefathers) on the Mahalaya Day. The *Devi Paksha* is ushered in the next day. On the sixth day of the moon, the image of Goddess Durga is installed in the mandap and is nicely decorated. For three days, 'Saptami', 'Ashtami' and 'Navami', the Puja continues amidst the din of drums and songs, the blowing of conch-shells and the chanting of mantras.

On 'Dasami' the deities are taken in procession and immersed in a tank, river or sea. After the immersion the crowds come back with a heavy heart and assemble in the mandap. After a little ceremony 'Shanti Jal' (water of peace) is sprinkled over them. Then they start greeting one another and elders blessing the younger. Next morning families move in small parties to greet relatives and friends. And thus ends this great annual socio-religious festival of the Bengalees.

IN MYSORE

The Dussehra celebrations in Mysore are said to have originated over three centuries ago, when Raja Wadiyar, an ancestor of the present Maharaja ruled in Mysore (1578-1617). This prince instituted the observance of Dussehra, after the venerable Lion Throne was made over to him by Shri Rangaraja, the descendant of the great house of Vijayanagar. Dussehra is the only occasion during which His Highness ascends the throne called "Simhasanam' (Lion Throne), and this magnificent throne, fashioned out of ivory, covered with gold and tasselled with pearls can be seen on that day.

A most colourful festival is celebrated on an extensive scale and the ten days of the festivities attract nearly ten lakhs of people from all parts of India.

On every evening of the Dussehra celebrations, a Darbar is held in the Maharaja's palace. Obeisance is done to the state elephant and horse and the state sword, as the symbols of power. The whole palace is brilliantly lit up. Troops parade in front of the Darbar Hall, wrestling and matches are held and fireworks are displayed. On the eighth day of the festival, the puja for the arms is performed in the courtyard of the palace.

The grandest spectacle of the Dussehra festival is the Jamboo Savari (the state procession) on the "Vijaya Dasami" day, a sight yet unrivalled. The procession signifies the march of conquest of Goddess Durga over Mahishasura. His Highness the Maharaja, mounted on a richly decorated majestic elephant, goes in procession to the Banni Mandapam for traditional worship. The Maharaja is preceded by the drums and bands, officials, bodyguards, state coaches and elephants, all gaily decorated. The procession reaches the Banni Mandapam parade grounds where he performs worship before the State sword and the Banni Tree. After performing the religious ceremonies the Maharaja proceeds to the "maidan" where a grand parade is held. The torchlight parade and the return procession amidst myriads of multi-coloured lights create a world of fantasy and enchantment—an unforgettable spectacle that ever remains fresh and green in the visitors memory.

CHAND RAI OF NADIA

By BHUPENDRA NATH SARKAR

IN the ancient village of Baganchra about five miles to the west of Santipur in the district of Nadia—on the sacred spot where saint Raghunandan was lost in meditation—stands the temple of Chand Rai entwined by a banyan tree in a jungle on the banks of the Gopea and left in the cold shade of neglect. Memories of Chand Rai are growing dim, as the old generations of villagers are fast dying out. Hence ours is an attempt to bring him out of the limbo of oblivion and establish his identity.

The past, though dead, speaks through its relics. Chand sleeps an eternal sleep. The temple and the Gopea bear evidence of his erstwhile existence on earth.

Chand Rai had a temple of Siva erected at Baganchra, as mentioned above. This was the biggest of the four temples that he had built. The temple, set with ornamental terra cota bricks, bore an inscription, which, freely rendered, says,—Chand Rai, engaged in the worship of Sankara and having a complacent mind, in his eagerness having placed the milk-white image of Sankara, gladly dedicated this temple, shooting its spire into the sky, in 1587 of the Saka era.

It is singularly unfortunate that the inscription is silent about the secular position of Chand. An act of Vandalism has robbed the temple of its inscription.

Three or four theories are advanced about the identity of Chand Rai. The first one is that he was a relation of Maharaja Krishna Chandra Rai of Krishnagar. The second is that he was the Dewan of Raja Rudra Rai, of whom Krishna Chandra was the fifth in descent, and the third is that he was one of the twelve Bhuiyas viz., Chand Rai of Sreepur. The fourth view is that Chand was the head of a gang of bandits. Let us examine the views.

Bharat Chandra, the court-poet of Krishna Chandra mentions in his "Annada-mangal", Chand Rai as a relation of the Maharaja. Krishna Chandra lived from 1710 A.D. to 1782 A.D., and the poet finished his book eighty-seven years after the temple had been built. Chand Rai could not possibly live up to that time and, for the matter of that, to the time of Krishna Chandra. The poet might have referred to some other Chand Rai, living near about Krishnagar. A negative proof is that there is no mention of Chand Rai in "Kshitisbansabalicharit", an authoritative book which discusses everything of importance about the family of Krishna Chandra.

About the second view, we find that Rudra Rai obtained a firman from Alamgir in 1676 A.D. It is likely that Chand Rai who dedicated his temple in 1665 A.D. was a contemporary of Rudra Rai. It is said that Chand Rai established a village named Brahmasasan nearby, where Brahmins predominated. Hedges, of the East India Company, in his diary, 1682, says that he came to Rewee (modern Krishnanagar)—the capital of Udai Rai—evidently Rudra Rai—by a country boat along the river. This river flowed past Chand Rai's temple.

The river having left its bed, it is at present known as Gopea's Beel or Bagdevi Beel. Hedges is supposed to have passed by this route seventeen years after the temple had been built. Had he followed this route, he must have mentioned Chand Rai, Dewan to Rudra Rai to whom he was paying a visit. Hedges is silent about Chand. The natural inference is that either Hedges did not go by this way or this Chand Rai was not Dewan to Rudra Rai. If he had been Dewan to Rudra Rai, he would have, according to the prevailing usage, mentioned his chief in the inscription. It is to be noticed that rows of tamarind trees, with peacocks, hovering here and there, were till lately to be seen along the water-way.

If the third view be correct, then Chand Rai must have fought with Man Singha in his youth and after his humiliation settled at Baganchra and dedicated the temple to Siva at the fag-end of his life. If the story of his humiliation at the hands of Isha Khan be a myth, on his way back from Puri, Chand might have erected this temple. We know from his life-story that he built many temples dedicated to Siva. He might have selected this place for his final abode of peace after the dust and heat of life had been over, because of its proximity to the Bhagirathi and the seat of the goddess Bagdevi, a place of sanctity. Tradition has it that he used to drive to the river for a holy bath every day ; and people still point to the path used by him. According to Sri Ananda Nath Ray, "Tradition tells us that a crore of rupees was put under the altar over which Sivalinga was placed. "The local people believe that under the temple there is a hoard of coins guarded by 'Jaksas' of popular superstition. These nobody ventures to take for fear of extinction.

About the end of Chand it is said that he once tried to disgrace an ascetic. Thereupon the ascetic became angry and brought about Chand's ruin. But we should be careful in giving credence to such legends, especially in view of the facts that ascetics who were spiritually advanced could not act in the manner indicated and that a man of Chand's temperament could not put a sage to shame. Another noteworthy fact is that the ornamental work at the temple at Baganchra is, to some extent, similar to that at the temple (now extinct) at Rajbari.

Some, again, have confused Chand Rai of Baganchra with Chand Rai of Rajmahal. Both cannot be identical, as the latter was a powerful Zemindar who lived on plunder and latterly turned out to be a Vaisnava. The former, we should remember, was a Saiva.

It is possibly a fortuitous concourse of events that the goddess Bhubaneswari, bearing the name of "Kedar Rai," is still to be found at the house of the Rai Choudhuries at Lakhuria, a village on the Bhagirathi in the district of Nadia. The stories connected with the advent of the goddess at the place, where she is at present, do not lend support to the supposition that she was in any way attracted by Chand Rai.

It is hazardous to come to any conclusion about the identity of Chand Rai. We leave it to our readers to form their own judgments.

ORIGIN OF THE CULT OF THE GREAT MOTHER THE MOUNTAIN GODDESS 'Parvati'

By SUDHINDRA KUMAR KAVYA-SANKHYA-TIRTHA

THE Mother Goddess in some form or other seems to have dominated the thought and action of the HOMO SAPIENS from time immemorial. The cult of the Great Mother in varied and colourful images and diverse names has its roots away in the dim and distant past.

We find striking similarities in the concept and worship of the Great Mother as the Mountain Goddess, literally meaning—'PARVATI', and also in the cultural finds of the most ancient peoples. There is evidence of it and it dates back to the pre-historic times. This is true of the OLDEST civilizations of the Middle East and the Near East as well as of India. One could cast one's look from the Mediterranean down to the Persian Gulf and the Indus region and there stand unearthed many images of gods and goddesses.

On mountainous river valleys of the Tigris and the Euphrates, the Oxus and the Indus, and of the Nile sprang up ancient kingdoms and cultures of Sumeru and Egypt, Babylonia and Assyria, Airyana and Susiana, and Harappa and Mahenjodaro, Chanhu-daro and Rupar, and Gandhar. The Pancha-Nada, Ganga and Yamuna, Saraswati and Ikshumati, Narmada and Tapti, Kaveri and Godavari, along with KANYA KUMARIKA, produced the common Mother Goddess, the LION-BORNE 'PARVATI'.

In all the concepts, She is almost invariably accompanied by or riding on lions and living in mountains, caves and forests. She is found sitting on a lion, or standing majestically before two lions planting her foot on one of them or reclining on the other. She is also found seated on a throne, accompanied by two lions in a relic of 1500 B.C. In a seal discovered at Knossos She is depicted as standing on the peak of a mountain flanked by two lions. Much more significant and ancient was the monumental discovery of the Sumerian and Babylonian Mother Goddess—'ISHTAR' at Mari, Iswari, Isin or Isani, who seems to have ruled the fertile region of the Tigris and the Euphrates not only between 3000 B.C. and 2000 B.C. but also at a much earlier and later period, as the guardian deity of the royal dignitaries and the commoners alike.

TEMPLE OF 'ISHTAR'

15 bronze lions, in a majestic posture, guard the unearthed temple of 'ISHTAR' at the entrance of the retiring chamber of the virgin Mother Goddess, and some others are at the gate of the temple. The concept is so similar to that of Kanya Kumari Uma, the UMMA of the ancient Sumerian fame of the pre-dynastic period, Umma meaning also 'mother' in Sumerian, Assyrian and Sabaean tongues. At Boghas-keui (evidently associated with the ancient deity 'BHAGA', also of the Big Vedic times), the famous capital of the 'Khatti's' (transcribed as Hittites in the Bible), so akin to the 'KSHATRA's of India "KSHAITRA." of the Rig-Vedic Age ("KSHAITRA-PATI" Mandhatara: Rg. Vd. 1, 112, 13.) the Goddess Umma is depicted in a votive relief with her child on her lap like our GANESHA-JANANI UMA. In the temple of Karnak of about 1000 B.C. was found an image of Goddess ISIS, Isa or ISANI, a fine granite figurine having beautiful face. In a notable bronze sculpture

the ancient LION-HEADED GODDESS 'SEKUNENT' is depicted with her son 'NEFARTIM' on her knees, feeding him from her breast, so like the 'GANESHA-JANANI' of the Indic civilization. The words 'SEKUNENT' and 'NEFARATIM' may well remind one of 'SUKANTA' AND 'NAVARATI'. Among the names of the 'KASSITE' ('Kasya', 'KASYAPA'?) regimes of Babylonia are found 'SUKAMAN', 'SUNAMA', 'SUMALY'. They are also akin to Sanskrit words.

EGYPTIAN 'DIGAMBARI'

No less significant is the discovery of an ancient MOTHER—Goddess in Egypt of the 19th Dynasty in a remarkable sculpture in which a beautiful 'KAMINI'-like figurine with slim waist and globular breasts is found standing nude on a lion. She seems to be the Mother Goddess 'ANAT ('ANANTA' or 'ANNADA' ?), a name of *Ishtar*. On one hand She is holding lotus and on the other spikes of barley, which look like serpents and have something to do with the famous ancient symbol of 'Naga'-NAGINI', invariably associated with 'Hara-Parvati'.

GODDESS OF FORGOTTEN AGES

It is remarkable that no pre-historic images or paintings or sculptures of the SINHA-VAHINI, LION GODDESS, nor any representation of a similar deity in seals and inscriptions, pots and coins, have yet been found in India. The lands of this most ancient Mother Goddess have forgotten her long ago along with their great civilizations which remained buried in the deserts for several thousands of years. Nevertheless, the same forgotten Mother Goddess of the Middle and the Near East has established herself firmly in our country for a pretty long time, more especially and prominently in Bengal, Mysore, Kerala and some other parts, as the most popular and principal Mother Goddess. She is equally worshipped by the Adivasis of pre-Vedic and post-Vedic India and also by the mixed descendants of the pre-Vedic, Vedic and post-Vedic times, who are racially miscalled 'Aryans' and more appropriately called 'HINDUS', the people as known to the then ancient world as living beyond the Indus, with pomp and grandeur, though in diverse and colourful ways.

Goddess of Egypt Isis the mother

The cultures of the so-called non-Aryans, Yakshas and Siddhas, Gandharvas and Kinnaras, Kaudreya Sarpas and Nagas, have left deep imprints on the pre-Vedic and Vedic, Hindu and Buddhist cultures and greatly contributed to the development of the common people of India known as the 'Hindu', multi-coloured descendants of various racial mixtures and traits.

This is not the time and place for consideration of these aspects of the pre-historic India. What is remarkable in regard to the development of the concept of the Mother Goddess in our country is her much elder connections with the religious practices of the pre-Vedic peoples including especially 'ASURA's and their priests and priestesses and great architect and chief like 'TVASHTA' and his son 'TRISIRA', triple-headed, with whom Indra fought so many epic battles.

The Goddess ishtar, (Babylonian)

The recent excavations, says Sir Mortimer Wheeler, show traces of the Indus Valley Civilization as far south as the Tapti river and gives it a coast line of over 800 miles. This ancient Indic culture might well have extended further to the South with the same or similar regimes. The existence of the monumental and colourful statue, 20 ft. high of the Great 'MAHISASURA', accompanied by an exquisitely-executed rock-cut figure of a huge sitting BULL, 16 ft. high, a master piece of sculptor, on the way to the significant 'CHAMUNDESVARI' temple on the equally-significant 'CHAMUNDI' hill near the ancient city of 'MAHISUR', also reminds us of the same intimate connection of the ASURAs and their Mother Goddess CHAMUNDA, who later developed into the concept of 'MAHISA-MARDINI' DURGA.

The majestic figure of 'MAHISASURA' in a priest-like cloak and having a 'KHADGA', daggar in one hand and a SERPENTINE SCEPTRE like 'NAGA-DANDA', also reminds us of the PRIEST-KINGS and Emperors of ancient Assyria.

GODDESS CHAMUNDA

A prominent name of the same mountain Goddess PARVATI is the aforesaid CHAMUNDA, having a curious word formation of non-Sanskrit nature, showing her original connection possibly with Chandas and Mundas, Chandrasuras and Mundasuras, Samvaras and Savaras, Sumbhas and Nisumbhas, of the same Asura people. Many other Hindu Deities also owe their origin to the pre-Vedic cultures of a multi-racial in nature. Lakshmi and Sarasvati are obviously connected with 'Yakshi' and 'SIRI' and still remembered as 'A-LAKSMI', the Goddess of evil.

Durga herself is still enshrined in the unforgettable memory of our common people as 'CHANDI' and 'MUNDI' as well as 'SAVARI' and 'KIRATI', thereby showing their evident connections with the Asura heroes Chanda and Munda and the 'Savara' and the 'Kirata' peoples. From the pre-Vedic and Vedic ages down to the Mahabharat war there has been continuous battles and struggles

(Continued on page 18)

THE MOTHER

Fortune of the good

By Dr. ROMA CHAUDHURI

INDIA has ever been a land of Freedom—Freedom of Thought, as well as of Speech. This freedom is, however, not confined to the ordinary, empirical sphere only, but is extended equally fully, equally truly, equally gloriously to the transcendental, spiritual sphere, no less. That is why, in India, we find numerous conceptions, as well as, numerous descriptions of even the Highest Reality—Brahman, Isvara, Atman: the Absolute, God, Soul.

But perhaps one of the most surprising descriptions of God is found in our very own, beloved *"Chandi"*, by common consent the most exhilarating treatise on the Worship of the Mother—Form of God. How boldly does it assert in one place—

"She, the Fortune of the good, And *Misfortune* of the bad"; etc.

(Sri Sri Chandi 4.5.)

This, indeed, is a most extraordinary description of God, as ever found, in the world. As it is, it is one of the most baffling problems of Philosophy as to why should there be at all sins and sorrows, impurities and imperfections, trials and tribulations in a world of God—a good God, a just God, a benign God. For according to this theory of Creator-God, God is either only the efficient cause,

(Continued on page 24)

THE MOUNTAIN GODDESS 'PARVATI'

(Continued from page 16)

with the 'SAMVARA' Asuras. The Chandels and Chandals, Mundas and Savaras seem to be their mixed descendants and offshoots. Siva and Parvati are also invariably associated with the Nagas and Sarpas, 'Yaksha' and 'Yakshini' and 'Yogini'. Yaksha-king Kuvera's head is still used as an offering to DURGA. In the Upanishad age 'KAUVERI', the great queen of Kuvera was later transformed into the proverbial treasurer of the gods.

Even up to the Maha VHARAT Age we do not find the worship of Durga as we know Her now. She is clearly described as the Goddess 'CHANDI' who used to be worshipped in forests by Savaras, Barbaras, Chandals and Pulindas, obviously mixed descendants of the Asuras and other peoples. In the MahaBharat even the ancient 'VIJAYA' Utsava, the victory celebration of the Savaras is mentioned.

The traditions of this ANCIENT WORSHIP OF 'CHANDI-MUNDI' continued throughout the Vedic and post-Vedic periods down to the Buddhist Age and the Christian era up to this day.

BLACK GODDESS OF VINDYA HILLS

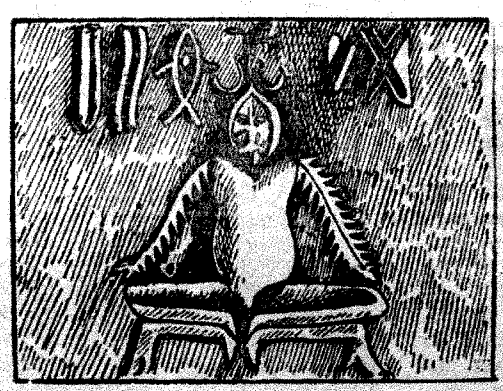
In the Mahabharat, in the Vanparva, Biratparva and Bhisma Parva, references are made to a FIERCE BLACK GODDESS OF DESTRUCTION, a dweller in the Vindya hills, older than the Himalayas. She is said to have slain the BUFFALO DEMON, Mahishasura in an epic battle there. She is also said to be a sister of Krishna, and named as 'KRISHNA'. No doubt, Krishna led the then India, as depicted in the manifold fratricidal struggles between the Kshatriyas and Brahmans and other non-Vedic peoples, to the path of destruction by a NATIONAL SUICIDE of a nature and scale hardly witnessed in history. He must have also appeared as the God of destruction. However, this throws a flood of light on the non-Vedic and pre-Vedic concept of the ORIGINAL BLACK GODDESS, closely resembling also the DARK NIGHT OF THE RATRI SUKTA, who still lives in the Hindu concept of 'Chandi', worshipped today as Durga and also as KALI. Several Upanishads referred to her in various forms in course of the development of the very peculiar SHAKTI CULTs of India, as worshipped by five kinds of offerings, wine and meat, etc.

In the Southern India Durga is called 'AMMA,' Mari, the Mother, equivalent to Khatti 'MA', and worshipped as "KOMATI KANYA KUMARI". Everywhere She is found, originally, as the VIRGIN MOTHER GODDESS creating out of her and by her power all beings who are sons and daughters to her. In the Rig. Veda in a notable Sukta, X. 72. Laukya Vrihaspati or 'DAKSHAYANI ADITI,' possibly addressed to her, describes the birth of creation, existence from non-existence in the ages before the birth of gods, and then personifies the creative energy in the remarkable words that 'DAKSHA' (i.e. Prajapati) was produced by Aditi and Aditi from Daksha; "DEVANAM PURVYE YUGE ASATA SADAJAYATI.... ADITERDAKSHA AJAYATA DAKSHAT ADITI PARI." She is still popularly known as Dakshayani Gouri. Daksha, quite possibly, had earlier connection with Yaksha and both Vindya and the Himalaya have been identified in our mythology with the Daksha and Dakshayani as the daughter of the Himalaya and worshipped as 'VINDYA VASINI' as well. KRISHNA is to be remembered in this context along with the river KRISHNA, possibly named after her, as KAVERI after the great KAUVERI, the FIRST KNOWLEDGABLE PERSONIFIED.

In the authentic parts of the Rig Veda, there is only one very important Sukta, X. 125, called DEVI Sukta, which refers to Rudrani but addressed to VAK Devi, in the name of 'VAGAMVRINI', which shows her peculiar characteristics according to the Age in which this was composed. Here Her claim to worship as the FIRST DESERVING is stressed as the creator of wealth, as installed in various homes, the maker of kingdoms, "RASTRI", the upholder and nourisher of MITRA AND Varnua, Soma and Bhaga, TWASTTA and Pushana, Indra and Agni and Asvins Bakambhrini proudly says: "AHAM RUDREVI, VASUVISCHARAYAHAM-ADITYAIRUTA VISWADEVAI": "I roam with Rudras and Vasus, Adityas and Viswadevas," that is, not with one Rudra but Rudras. She further say : "I bend the bow of Rudra and put arrows in it. . . ." I shine *above* the head of the Father," that is, Siva Maheswara, the root of the later legend of 'Ganga' and 'Ganga-dhara'. Her abode, "YONI", origin, is still in the Ocean, not in the mountains. This is precisely a description of the Mother Goddess which fits with the CROSS ROAD and turning point of pre-history when the power of the Mother was still dominant but waning along with the rising power of the Father as the head of the family and the community.

LION GODDESS OF BABYLONIA

For the present, I will close this article by referring to an extraordinary figurine of ISHTAR, belonging to the period of Larsa dynasty that ruled the region before Hammu-Rabi in about 2100 B.C. She is NUDE, 'DIGAMBARI', and possesses a fine oval face, thin lips, and globular breats of NAGINI type and has acquiline nose. What is more remarkable is that She obviously looks like NAGINI Devi of the later Hindu concept and conspicuously wears a SNAKE HEAD DRESS with a deductive and charming expression, also holding in her hands, significantly, the old symbol of YONI and LINGA, but with a NOTABLE DIFFERENCE that She is *standing upon two reclining* lions and has also BIRD'S FEET AND WINGS. Remarkably, two owls, the symbol of Lakshmi and Minerva, are standing at her side. This very ancient image seems to COMBINE the concept of the Indian Mother Goddess in diverse forms and attributes of PARVATI, DURGA, LAKSHMI, and KAMARUPA NAGINI, who has been described in the Tripura-Upanishad as "YONI-VIJA-RUPA, KAMAKALA-SWARUPA" and as "JAGAJJANANI", the great Mother of the world, representing the very source of the creative force and impulse, symbolically.



UNIVERSITY EDUCATION Under an Eclipse

By Dr. SRIKUMAR BANERJEE

UNIVERSITY education not only in India but all over the world seems to have been suffering from a steady and progression devaluation in recent years. The devaluation is not only in respect of external prestige and utility, but in its inner essence and self-estimate as well. Not only does the world show scant respect to its academicians, but university people themselves do not look so big in their own eyes as they used to do. They have been dwarfed and outdistanced by taller giants in other walks of life and have consequently shrunk in self-esteem. That absolute self-confidence which alone can foster a dedicated life has been undermined by the trend of events and even Browning's frammarian would have lectrayed today. Some inevitable qualms of doubt about the determination of his intellectual interests.

The subject of the marked deterioration of university standards is a trite and well-trotted topic of discussion by academic authorities and its causes have been analysed with a somewhat tedious iteration. Constructive suggestions as to how to stop the rot have however not yet been precisely formulated. Vague statements about the unsuitability of the courses of study and tests adopted have been thrown out rather casually. But no body of experts has as yet taken the lead in drawing up curricula move in accord with the needs of the new situation and devising tests that might be more searching and reliable. Only mechanical devices like restricting admissions, splitting up examinations into two or more parts, introducing viva voice tests which are infinitely more erratic and whimsical than the written test have been sought to be enforced without any clear realisation of their impact upon the mind of the students. The proliferation of universities in India with little attention to distinctive features or varying regional needs merely emphasises the dull and soulless uniformity in university instruction and failure to think out new methods of approach in consonance with the temper and tastes of the young people in each area. One might travel from Kerala to Mithila and from Kashmir to Assam without experiencing any the least touch of novelty and any vestige of originality in planning and execution. Every centre of learning is as unvaried as a railway line that covers a certain period of time instead of space and at the end of that period leads as inevitably to a predetermined destination.

Leaving academicians to their pleasant pastime of interminable discussions and no action, one can turn with more profit to enquire into the causes which have led to the slump of academic values in modern life. Scholars came to the top during the heyday of the Renaissance in Europe because they were the main channel through which the new fermenting wine of a sense of the unlimited potentialities of life flowed on into the social conciousness. In that golden age, classical learning was not a mere dusty absorption in theoretical knowledge, but it provided a quickening message, an invigorating exhilaration to the sober routine of life itself. It was at the root of the most wonderful creative fervour in literature and the most adventurous temper of exploration in practical affairs. It was the one pervasive spirit that dominated the mind of the age, being at work equally in the drama of Marlowe and the University Wits and the sheer, dare-devil bravado of Drake and the circumnavigators. Moreover even the manners of the average city-dwellers, including merchants, gallants and play-goers, testified to the impact of the new spirit that was abroad.

But the reign of the Renaissance in national life was but short-lived and its supermacy challenged by the more sombre spirit of the reformation. So scholarship gradually came to lose its hold on the national mind, excepting what little of it survived in the form of clerical influence and its reflection in literature. With the growth of the political sense and of trade and commerce in the 19th century, which became the main absorbing interest of the nation, scholarship slunk back to its academic seclusion, inspiring respect in progressive societies,

in which its value was permanently recognised but hardly exercising any appreciable influence upon the broad current of national life. Science was deflected either to professional pursuits or to a technological application to problems of industry and today it is valued not so much for itself as for its practical service to humanity. Today in some European countries the holders of university degrees are treated with a good deal of deference and encouraged to maintain high standards in academic life. But any pretension to leadership from this class is quite unceremoniously dismissed.

In India the same process of denigration has followed at a much quicker rate and before a disinterested love for learning could take deep root in the community. The brief spell of influence exercised by educated young people in India was limited to the period when Western learning inspired creative literature and journalism and university-trained people were entrusted with high administrative services and stood high in popular esteem as arbiters of the fate of the masses. When political fever leading to the launching of the non-co-operation movement was at its height, universities came to be branded as *Golam Khanas* and all intellectual cultivation decried as a luxury of the mind which enervated more than it inspired. Academic life even today has hardly recovered from this depreciation of value, and not unoften a touch of unspoken contempt spices our conventional admiration for its so-called idealism.

Nor can the position be said to have improved since Independence. With independence, politics became the besetting passion and increase of material resources the sole goal of the national effort and the academician has found himself a little out of the picture. If he is not a scientist or a technologist, he will have little opportunity of making any significant contribution towards the advancement of the country. The cultural level takes years of silent, devoted work before it can be appreciably raised. Moreover, objective conditions are all too unpropitious for the success of his efforts. Both to Government and to himself he appears to be something of a misfit in the running of the complex administrative and economic machinery that functions today. A knowledge of literature or history will hardly avail to solve the problem of unemployment and determine the rational basis of strikes. Even a student of economics or statistics can do little to explore the mystery of soaring prices and to unravel the tangled skein of Five Year Plans. His little learning seems completely swept away by the rush of tremendous forces suddenly released in the country. The sense of his own impotence drives him to shrink deeper within his shell rather than to come out into the open and face the multiple challenge of life.

The party system of Government as it has developed in India has further damped the spirit of intellectuals, by demonstrating how entirely useless they are in utilising their talents for the service of the country. Today the Government stands entirely on the basis of the voting strength of its supporters, and the more silent and un-questioning the support, the better for the Government. So all debating talent and probing efficiency are virtually concentrated in the ranks of the Opposition, and the Government, so long as they are confident of the numerical superiority of their partisans, do not bother about a reasoned exposition of their policy. The so-called experts who may be supposed to advise Government on the framing of its major policies are more concerned with carrying out their masters instructions than with offering them independent views calculated to curb their errors. The Five Year Plans have all along been taken on trust rather than convincingly presented. When they have failed, the blame has been laid at the door of everything else but defective planning. The initiative has been wrested from intellectuals and assigned to bureaucrats who are all the more serviceable if they are not troubled with excess of brains. Sometimes in a period of crisis the cry is raised to have a ministry of all talents as the only remedy for the ills of the State. Nothing could be more incongruous in the context of the present setup, in which the driving force, if any, is located in other centres than the brain to conceive aright and the will-power to execute the planning with dispatch and determination.

The university man is not even the leader of society and moulder of its thoughts and opinions. Demagogues and members of village Panchayets on the one, and Government agents of various categories on the other, have supplanted teachers in their position of natural leadership of the masses. Even members of the moffussil bar no longer have their old prestige and influence and the practitioners of the learned profession have yielded place to the village intriguer and agitator. This position of impotence naturally saps the self-confidence of the educated man who feels himself bypassed by the stream of life and his dearly bought learning of little help to find his bearings in a rapidly shifting world. The university has taught him little to adapt himself to the vortex of change in which he is engulfed, unless he is safely ensconced in a comfortable academic or clerical berth. The rough and tumble of modern life finds him woefully unprepared and wading desperately beyond his depths. Life and he had parted company the moment he had crossed the threshold of the university quadrangle, and the young student, heedless of our wellmeant advice, naturally seeks to reinforce his contact with life by throwing to the four winds all canons of academic discipline and jumping into the fray at its most riotous and explosive points. Perhaps an unerring intuition has taught him what older and more sophisticated minds are reluctant to admit that his future lies in equipping himself for tasting the mixed savour of life through those unconventional escapades. He uses the four years of his academic life not for sharpening his brain which will mow no grass for him but for whetting his battle-axe with which he hopes to hew his way forward. It is a lurid commentary on our academic life that its centrifugal force is far stronger than its centripetal attraction.

This brings us back to our subject proper with a bump. The basic malady of higher education is its maladjustment with life and the only effective remedy would be to ensure its right relation with the rhythm of the contemporary world. In fixing the courses of study and methods of work in our universities the aim that authorities should steadily have in sight is not to keep the academic world in complete isolation from the real. No doubt, the whole of the unsifted and disorganised miscellary of life will not admit of being fitted into the academic pattern. At the same time we must not live entirely in a world of exploded values and outmoded systems. The courses must be mapped out so as to include some incipient trends that are not yet established truths but yet have a probing and questioning value. The students should be given an intellectual foretaste of the intractable problems they will have to face in the outside world. We must not complacently fiddle on the old tunes, while the Rome of traditional values in burning and falling in ruins before us. No mere tinkering reforms, no mere re-orientation of authorities, not even

(Continued on page 24)

Spiritual Initiation of SRI GOURANGA

By RAMANI KUMAR DATTA GUPTA

EVERY SOUL IS DESTINED to be perfect. We shape our own destinies no doubt, but that does not preclude our receiving help from outside. Such outside help is quite essential specially in spiritual life. When outside help comes, the higher powers and possibilities of the soul are quickened, spiritual life is awakened, growth is animated and man becomes holy and perfect in the end. This quickening impulse cannot be had from books. The soul can only receive impulse and inspiration from another soul, and from nothing else. The person from whose soul such impulse and inspiration come is called the **guru** or preceptor, and the person to whose soul the impulse is transmitted is called the **shishya** or disciple. The transmission of this spiritual power is called **diksha** or initiation. The real guru is the one through whom we have spiritual descent. He is the channel through whom spiritual current flows to us. He is the link which joins us to the whole spiritual world.

The soul from which the impulse proceeds must possess the power of transmitting it to another, and the soul to which the impulse is transmitted must also be fit to receive it. The seed must be a living seed, and the field must be ready ploughed; and when both these conditions are fulfilled, a wonderful growth of spirituality happens. The true teacher of spirituality has to be a person of wonderful capabilities, and his hearer shall be skillful and worthy—thus says the Upanishada. When both the teacher and the aspirant are really wonderful and extraordinary, then will a splendid spiritual awakening result, and not otherwise.

The spiritual teacher must, therefore, be the person of renunciation, wisdom, truth, purity, love and selflessness. Above all he must be a seer of God. The conditions necessary for the aspirant are

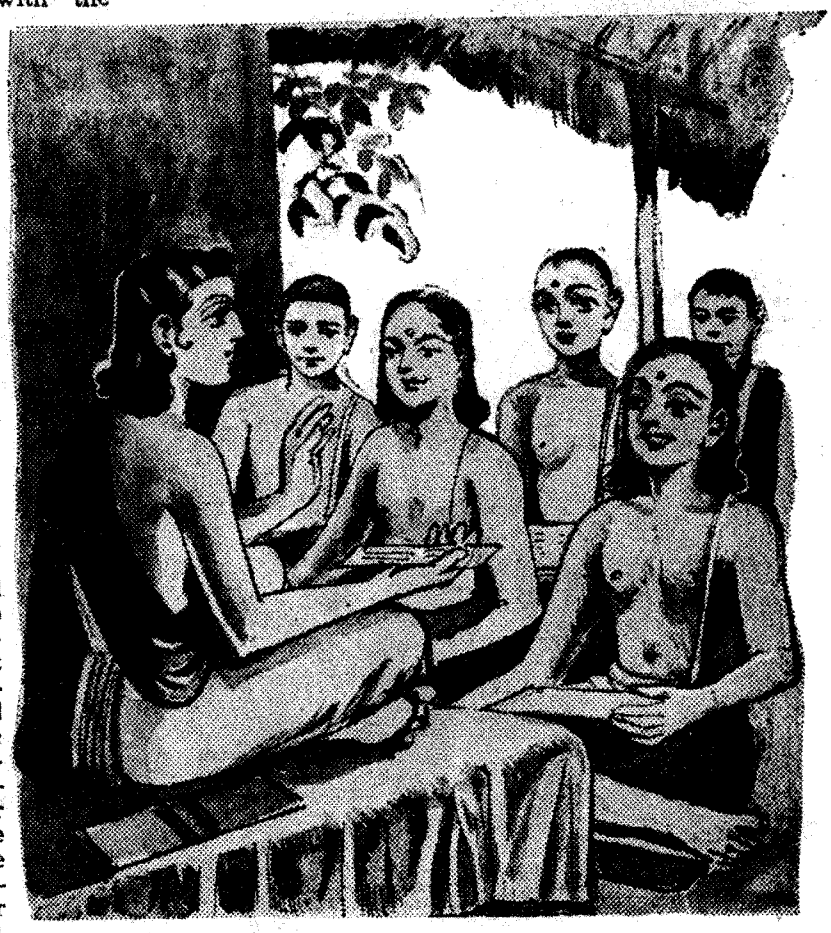
urity of body and mind, spirit of veneration, real irst for spiritual knowledge and perseverance.

Spiritual initiation is of three kinds—*shambhabi, shakti* and *mantri*. In the *shambhabi diksha*, t the very sight and touch of and talk with the receptor spiritual illumination dawns n the disciple. In this initiation neither he preceptor has any previous resolve to nitiate the disciple, nor the disciple any re-intention to be initiated. The moient the preceptor sees the disciple, he eels an immediate urge to shower his race on him and initiates him. In the **hakti diksha**, the preceptor transmits is own spiritual power into the disciple nd as a result enlightenment dawns on he disciple. In the **mantri diksha**, the receptor after going through prescribed ituals and ceremonials utters the sacred nantra into the ears of the disciple and nitiates him.

Nimai Pandit opened a tol at Nabadwip for teaching different branches of Sanskrit learning. His fame as a profound scholar and an efficient teacher spread far and wide. One day a Vaishnava saint named Iswar Puri visited Advaitcharya's place at Santipur. The Sannyasi's love and devotion charmed everybody. At that time the saint also visited Nabadwip. One day Nimai happened to meet him on the way and felt intensively drawn to his life of renunciation, dispassion, love, devotion and purity. Nimai invited the saint to take **bhiksha** at his place. The sannyasi acceded to his prayer and was cordially entertained and fed. From a close and eager talk with the saint it transpired that the sannyasi was Iswr Puri, belonging to the **dashnami** sect founded by Sankaracharya. He hailed from Kumarhatta or Halisahar in the district of 24-Parganas. Iswar, son of Shyamsundar Acharya, renounced the world and was initiated into sannyasa by Madhavendra Puri, whose disciples were also Advaitacharya and Pundarik. Nimai was very much pleased with the sannyasi's love of God, erudition and scriptural lore. The saint, too, felt extremely delighted with the loving care and hospitality of Nimai, Sachidevi and Vishnupriya. Iswar Puri came to Nabadwip to have an ablution into the Ganges and to dwell on its bank. With this object in view he put up at the place of Gopinath Acharya, a great devotee, for more than a month.

During his stay at Nabadwip Iswar Puri wrote 'Krishnaleelamrita', a treatise on Krishna-cult and religion of love, and used to read it out to Gadadhar Pandit, a friend of Nimai. Puriji heard of Nimai Pandit's profundity of learning and requested the young scholar to revise his treatise. Nimai did not accede to his request saying with utmost humility: I am quite unfit and have no right to revise and review a treatise on Krishna-cult and love. A sinner is he, who finds flaw in the description of Krishna. God does not find any defect in the poetic achievement of His devotee. Who, therefore, dares find any flaw in the description of Krishna? Pleased with Nimai's humility and courtesy Puriji requested him to rectify only grammatical mistakes and other errors, if any. Nimai agreed, revised the treatise thoroughly and endorsed his opinion.

Iswar Puri's holy association and the revision of his treatise left a deep impress on Nimai Pandit's mind. Study and teaching, scholarship and debate, name and fame—all these lost their charm for Nimai.



Nimai Pandit opened a tol at Nabadwip for teaching different branches of Sanskrit learning.

Before his death father Jagannath Mishra told Nimai, "My dear son, heed my words. Prove yourself worthy of your parents. People will attain redemption by your birth. It is my earnest desire that you will offer *pindas* or oblations to your forefathers at the holy feet of Vishnu at Gaya."

Two or three years after Iswar Puri's *bhiksha* at the place of Sachidevi, Nimai in obedience to his revered father's behest visited Gaya to offer oblations. Chandrasekhar Acharya and some of his relatives and pupils accompanied Nimai. In strict adherence to shastric injunctions Nimai performed the necessary rituals and ceremonies — tarpan, shradh, ablution, offering of oblations at Gaya. At the very sight of the sacred feet of Vishnu in the temple Nimai fell into a religious ecstasy and became a totally changed man. Iswar Puri was practising *tapasya* and meditation at Gaya at that time. Puriji lovingly embraced Nimai, who at once regained his consciousness and reverentially bowed down to him. Nimai was happy beyond measure to see the saint once again there, cooked food with his own hands, entertained the God-intoxicated sannyasi and heard from him words of divine love. Iswar Puri out of deep grace initiated the young aspirant Nima into Krishna-cult. The preceptor could recognise divine powers in the disciple, to whom he

said: Thou art the Incarnation of God—the knowledge Absolute and the Bliss Absolute.

Sometime after initiating Nimai, Iswar Puri left Gaya for Brindaban and met there Abadhut Nityananda, whom he told to seek 'Kanai' at Nabadwip instead of at Brindaban. On his return journey from Gaya Nimai felt an urge to visit Kumarhatta, the sacred birth-place of his guru Iswar Puri. 'Chaitanya Bhagabat' describes this august visit thus: Nimai took the holy dust of Kumarhatta on his head, bowed down to the birth-place of his guru, shed tears of love and devotion and feelingly uttered forth nothing but 'Iswar Puri'. He dug some earth from that place, wrapped it carefully with his outer garment and expressed himself, 'This earth of my guru Iswar Puri's birth-place is my very life, wealth and soul'.

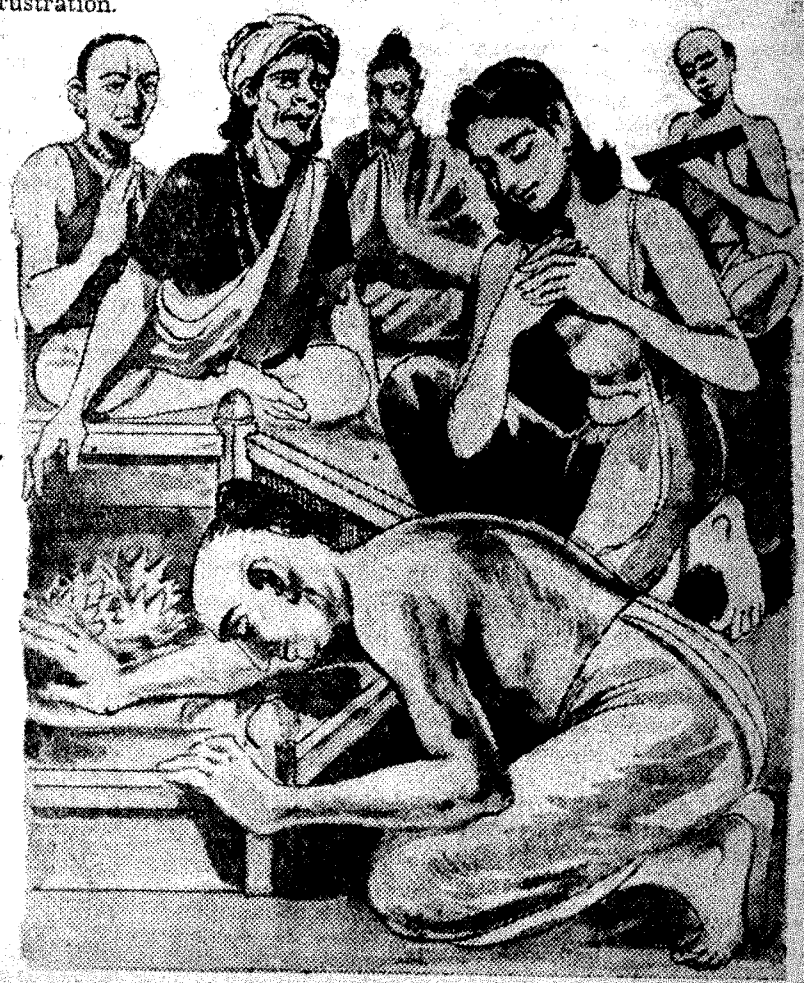
Nimai returned to Nabadwip a totally changed man—everybody noticed something new in his mode of living, tastes and demeanour. His mother, wife and relatives were surprised to see the condition of his mind. Nimai did not like to hear anything except discourses on God. Dry arguments and debates on scriptures were distasteful to him. He spent most of his time in worship, prayer and meditation. He was quite indifferent to worldly affairs and work of teaching at the tol. Association with others was eschewed as poison. He remained silent in pensive mood in solitude. Tears rolled down his cheeks in the name of Hari. He heaved deep and piteous sighs of despair and frustration. Such were Nimai's unbearable pangs of separation from his beloved Krishna.

Sachi Devi apprehended something wrong with her dear son. She tried various means of restoring her son to his healthy state of mind and body, but in vain. Nimai's ecstasies increased more and more. Vishnupriya looked after her lord's care. Relatives and well-wishers ascribed Nimai's mental condition to some disease in the brain. Medicines were used with no effect. When his pupils attended their classes at the tol, Nimai told them plainly, "It is beyond my power to teach you. You should go to other teachers." Pressed hard by his pupils Nimai would begin to teach them texts, but would be entirely lost in spiritual fervour in no time. As a result his pupils left the tol one by one and the tol ceased to exist.

Nimai's teacher Gangadas Pandit persuaded him thus: Nimai, pay heed to your profession of teaching. Why are you so mad for 'Krishna'? Look after wordly affairs and discharge your duties to the family—by doing this you will achieve virtue, wealth, enjoyment and salvation. With folded hands Nimai replied, "Master, I wish I would look after worldly affairs, but my mind is out of control, some unknown power seems to divert me perforce." The famous Tantric Sadhak Krishnananda Agambagish, Nimai's class-mate, advised him to abandon his excessive religiosity and take to household duties. But all those efforts proved futile.

From Nimai's talks, mode of living and mental condition noted devotees like Advaitacharya, Sribas, Mukunda, Murari Gupta, Damodar, Sridhar, Gadadhar, Jagadananda and others clearly understood that the divine love of a very high order had dawned on Nimai Pandit after his spiritual initiation at Gaya, and that it was a rare thing in human life and could be had only by God's grace. People of Nabadwip were much drawn to Nimai, in whom they found a really God-intoxicated man.

Nimai felt in the inmost recess of his heart that by renunciation alone he could redeem people through the preaching of the name of Hari. One day a venerable Sannyasi named Keshab Bharati, belonging to the Dashnami sannayasi sect founded by Shankaracharya, came from Katowa in the district of Burdwan for *bhiksha* at the place of Nimai. The saint was cordially entertained. Nimai heard in detail from Bharatiji if he had any right to become a sannyasi. Intense dispassion and spirit of renunciation urged Nimai to take to the austere life of a sannyasi. One night Nimai renounced the world plunging his mother, wife and the whole host of relatives and friends into the sea of grief and wandered all the way to Katowa, where he was initiated into sannyasa by Keshab Bharati and named Sri Krishna-Chaitanya.



At the very sight of the sacred feet of Vishnu in the temple, Nimai fell into a religious ecstasy and became a totally changed man.

THE MOTHER

(Continued from page 17)

both the efficient and material cause of this niverse of souls and matter. In the first case, He kes the material for creation of the Universe om outside (which, however, is inconsistent with ie conception of an All-pervasive God); in the econd, He Himself is the material. Thus, in the rst case, He being all-pervasive, must be able to reate a good world, a pure world, a blissful world; the second, He Himself being transformed into ie form of the world, it must, of necessity, be ood, pure, blissful like Him.

HE PROBLEM OF EVIL AND ITS ORDINARY SOLUTION

Hence it is that every philosophical system in he World, worth the name, has to face this very ifficult problem of Evil, viz. why should there be t all sins and sorrows in a world which is God's wn creation, in a world which is God's own mani-estation?

Here, ordinary solutions all try to exonerate God by putting the whole blame on the *Jiva*, the ndividual soul itself. It is said here that the All-Good, All-Pure, All-Blissful God has nothing to do with all these worldly sins and sorrows, which are due entirely to the past and present *Karmas* of of the *Jivas* themselves.

THE MORE DIFFICULT PROBLEM OF SRI CHANDI

But in the above wonderful case of Sri Sri Chandi, we have to face a much more difficult problem. For, here the Universal Mother Herself is described as *"Alaksmi"*, as Misfortune Incarnate—here the *Jiva* is not *"Alaksmi"*, She Herself is so.

But how can that ever be? The term *"Alaksmi"* stands for any and everything *bad* on earth. Such badness is really logically impossible even in the case of the *Jiva*. So, how can it ever pertain to the Divine Mother Herself?

THE WONDERFUL SOLUTION OF SRI SRI CHANDI

The answer,a great and grand and glorious answer is given in Sri Sri Chandi itself consider that enchanting line, containing the quintessence of our age-old Indian Philosophy, Culture and Civilisation—

"I alone am in the world,
Where is a second besides
Me."?
(Sri Chandi 10.5.)

If She, She, none but She be the only Reality, then whatever there is on earth must be She, She, none but She—the good and the bad, the pure and impure, the high and the low—all, all are She, She, none but She.

So, first realise this great and grand and glorious fact that *Brahman* and *Brahmanda* are one, that whatever there is in the *Brahmanda* is *Brahman*, This is the first step.

And the last? The last is to realise the greater and grander and more glorious fact that really there cannot anything that is *"Alaksmi"* here on earth—there is really no sin, no sorrow, no impurity, no imperfection here on earth—we are all Brahman, all ever-pure, all ever-perfect, all ever-blissful. Such is the glorious view of Sri Sri Chandi, and such is, or should be, our glorious realisation during the pujas.

PUJA

Durga Puja and Vijaya Dashami

(Continued from page 10)

self-introspection and of self-purification. In the flame of our Mother's love let us burn the dross of our inner being and make it radiant like gold that always comes out of fire with brighter radiance. We shall be offering real prayers only when we, like the worthy sons of the omnipotent Mother, become crusaders in the cause of virtue, truth and justice. We must drink at the immeasurable fountain of all-embracing love and become the torch-bearers of universal love and brotherhood. It is also a time when we can resolve to rationalise our traditionally superstitious ways of life.

At the present juncture when the sovereignty of our Mother country is being challenged and our freedom threatened, the best way of observing our cherished festival of Durga Puja-cum-Vijaya Dashmi is to seek inspiration from Mother Durga for following the noblest example of Lord Rama in order to embark upon the arduous path of selfless sacrifice. The evil forces of our enemies have been of late gathering like a storm to envelop us in complete darkness but we are confident that with the resolve of the millions of her children Bharatmata will become as invincible and powerful as Mother Durga. We bow to Thee, Mother Durga, for Thy blessings.

University education under an eclipse

(Continued from page 20)

liberal financial help will suffice to reanimate an organism that is slowly dying of inanition.

In the meantime we must lighten up standards and impose exacting intellectual tests to keep students on their mettle and to prevent them from taking things too easy. It is the conviction that however poor their quality, grace marks will come to their rescue and give them an undeserved pull-up that has demoralised the entire student population. However, we can only be strict to them, if we have been unsparing of ourselves. If students have no reasonable grievance about the quality of their tuition and about the affectionate care taken of their welfare by the athorities, their inborn sense of fair play will reconcile them to reasonably balanced tests.

Above all, authorities must exert all their moral force to prevent violent explosions of student indiscipline. This is a fundamental issue on which there can be no temporising. A fairly long spell of tactful handling may be necessary to restore the peaceful and cordial atmosphere in educational institutions. But failure in their essential objective is such a humiliating admission of signal defeat that it must be overcome at all costs. No university has any moral right to exist and function if its students are not trained in the minimum standards of decent, civilised conduct. Our intellectual standards may be low, our teaching and research work may not sustain any comparison with that of more progressive countries, but the unforgivable offence is the failure to contribute to the nation-building programme by providing human materials, who, if not brilliant, will at least be willing workers and have their hearts in the right place.

To turn out malcontents and misfits in an endless stream into the current of national effort is not merely to neutralise progress but to jeopardise the very existence of the nation. Our universities, one cannot help thinking, have been playing a not merely a negative, but a disruptive role.

Religious Poetry of George Herbert & Tagore's Gitanjali

By Prof. K. C. Dev.

THE seventeenth century is regarded as the first outstanding epoch of religious poetry in England. The growth of High Anglicanism on the one hand and Puritanism on the other gave the religious poetry of the period an altogether new depth and meaning never found before in such poetry. Christian religious poetry of the previous ages has been of the narrative, or else, of a sententious type, concerned more or less with rituals of the Catholic Church; and hymns and carols and occasional pieces of these periods are characterized by feeble sentiments and flat conventional expression. Lord David Cecil remarks that 'much of the Christian verse is by an aesthestic standard, insincere. The writer, that is, does not say what he really feels, but what he thinks he ought to feel : and he speaks not in his own voice but in the solemn tones fitting to his solemn subject'. (*a*) It was after the Reformation, however, that religious emotion became the subject of genuine poetic expression.

Rich possibilities of religious emotion were explored by a close attention to one's inner life. The love of God then 'found utterance in prose and verse, in music and ritual, in prayer and daily allusion and implication. There was certain temperature in the religious life of the time not found perhaps in the England of later times'. (*b*)

This new phase of religious poetry is intensely personal in tone and content, and is marked by a certain analytic tension that is the outcome of the Christian concept of sin and expiation and Divine grace passionately comprehended in the context of each individual life.

John Donne who takes the first place among Christian poets of the period became an influence in the sphere of religious poetry. Among the four devotional poets, namely, Crashaw, Trasherne, Vaughan and Herbert who came under his influence, George Herbert stands out as the most remarkable by virtue of his pure vision, variety of fancy and a sense of form. Herbert did not have the psychological background of his master, nor did he share his dialectical brilliance. What he learned from Donne was the patterning of thought and feeling in a poetic mould. He is acutely aware of the conflict in his mind and he analyses it in the manner of t 'school" to which he belongs, but what gives poetry its peculiar flavour is his absolute sincer of feeling and the simplicity of his diction.

TWO SIDES

As Donne in love poetry, so does Herbert in h devotional poetry show an analytic tension. T world draws him in one direction towards t pleasures of the sense, and his love of God dra him in another ; and ultimately it is the love of G that triumphs. Even afflictions of life come fro God, and the poet finds solace in surrender.

Ah, my angry Lord,
Since thou dost love, yet strike ;
Cast down, yet help afford ;
Sure I will do the like.
I will complain, yet praise,
I will bewail, approve ;
And all my sour-sweet days
I will lament, and love.

(Bitter-Swee

Sometimes the rebellious child that he is, he ma choose to seek a life of pleasure, for he realises th he has the freedom to do so :

My lines and life are free, free as the roa
Loose as the wind.

But God in his loving-kindness saves him by o clear call heard in the depths of his heart :

As I raved and grew more fierce and wi
At every word,
Methought I heard one calling, 'Child' :
And I replied, 'My Lord'.

(The Collar

The tension is over and the child is restored to th bosom of the Father. What gives a tone of realit to such poetry is the conviction that the poet mus have lived through the struggle and reconciliatio

That George Herbert passed through a perio of indecision before choosing the life of a countr parson is well known. By birth and accomplish ments he was fitted for a secular career, and in h heart of hearts he must have felt the clash betwee his ambition and his piety. In *The Quip* he refer to the various temptations that came in his way

(*a*) Introduction: The Oxford Book of Englis Verse.

(*b*) Helen C. White; The Metaphysical Poets.

Beauty, Money, Glory and Wit. All these he renounced for the love of God, for 'I am thine'. In *The Pearl* also he deals with the same theme in a more sustained manner, asserting his preference in five simple words : 'Yet I love thee' repeated three times at the end of each stanza.

COMPLETE SURRENDER

The devotional note is to be found in the attitude of complete surrender. The poet was conscious of the fact that his poetry might become a vehicle of mere wit, even as Donne had hinted in *Litanae* (c) and in his *Jordan* poems, which L. C. Knights regards as his 'literary manifesto', (d) he bids farewell to the poetical fashions of the time, to 'quaint words and trim invention', and wrote in defence of the plainness of style. To him, as Alvarez has pointed out : 'the choice was either religion *or* wit, devotion *or* invention ; either he said "My God, My King" *or* he 'riddled in sweet phrases'. (e)

The result is that in his best poetry, Herbert's wit is subordinated to a mood of humility and contrition :

Lord, who hast form'd me out of mud,
And hast redeem'd me through thy blood,
And sanctified me to do good ;
Purge all my sinnes done heretofore;
For I confess my heavy score,
And I will strive to sin no more.
Enrich my heart, mouth, hands in me,
With faith, with hope, with charity ;
That I may runne, rise, rest with thee.
(Trinity Sunday)

Having none of the dialectical brilliance of John Donne, Herbert however shown within his range a certain kind of ingenuity in various types of verse-forms and word-play. In *Home*, for instance, he deliberately transposes the rhyme-word in order to create an effect :

Come dearest Lord, pass not this holy season,
My flesh and bones and joynts do pray :
And e'vn my verse, when by the rhyme and reason
The word is 'Stay', sayes ever, 'Come'.

The device adopted in *Easter Wings* in creating the shape of wings by an ingenious arrangements of lines reveals, if anything, 'a certain child-like qualities of mind'—the playfulness of an unsophisticated mind, so to say. In the poem, *Paradise*, he cuts off the initial letters of the rhyme-words to suggest pruning of the tree:

I bless thee, Lord, because I GROW
Among thy trees, which in a ROW
To thee both fruit and order OW.

Such playful effects as these indicate a fundamental difference between his mind and Donne's and accounts for other modifications which he made in the metaphysical style. As Joan Bennet has said : 'He simplified the inner logical pattern, following as a rule a single train of argument ; he changed the metrical pattern into something less flexible ; he narrowed the range of diction and imagery, while preserving their actuality'. (f)

EARNESTNESS

The unstudied earnestness with which religious themes are treated accounts for the homeliness of much of his imagery, as distinguished from the learned references found in many of the poems of John Donne. In *Affliction* he speaks about entering the service of God in which 'so many joys' are to be found. He speaks on looking on 'Thy furniture so fine' and 'glorious household-stuff', and refers to his Master's hospitality :

At first thou gav'st me milk and sweetness ;
I had my wish and way ;
My days were strew'd with flow'rs and happiness ;
There was no month but May.

In the second of the *Jordan* poems he presents the picture of a bustling salesman, fidgeting about his wares, 'decking the sense as if it were to sell', until he is advised to 'save expense'. This kind of image he always prefers, an image which associates his experience with the daily traffic of men of affairs or with ordinary household business.

The last poem of *The Temple* records the final acceptance of love of God, and the imagery employed is that of the guest and the host. The relation is symbolized by a commonplace human situation, a travel-worn and shamefaced guest receiving hospitality at the hands of a generous host. The theme of the poem is an argument which reaches the emotional climax in the middle of the poem:

I the unkinde, ungratefull? Ah my dear,
I cannot look on thee.

And towards the end the tension relaxes, comes the final surrender:

You must sit down, sayes Love and taste my meat;
So I did sit and eat.
(Love)

Commenting on this poem, Joan Bennet remarks, 'A graph might be made of the emotional plan of the poem in the shape of a pyramid; the two statements, L o v e bade me welcome; yet all my soul drew back and So I did sit and eat are the bases upon which it rests; at the apex is the cry of self-disgust'. (g)

SIMPLICITY

Coleridge praised the 'pure, manly a n d unaffected diction' of George Herbert. As a matter of fact, it is in the art of simplicity that the unique charm of his poetry lies. His simplicity is the outcome of great concentration and constitutes a kind of spiritual discipline; it is the measure of his maturity as a poet. Obviously he owes much to the influence of the Bible, and L. C. Knights very aptly points out that the force of his poetry is like that of the parables of the New Testament.

Herbert's influence on the devotional poetry of England has been acknowledged, among his contemporaries by Vaughan and Crashaw, and among later religious poets, by Hopkins. Outside the Christian tradition, however, Tagore's devotional poetry bears remarkable similarity with Herbert's. There

(Continued on page 30)

(c) 'When we are mov'd to seem religious only to vent Wit, Lord deliver us.' (Litanae).
(d) Explorations.
(e) A. Alvarez: **The School of Donne**
(f) **Five Metaphysical Poets**
(g) **Five Metaphysical Poets**

ALL THIS and HEAVEN TOO

By SHIBDAS BANERJEE

THE golden silhouettes against a crimson sky, a mighty ancient river, massive columns admidst ruins of what for centuries was the centre of the known world—all this is too dazzling a sight even on the seventh day of my stay in Thebes.

Stripped of all the symbols of sovereignty and power stands a world, desolate and dumb, and nearby stands a colossal statue with the subscription: "We are born to see the sunset of the world".

Every morning over the week I have stood here watching the sun-rise turning the ancient world into a blaze of blue and red. Every evening I have seen the sun-set. And beyond the hills is the City of the Dead, and still beyond is the Sahara. Sprawling wide and forlorn on the banks of the River Nile, Thebes is a lost music. It is a world that existed for two thousand years. A flourishing civilization it had inherited from Memphis, downstream on the Nile Delta where now stand the Pyramids and Sphinx. The Sphinx still watches mankind, unspeaking the knowledge it has stored up for 5000 years.

Walking on the sandy banks of the Nile, watching a stark and terrifying past, one feels much alone and I am not an exception. And often loneliness is not congenial to the health of the mind. Herodotus had looked for the source of the Nile. He had meditated for long at the Pyramids as did Plato. But Thebes, Karnak and Luxur eluded him. It was a forgotten capital by then. The dawn of Christian era found it crumbled down only to remind where the mightiest shall and will ultimately go. And across the sunlit sky is written for all of us to see, that all is vanity, and shadowy is mortal glory.

In the city of dreams and legends I shall do without both. I will only listen to the whispers of the papyrus rolls and as I watch the living scene I will try to read the wrinkled faces of present day farmers who live here still with their wooden plough much the same way as they did four-times a thousand years ago. From Pharaoh to Farouk, Egypt had kings and kings, each competing to outshine the others. But the sands of time have left the universal man where he had began. He has learnt nothing anew. Across the eternal fence the Great Creator must be laughing in His sleeves.

Thebes was the Golden Age of Egypt before which a period of darkness had enveloped the Nile Civilization, a handiwork of foreign invasion and occupation. Manethos, the Egyptian priest historian who lived the third century B.C. wrote: "I know not how it came". Then the gods had gone up in flames. Ravages of war.

From history we have learnt nothing. Understood much less.

The invaders were the horse-driven charriot-riding Hyksos from West Asia. The horse was theirs. The science of charriot-making was borrowed from India. A branch of the Hyksos had already spread across the deserts, crossed Persia, and made India their home. Centuries later the rulers of Thebes fought back the Hyksos and gave them the final blow. And the Golden Age came when Egypt itself became empire-minded, subjected states from the shores of the Caspian Sea to the heart of Africa. Emperor after emperor engraved on stone and wrote in papyrus their stories of valour. Their domain lay "as far as the circuit of sun". That again is a quotation from the stone.

"Ordained by god" these emperors ruled over men and their minds. They were never to be opposed. As the son of Ra, the Sun God, unlike us mortals, they never died. Bejewelled their mortal remains were preserved in gold caskets. Only they returned to Ra. Born of the Sun they went to the Sun.

Did they know the soul ? Did they believe in rebirth ? Did they believe in the eternal journey of the soul? Papyrues have no answer. The stones are mute for once at least.

The empire belonged to a family of rulers: as God-kings they ruled, "ordained by God". Of all ancient civilizations nowhere is to be found such

wonderfully preserved relics of a past that has been substantially the greatest milestone in the history of mankind.

Millions of words are carved all across the landscape of a vast panorama of statues, columns, temples, obelisques, complete with names of dynasties, of kings and emperors, princes and men of letters. And then there are those thousands of cemeteries, the dark and formidable temples of the dead, all as they have always been.

The ancient kings, many of them, have come down the ages in their mummies. Some of those mighty ones who fought, married a hundred times and more, enslaved, enriched themselves and their eras, and made possible a civilization to surpass all that went before and for centuries to come by.

What have we learnt from them ? All their empires have gone. What has the modern age yielded to ? Technologically we have come so far. What is this coming-to given to the vast majority of human beings ? The Great One sitting on the encircled fence is asking that question; may be. He

The head of a Sphinx

has disarming tolerance. He will go on asking the question.

But the story of the God-Kings of Thebes is completely written. Nothing is left out for guess-work. The grocers have kept their records, the clerks have kept their files, the wine-sellers their proper accounts, the surgeons their notes on surgery, the priests their scriptures, the slaves their codes, the commanders-in-chief their log books, the kings their personal diaries. Dancing girls, princesses, and some artists have left their written words to say what they did, felt and thought. A foreign princess, bought as a slave, wrote, "Master, I give you my past, present, and the future—only spare me the torture".

All these records seem so fascinating when we recollect that much before them the wise men of Memphis (near Cairo) had found out that the year contained 365 days, and that they had successfully invented the use of prophylactics to check over-population ! They had known brain-surgery, and their art of sculpture is *even now* unsurpassed. They are all there for us to see and touch and examine.

These things happened more than four thousand years ago. The science that made it possible to build the geometrically perfect-proportioned Pyramids was, at the time of Thebes, just History. The great Gautama Buddha was yet to come in the Gangetic Civilization. Alexander the Great was far down the corridor of time, Cleopatra was nowhere naturally; Greece, and Rome were still living in caves.

It was left to Gautama Buddha to strike the big gong across the sky warning: "Do not believe anything because the written testimony of some ancient wise man is shown to you. Do not believe anything on the authority either of teachers or priests. Whatsoever accords with your own experience and after thorough investigation agrees with your reason, and is conducive to your own welfare and to that of all other living things, *that* accept as truth and live accordingly".

From Thebes to Gautama Buddha the distance is nearly two thousand years. Son of a King, Gautama was not talking in the language of rulers. For 45 years he only spoke the language of soul. The enrichment of soul, not the saleable commodities. He was giving the secret of the universe when he said with incandescent clarity that the only way to survive is the way to "purity". The purity lay in the "noble and happy way of living and dying in the present world".

I have to write as I do in order to give a perspective to what a historically sensitive man would possibly wonder at when in Thebes. Watching the liveliest triumphs of a torchlight-race which existed for 20 centuries and passed the torch to us, good, evil and bad, I have the feeling, that man has not grown since. Man has not understood his place. Neither has man appreciated matters and materials that surround him.

Anyone here would start wondering that we have learnt and unlearnt the greatness of Thebes, but its follies we have preserved in totality; or else how is the cycle of destruction to be completed?

If nearly 5000 years ago the astronomers of the Nile Delta could calculate, which they really did, that a year contained 365 days, our progress in the measure of Time has so far been only 6 hours. I do not have the capacity to think farther. It is too much. Only I can ask myself, what is myth ? What is man ? Are they the same thing or just an illusion ?

The outstanding rulers of all times who ruled in Thebes imagined that they had reached the highest point where man could intellectually reach. They were perhaps not very wrong. Or were they ?

But enough of the outlines of a shadow. The sun is coming out on the horizon throwing streaks of gold across the hills and the Nile. I stand facing the statue of world's first and most dazzling queen, Hasthepsut. This is the statue where once Cleopatra fell and wept, "Tell me oh my ancestor, tell me what is my son's fate ?" Before the mighty sweeping of Rome her son was transhipped towards India and Cleopatra died of her own hand. But does it not suggest that the wheel of destiny recoils ?

(II)

In the half-turned light of glimmering beauty Thebes is now in a glorious chaos. But the man on the Nile was then fully aware that life depended on cosmic conditions. Like his Babylonian brother he knew all the stars in heaven worth knowing. Time has now told on aged Thebes; not the less majestic though.

I am moving about in the spirit-haunted Great Hall which is a forest of giant columns. No builder,

modern or ancient, has ever conceived and built such a wonderful massive monument. The columns are so big that not even six men abreast with outstretched arms could hold one of them. Everything around me is huge and massive and gigantic. The walls of the super-structure are carved out and caved in with stirringly vigorous scenes of a regime, from battle scenes to praying Pharaoh.

In one of these scenes I can see a king being carried by twenty-four noblemen in an ornamented charriot, our latest jeep fashion, to review a victorious army. In another amidst burning incense priests are singing hymns to Gods. The Great Hall is littered with broken images....reminding me that all images ultimately break giving way to new images and thus enabling man to think afresh that he cannot escape his own achievements. In its own time even the greatest of human achievements lie in dust. Man thinks to build anew, forgetting to put in the few missing elements of the images he replaces. Perhaps he disbelieves that every age asks for its own grammar.

I keep walking amidst an awesome mystery. On the western side of the Nile is the Temple of Ammon, the reigning deity of Pharaohic Egypt. The Temple keeps the memory of History's first Empress, and it is the loveliest of all architecture human eye has seen. When it was built nothing like it existed before; even in ruins it lies majestically enchanting.

The Temple is really a sanctuary. In the farthest end of it is hewn in the rocks a mortuary. An avenue flanked with ram-headed sphinxes lines up what was once a great entrance. The road leads to the sacred river.

It is all but ruined now, but the grandeur is not faded. The immediate background is salmon flakes of mountains. The foreground has a triple vista of sun-grasped roofless columns bathing in an unearthly radiance.

Here was fulfilled the dream of history's first lady. This is no foggy legend. No authentic facts are lacking. Legend has no concern with facts. Here is no "all happened once upon a time long ago". It seems everything here is everlasting. But is it reality ? Reality ought not to die. The sun is not dead.

I am standing before a woman's statue. Her breast naked. The curves in her granite body are so chiselled as to be believe it or not, rippling soft. In flesh and blood she was very clever, stunningly beautiful and healthy. This was the Queen. The records of her time have said so much and much more about her.

The sculptor of this museum-lady is Ineni. The name is well-preserved. The artist was her adviser also. So was he to her father, the God-king before her, Thothmes I.

She had ruled her world for 22 years, dying young at the age of forty-two. Much of the splendour of Karnak belongs to her time. The supreme question mark is always here. It is written in the books Queen Hasthepsut had asked sculptor Ineni. "Who am I ?"

Unlike her father she never went to war. That is one more reason why Karnak is enchanting to me. She was a woman who spread nothing but goodwill. Her ships went across the Arabian Sea, for trade, and commerce. She was far too much straight-sighted. "I hate war", she had said. "God has created man. I have no right to tamper His child".

Her fleet of ships ultimately traded along the Indian Ocean, and it is believed—here history fails to throw definite light—her ships reached the Bay of Bengal. The world knows her as the harbinger of peace on Earth.

As I stand at the foot of Queen Hasthepsut's elegant statue I can only read in substance what she wrote after building the dazzling temple : I am I.

As the afternoon shadows lengthen desert wind blows over my face. There lies the Queen's tomb. All robbed.

Watching the skyline a flame seems to be running over my body, a flame of the eerie past and I can as if in a soft golden limelight see Queen Hasthepsut driving past in her lotus-lined chariot, only shaven-headed priests following her to the Temple. I can feel the night astir, the moon beaming on the queen's olive coloured silky skin. She was the first woman in history.

Tremendous is the silence here. The silence makes the dead stone talkative. The sculptured stones always speak if one is in a mood to listen to them. They speak in so many voices. From the dimmed distant past if I can reconstruct some arguments and counter arguments they would, I am sure, be something like this :

Weaker men must submit to the stronger ones. That is nature. Bigger nations must eat up the smaller nations, economically. God is with us.... Man is the supreme creation of God. Why then one man eats up the other? Who is God? Who is man ? Who am I ? Why do I exist ?

The arguments went on and on and a God-King was not long in coming. It sounds so strange at this very far away date, to declare from his throne at the top of his poetlike voice :

> "I want no man, however mighty and rich he may be to own slaves. I want everyman to be brother unto the other. I want no man to be exploited. Let there be no killing of man by man. I shall not go to war. There shall be no war. Pharaoh has spoken."

Ancient history has no parallel till Asheka the Great. But that was much later.

This new God-King outlawed slavery, made all men equal, banished war, all legally. His name is Ikhnaton.

Declared insane he was poisoned to death by the powerful priests, instigated by the all-powerful commercial circle whose God he had disowned to create his own peaceful God, Aton, the Sun. He, the God-King, was only thirty years green. He had a beautiful wife, the famous Nefretate. But before I proceed let me watch the sunset.

Slowly the sun is setting, throwing streaks of gold over the motionless ruins of Ramesseum, the macbre funerary temple of God-King Rameses II, in a way King Farouk's ancient prototype.

Rameses II ruled for sixty-three years. He brought an endless steam of slaves from all over the known world, and married "hundreds of lovely women". It is written in the stones and books. He kept luscious concubines from China, Sudan, Ethiopia. Libya, Syria, Crete and slept with anybody he fancied for, dying at the ripe old age of ninety when he had succeeded destroying Queen Hasthepsut's temples of Aton. He had also connected the Nile with Red Sea. The entire land of Egypt even today is full of his huge statues. Amongst the ancient great kings he was a builder amongst builders, a brave amongst the bravest.

Now as I stand in this Big Man's Hypostyle Hall, a terrific looking brilliant splendour is slowly

(Continued on page 32)

TAGORE'S GITANJALI

(Continued from page 26)

is the same concrete homeliness of imagery, the same devotional fervour, the same longing for the divine in the context of an intimate personal relationship. As Herbert thinks of himself in terms of a tree,

I read, and sigh, and wish I were a tree,—
For sure then I should grow
To fruit or shade:
(Affliction)

so does Tagore thinks of himself as a flower:

Pluck this flower and take it,
Delay not: I fear lest it drop and
Drop into dust.
(Gitanjali: 6)

In an age of wit-writing George Herbert cultivated the art of simplicity, and his verses acquire their charm and meaning from his tone of absolute sincerity. Tagore's poetry suggests the same tone and temper of mind when he says :

My song has put off her adornments.
She has no pride of dress and decoration.
Ornaments would mar our union ; they would come between thee and me ; their jingling would drown thy whispers.
(Gitanjali : 7)

Both Tagore and Herbert pattern their religious emotion on much the same lines when they speak of God as Lord and Lover. Herbert's prayer is :

Teach me, my God and King,
In all things thee to see
And what I do in anything
To do it for thee.
(The Elixir)

This mood finds a parallel in Tagore's *Gitanjali: 36* where he records his prayer too:

This is my prayer to thee, my Lord—
strike, strike at the root of penury in my heart.
Give me the strength lightly to bear my joys and sorrows.
Give me the strength to make my love fruitful in service
Give me the strength never to disown the poor or bend my knees before insolent might.
Give me the strength to raise my mind high above daily trifles.
And give me the strength to surrender my strength to thy will with love.

As in their moods of application, so also in the moments of ecstasy their verses strike the same noted of exultant joy. In *A True Hymn* Herbert gives expression to a feeling of rapture that men of religious sensibility are known to have experienced in certain moments of their life:

My Joy, my Life, my Crown!
My heart was moaning all day,
Somewhat it fain would say,
And still it runneth mutt'ring up and down
With only this, my Joy, my Life, my Crown!

In the presence of his Lord Tagore too bursts into a paean of rapture

Light, my Light, the world-filling Light,
the eye-kissing light, heart-sweetening light!
Ah, the light dances, my darling, at the centre
of my life; the light strikes, my darling,
the chords of my love; the sky opens, the wind
runs, wild, laughter passes over the earth.
(Gitanjali: 57)

These two poets, the one Christian and the other a Hindu mono-theist, speak in much the same accents while giving expression to their religious moods and spiritual experiences, and to them, as to all who believe in the love and mercy of God, death has no terror. To Herbert, death once 'an uncooth and hideous thin' before Christ was born to redeem mankind, has since lost all terror and it appears as a welcome sight:

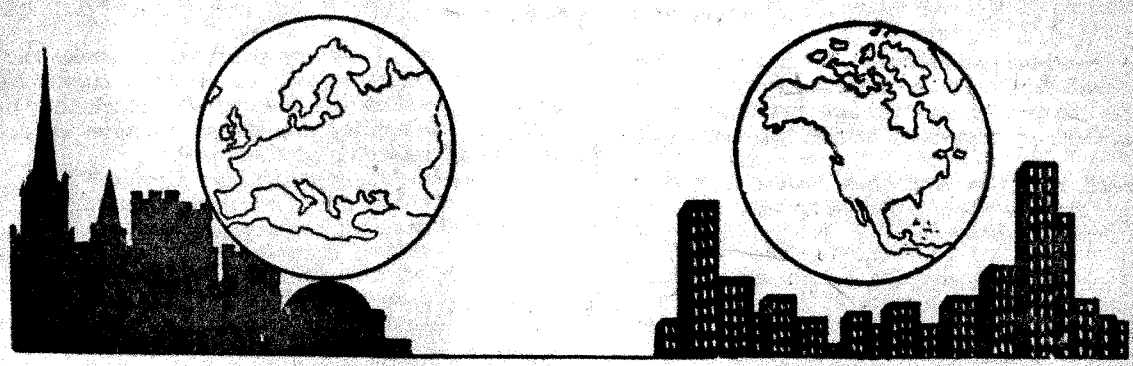
But since our Saviour's death did put some bloud into thy face;
Thou art grown fair and full of grace
Much in request, much sought for as a good
(Death)

Tagore regards death as 'the last fulfilment of life' *(Gitanjali: 91)* and is ready to welcome it even as Herbert does:

Day after day have I kept watch for thee; for
thee have I borne the joys and pangs of life.
All that I am, that I have, that I hope
and all my love have ever flowed towards thee in
depth of secrecy. One final glance from thine
eyes and all my life will be ever thine own.
(Gitanjali: 91)

W. B. Yeats regarded the *Gitanjali* poems of Tagore as 'the work of a supreme culture' and commented that 'they appear as much the growth of the common soil as the grass and the rushes', the outcome of a tradition where poetry and religion are the same thing'. *(h)* In Tagore there met two streams of sensibility, one Indian, the other exotic. The native influence came from the *Bauls* of Bengal who cultivate a kind of erotic mysticism in their relation to God; and what he imbibed from these religious mystics was rendered in the superb speech-rhythm of the Biblical verses. The result has been a wonderful poetic expression on man's yearnings for the Infinite. The Bible provided the meeting ground between the two poets separated by time and space, and as in Tagore, so in Herbert, it is the truly personal which is also the truly universal.

(h) Introduction to Gitanjali.



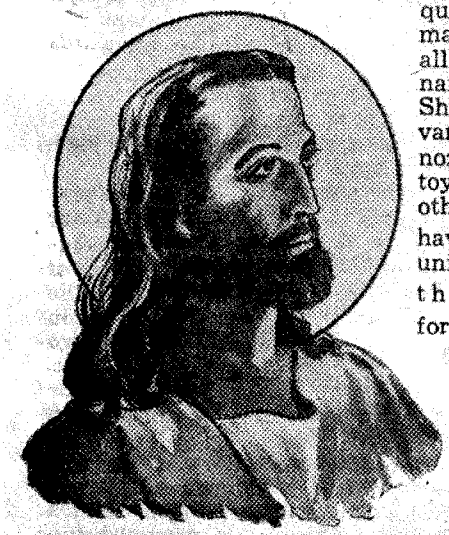
WHAT CAN WE STILL EXPECT from EUROPE & AMERICA?

By ANNADA SANKAR RAY

WHAT can we still expect from Europe and America?

Ever since the Renaissance the Western countries have been the torch-bearers of human knowledge and enterprise. Knowledge is power. They have acquired unprecedented power over nature. Now they are exploring outer space and preparing to land on the moon. A conquest of this kind fills all mankind with pride. It is a human conquest rather than an American or Russian one.

In a sense all discoveries and inventions are human conquests. All creative works of outstanding importance are human conquests too. Such conquests have been made in Europe for all mankind by Leonardo da Vinci, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Mozart, Spinoza, Goethe, Tolstoy and the many others whose works have made them universal. To claim them exclusively for any one nation would be parochial and narrow-minded. To put them aside as alien would be fanatical. Did not Christ suffer for all men? Did not Buddha attain illumination for all who are subject to old age, disease and death'? No one is a foreigner and nothing is foreign to the normal human being uncorrupted by false notions and false pride.



Christ

Thinking in terms of country and continent is comparatively recent in human history. Harping on national differences and shutting one's eyes to common features have gone too far. One half of mankind ranged against the other half is dreadful. With nuclear weapons on both sides it is nothing less than race suicide. If there are any survivors they will also have their differences. It cannot be that all differences will be blotted out. World peace depends on how quickly we begin to think in terms of the planet we all inhabit. Travelling recently by an international jet plane I had my dinner in Calcutta and breakfast in Munich. What was more memorable was the sunrise over the Alps.

Tolstoy

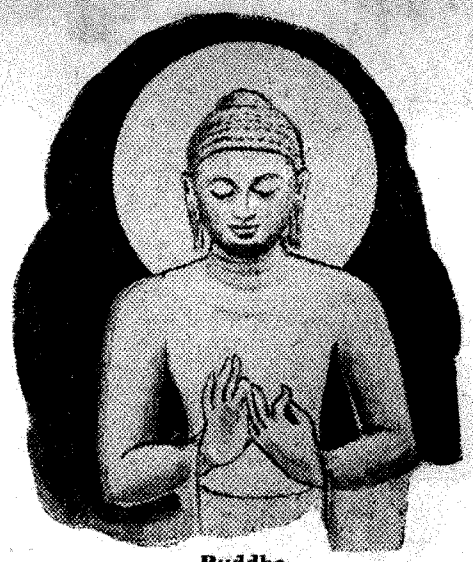
In the age we are living in neither nationalism nor continentalism makes any sense. Yet these are phases through which we all have to pass in the course of our evolution. Nationalism is better than tribalism, class or caste-ism, provincialism or sectarianism. In India it is a progressive step which must be taken in spite of its limitations. We have embarked upon the difficult task of evolving a single nation out of a multitude of potential nations, not by suppressing differences but by trying to create a harmonious autonomy among them. If we do not take care India can became Balkanised. We are also determined to have secular state, not a theocratic one. This is stern necessity in a land

where many religions flourish. Hinduism is the oldest of them and has the largest following. We could have had a Hindu State by a majority of votes but that would have vitiated our democratic constitution at its very inception. We want not to perpetuate communal divisions but to forget them and help others to forget them in public life. Our object is to root out social injustice within the framework of a secular democracy. Economically we are experimenting with a public sector married to a private sector. It is too early to say whether the marriage will suceed or break up. If it fails there is a likelihood of our being confronted by either Fascism or Communism. Both these international forces are very active beneath the surface of our country. Social democrats have to reckon with them. Nehru was fully alive to his responsibility. His successors appear to be also.

Gandhi was more than a nationalist leader and had the foresight to realise that free India would have to reckon with totalitarian forces some day. He knew that they can only be defeated by more and more fundamental social change. Vinoba Bhave has inherited Gandhi's moral authority as Nehru inherited his political leadership. Today Vinoba is engaged in an effort to inaugurate this new social order. The Gandhians call it Sarvodaya. For fifteen years Vinoba has walked from one end of the country to the other, collecting land for landless. Whole villages have been donated to him so that he may reconstruct their economy and their society on a new and more equitable basis. With this decentralisation of the economy goes decentralisation of power. Vinoba insists on non-violence and manual labour. He also advocates the voluntary renunciation of private ownership of land. According to him land should be held in trust for all by the community as a whole rather than owned by a single person. The results so far obtained are remarkable but it is still too early to say whether the voluntary principle will lead to substantial social change or not.

This being the general background in India today what can we still expect from Europe and America? If human progress follows only one line of development then they are still ahead of us. But does it? Can men not advance on more than one front? If they can India should be left free to make her own way forward as best she can. I would not like, personally, for my country to imitate either America or Europe or even the old India-of-the Golden-Age. I want it to be something different from all these, as good as they are, yet unique in

Da-Vinci



Buddha

time and place. Such an India would be neither Eastern nor Western. It would be modern and human, attached to all modern countries by strong bonds of mutual understanding. It would have, certainly, deep affinities with the West. Such an India would always be ready and eager for friendly co-operation. Co-operation may be necessary to her development and she may go out of her way to seek it, but it will be a mistake to think that she will barter away her soul. I deplore the get-rich-quick mentality that has come to us with Independence. I would rather go slow, consider every step, retrace false steps before it is too late and advance again thoughtfully.

ALL THIS AND HEAVEN TOO

(Continued from page 29)

being washed by steelblue rays of a setting sun and beyond is a fearful desert where no grass grows. Lying on the ground are the remains of a statue whose ear is 1.05 meters long, the forefinger is 1 meter, the total weight of the "colossus of colossi" is estimated to be one million kilogrammes, that is nearly one thousand tons!

The sun has set. The silence is paralysing.

Over there is Ramases II, lying in dusted glory. He in his time had hammered out in blind fury every trace of God-King Ikhnaton, the man who seemed to have given voice to Voltaire: "Which is better, a monarchy or a republic? What difference does it make to a poor man whether he is devoured by a lion or by a hundred rats?"

To the foolish and wicked world, to the great and small globe, Ikhnaton had preached *Ahimsa*. Preaching that he met the same fate as that of Gandhi. He is also the first man to utter and practice *Satyam, Shivam, Sundaram*. History's first poet was also he: everything under the Sun is for the sake of man. Why then most men are allowed to be exploited by a greedy few?

Whatever is left his statues, he looks exactly like the poet in Rabindranath's *Puraskar*, giving and not possessively wanting.

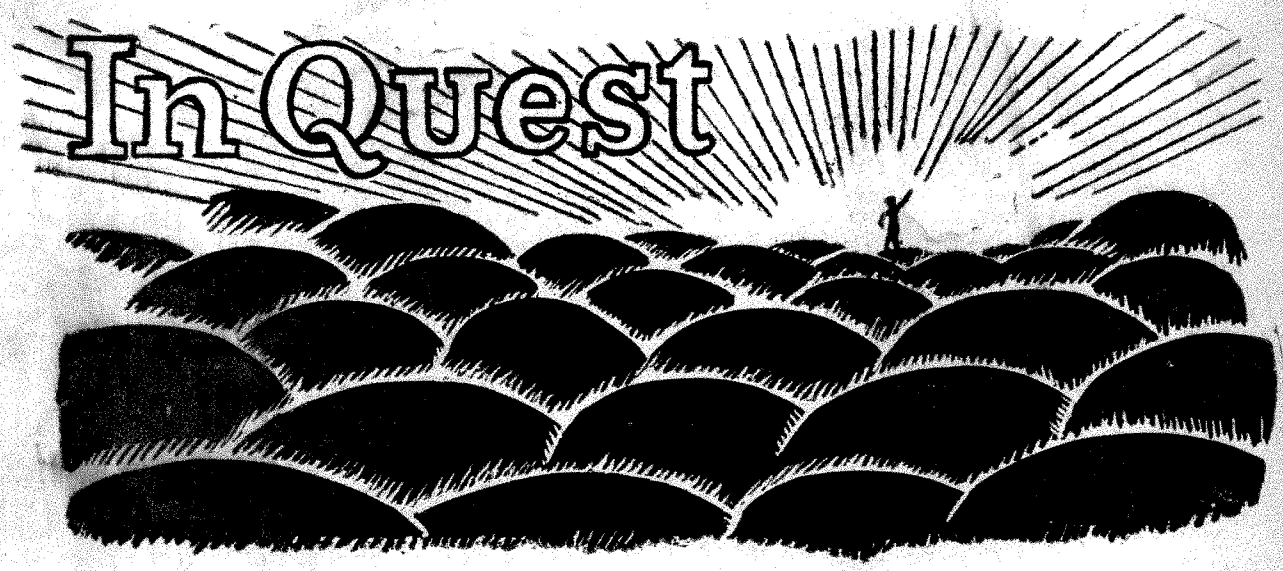
And he was murdered for being what he was.

Not only he believed in his vision of man for man but he tried to arouse human emotions to that effect; not only he tried to pass on ideas but he led men to a world without selfishness.

And lest his body should be further polluted, believe it or not, legend has it that his friends transhipped his mortal body to the Raj Mahal Hills in Bengal.

KABITIRTHE SARADOTSAB
(Kidderpore, Calcutta)

In Quest



By PRAVASJIBAN CHAUDHURY

(Translator's Note: This is a strange and rewarding document. A confession of faith, it reveals a sensitiveness and yearning after mystic experience characteristic of the poet. Physicist by training, philosopher by choice, at heart Dr. Chaudhury remained a seeker, a playboy of the Infinite. He had made his mark, early in life, among scholars of aesthetics and philosophy. The supplement, "The Aesthetic Attitude in Indian Aesthetics" brought out by the Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism (Fall 1965) is a distinction with hardly a parallel in that journal's history. But gifted with imagination, vitality and an abounding curiosity he was—as this spiritual diary found among his papers will prove—more than an academician. Basically the record of a dream journey or allegory, it is not to be treated as an apology or argument, even if now and then it is packed with subtle dialectics and speculations, as in the encounter with the holy men in the temple courtyard. A rich catholic mind, drawn to every wind of doctrine and storing wisdom from various sources, nothing distinguishes *In Quest* so much as its passion and pathos, tinged by *Baul, Sahajiva,* Zen and Rabindrean strains. The journey he writes about is one which every man has to undertake one day or the other, every one in one's own way, alone. And if one goes far, even to the edge of doom, at the journey's end, the mystic voyage, one might find, like the diarist, the harmony of opposites which give us no relief till That is found, the agony and ecstasy. Then, and not till then, will the Meaning and the Mystery be his. It is the pearl of great price, *nanya pantha.*)

T last one day I found myself on the Open Road. The old Adam, *purono ami*, had to be left behind. Within me was the agony of another self. All the time it went on whispering: Get away, get away from this familiar world of yours—this world that is tied to the five senses, these stale thoughts and emotions which by now you know almost as well as the palm of your hand. The desires, fears, hatreds, the knot of your science and philosophy, break away and move out of these. It is these that have made you what you are, made as well as unmade. What you are looking for, you did not find in the present scheme of things. So why tarry? Now go and find a new world, a new self.

When a man thus runs away from himself he sets up a civil war within the soul. But, after all, no man can run away from himself. Before the bar of conscience he is both judge and accused. From within the breast of the accused comes the peremptory call: Go away, please go away. To whom are these words addressed? To none but himself. To such admonition an inner voice responds: Here I go.

Let me, then, stand apart from this little ego of mind and see if I cannot find a new sky, some new dawn, some new truth. Between the God that has defined itself within my heart's recess and the world outside I have failed to find any correspondence. Let me see if I can find Him somewhere else, in some other world maybe. There are, I find, so many levels within me, beings within being. Yet, for ages, I seem to fix my home in only one of these levels, and then all else is forgotten. For long ages did I not slumber in the plant and the animal worlds? As for the human level, it too has many

mansions which are revealed when these moods are upon me. It is then that these yearnings come, to go beyond, beyond the immediate and the sensible, beyond all present boundaries. It seems a higher Being is seeking to be born within me, a devine self. Out of my agony comes the cry :

O lord, a new birth, from me upto Thee ....

II

In all the three worlds no one will know,
O pilgrim,
Where I am set for, for which land.

And yet that—I which has made this—I a homeless wanderer, it is quite vague, like vapour. Restive, it wants to smash the doors and windows of the old self and move away, somewhere else. As it is, only faint traces of the old self survive. It is as if the old body slipped away and I have stepped out from the ancient brick-and-wood house of mine—leaving my favourite jamboline tree behind. O friendly shade! In the dewy light its fresh leaves glistened, while one or two sparrows twittered in an effort to rouse the slumbering morn. A long day was about to sweep across the fond, old universe—only I would not be there to see it. Farewell, my light-washed ever-busy fool, my world! I am off to another world where one day, I hope, a new light will strike and dazzle these eyes. Someone, I feel, has sent out his Call to me. I seem to hear it in this world itself, here and now. The sun and the moon open up the doors of another realm, where too there are the mango, the jamboline, *simool, sal* and *piyal* trees and their shadows spread and wander in the winds. But they speak a different language and all else looks like a dream. It was as if the whole thing moved in tune with my desire—a Land of Heart's Desire. My feet move towards that country—where everything, every form, touch, smell, feeling is as here—with this difference that they come in response to what I wish—emerge out of my sense of delight and, again, dissolve into it. What of a country is this where the sun and the moon rise because of me, where with a flash of wild laughter, the lightning sears and slits the heart of darkness only to please me, only for my joy in it? More than that. It is as if to please myself that I paint and erase these picture frames, these many worlds. It is a strange country and I am out to solve the mystery. Farewell, my long-loved world, my shadowy groves of jamboline, the fluttering mango leaves, *sirish* and guava; the daily chore, the many shapes and sounds, the love and sympathy, desire and hatred, anger and irritation weaving the endless nights and days! I am leaving you behind not for the sake of any other country of this world but for a different world altogether. It is a love that my dreams have fed. Who knows it may be a dangerous illusion. Even then I have to find out whether it is true or false. I do not know who it is that is leading me away from this familiar shoreline to the borders of the Unknown. Yet go I must. As the poet has said :

I do not know, I have no idea.
Only hold His hands—
and move on. Charaiveti.

III

The winds shall carry us from one island to another.
Our boat we shall fill with all manner of merchandise—
When this beggar soul returns it will be like a King's return.

But if that other domain be like this, all you need to do is to change your inner being or perspective—through that you will see quite another significance of what you have already known. Then why leave this abode at all, this home of yours? Here, under the shades of the jamboline tree, or in the rugged dust bowl itself, can you not glimpse that world of dreams—as shape of your own consciousness—as instrument of your self-delighting—and know your God in your own spiritual consciousness? Has not your poet said:

In the room He comes and goes,
Do I have to look for Him on the highways?

To the sceptic what shall I say ? Well, this journey is an outward symbol of what is going on within me. It is like the ochre robe that the *sannyasi*, the ascetic, wears. When a sea-change goes on within the individual psyche, there is need for some outward symbol or suggestion. The symbol keeps the mind alert so that it does not flop or flutter, get lost in the world any more.

Before my eyes new fields, trees, rivers, landing places sweep by—as from either side of the railway carraige new forms of nature rush by. It is the same old nature, but in a new garb, a new gesture. In a new land the sun will go down the west, in the evening stars shall rise, maybe in the midnight hours, across the slopes of the mountain, the yellow moon will come up as of old. This is how, the mind tells me, you must renew your world as something deeper, more revolutionary, new. To welcome the new one must re-new oneself.

Life is but a tryst, a resurrection, of image after image: the mountain against an unfamliiar landscape; a twisted palm tree by the side of the rivulet; on banks of sand faint footprints of the crane. Children of an unknown land, their eyes bright with laughter and curiosity, I shall make friends with them by a gift of flowers whose-name-I-don't-know. All the while the song echoes:

Wanted another world, another life.

After I have earned that other kingdom, that life, I shall once again come back. To my old little corner. And sit, as of old, at leisure in the shades of the jamboline tree or by the side of the flowering red or the blue and pink star flowers winking in the grass. Do not call me back, rather say—Go, obey the call of the Beyond that has come to you. The melody—like the shepherd's pipe that turns the heart so wild and nostalgic—that sings in your heart, follow that. Him whom you seek—He who had called you even earlier—is causing this agony in the heart, the sweet sorrow. But the One you are seeking is within you and knows you as His very self. Know Him. That is, know yourself. It is the same. When you come back you will find that the object of your new love has been here all the time, waiting, waiting—for you. For its sake:

Leave the hoardings of the coastland and do not look back.

IV

So I went, leaving all else behind, taking nothing with me. At one time I had thought of carrying one or two books: at least an Upanishad, Shankar's *Crest Jewel of Discrimination*, Confucius, or St. Augustine. If nothing else, Rabindranath's bunch of songs. The Person I have been seeking He must be, I thought, like what these books say. That which I will get in the end, can it be far different from what these early seekers, the pioneers had received? Finally, I did not, however, take any books with me. Cut off all connection with the past—I heard the voice say. That which is true in these works is already in you. Are not the poet's words a part of your life? What you will receive now, as direct experience, will be all yours. New, strange, original. Forget all that you have learnt. Only keep open the doors and windows of the inner being. And don't come back after an imaginary encounter. Forget all road maps and their directions. To go to Him you need no intermediaries. It is an Open Road where

anyone may travel, where one day everyone must go, but each in his own way. He who has sent the call will lead you through all detours. What does it matter if, for a while, you loiter a bit or suffer a little? Even that, you will see, will not have been in vain. One day you will know that even this has added to the value of what you have got.

Salutations, then, to the Masters whose inspiring words have roused in me this desire to know and recognise Him, the Lord of my Being. What arguments, parables, symbols! At their journey's end they have hinted and revealed those deeper, inner experience, which are now a part of mankind's enlarged existence. They have done this in a variety of ways according to time, place and temperament. And this is precisely why there has been so much confusion and controversy about their statements. The Experience in question is no doubt supra-sensuous, beyond all formulas and formulations. But speaking of it one cannot help speaking of oneself. Language is a human tool serving human ends—in this world of ours, this market place of getting and spending, where 2+2 always equals 4. The News from the Other World has to be written in our script and its laws. No wonder the whole thing turns into a kind of symbol and often reads like a fairy tale. The records get mixed up with our worldly habits and dispositions, our normal ways of seeing, knowing and saying things. That is why Confucius or Lao-tse sound different from Shankara or Buddha and St. Theresa may not tally with Hafiz or Rumi. All this puzzles the youthful seeker. So the mind advises: Listen to all that the Masters have to say but remember that, like them, on this Path you have to be on your own, alone. On the wings of an ultimate daring they had left all familiar landmarks behind. So must you. Greater than all their words is as spirit of their Ideal, the Call—the history of the Path Perilous! Take from them the basic lesson, learn to exceed your present limits. Then you will know both, the supra-mental awarness and its receptacle, the ultra-human Self.

V

Step out of your little self into the wide world
And hear its music in your heart-beat.

With the *Baul* song on my lips I stepped out. How bright was the morning! Everything sang. When the Aeolian harp is tuned to a high pitch it stirs in the slightest wind. Somewhere in the sky a little bird flies, the clouds gather, the winds away and the waves dance—my heart seems tuned to the infinite. A strange cosmic harmony steals through my heart. I have become but a sentry or a channel. Whatever comes near, be it a piece of wood, cloth, window bars, flowers, leaves, water, I want to hold it close, close to me. More than ever before I want to be at-one with all things. My mind and heart have become a thoroughfare for every thought and emotion. There is no rigid rule or exclusiveness, all co-exists. I neither call nor stop anyone or anything, but The waves splash and seem to float on the passing wind, look at the changing hue of the sky and the forest, the river glides by at its own sweet will, there are only patterns, patterns—a sudden whirr of the kite and the kingfisher ..... colours, contours, I make myself 'simple' and transparent, and, in the mirror of the soul, each passing picture picture is reflected clearly. In tossing, turbid waves how many impressions are blurred! Yet deep within is the pool of Vishnu—vibrating to the murmur of a tree awaying is the wind and the lonely, unheard cry of the solitary mountain. I long to lose my self completely. Only by such a loss does one find oneself. I must know the link that binds the inner with the outer self. To do that I have to keep away all personal willing, opinion, habits, tendencies, preferences. In the everyday world we follow some general rules,

Only patterns, patterns.— sudden whim of the Kite & Kingfisher ..... colours, contours

we look at life from a point of view, through a prism as it were. Much of what we see or know is a mental or a biassed product. Through the interplay of the education we have received and the nature of our personal taste and experience a kind of attitude or philosophy develops within each of us. We are conscious of only a part of this. At the same time, since it helps us, we work out a serviceable sketch of this personalized philosophy. But such pragmatism hides or distorts the deeper truth of our life and the world. We deal with the world only in so far as it touches the senses or the surface of our practical existence. We have a large number of popular but erroneous ideas—ideas of national, religious, ethical and other differences, "narrow domestic walls" that divide the world into warring camps. These can hardly be said to be product of experience. On the contrary, they colour or determine our experience. It is because of their rigidity and resistance we lose the total view and whirl in a round of endless pettiness. The point is, the more we are able to harmonize our relationship with the world outside us the more we stabilize our hold on certain basic principles of life. To earn these enduring principles we have to rise above petty, private notions, get rid of our prejudices, big and small. These littlenesses that dog us may be unavoidable, perhaps even necessary, for the average person, *le homme moyen sensuel*, content to live out his days amid trivialities. But to one who is looking for ideals and principles these appear as but parasites that need to be uprooted, so that the field may be ploughed and left under the open sky. Maybe, in some happy hour, the seed will fall, the rains come .....and one day a tall *deodar* tree rise high seeking for its lost self, the secret that lay at the moment of its birth, even in the seed-state. O mind, be like a tree! But this is not a tree that mortal eyes can behold. Hence when one has to speak of these things—mysteries—one has to speak indirectly, obliquely, through hints and suggestions, symbols and parables. One has to speak of that world in terms of this. The map of the new country of the mind has to be drawn in lines and colours of that which one has left behind and known to be almost untrue. Such is the paradox of communication. This is what they have done, the holy men, saints, yogis, mahatmas—poets, all of them. Those who were not poets have said nothing. Yet through a profound Silence they too have tried to express something of the inexpressible mystery.

VI

I know not what I shall see or know
Or the delight of the new light within my being.

Turning myself into a receiving set for all sensations, emotions and forms, I set out on the journey, with no idea of what was to be gained .... and how. The beaten tracks I had left behind me nor did I make any effort to reach any place of pilgrimage. The lonely thought that sustained me was that something would turn up. From nowhere. I have only to hold on, to keep moving. Alert and hopeful, I knew that He who had dragged me out of my hearth and home and put me on the Open Road would one day reveal Himself and come within my grasp. For the time being I have only to wait, wait and observe. In my present state this is all that I can make out—that I must cut myself adrift from old moorings and move onward. That which will happen must be there already within me, yet unmanifest. He whom I am expecting. He must be in me, asleep or half-asleep. I have set out on a journey but in search of whom or what I do not know. Who is that Unknown that calls me like this? I am seeking the Mystery behind the veil. But the idea of a surrounding mystery has its source within my being too, and it is leading me to a state beyond anything that is guranteed by my past. Hence, I am obliged to infer, this idea and desire of mine is a creation of the supermind which lies hidden within me. When a man wakes up to this truth he feels the presence of two voices or two selves within him. In fact the two—the awakener and the awakened — are not separate. For he who is awakening will, on awakening, think 'I was but asleep'. Had the two been altogether disparate there would have been no possibility of a contact or awakening. This would have been equally impossible had they been entirely one and the same. The same applies to the cause-effect syndrome. The effect follows cause, yet the two are not one. The perfume that the deer madly runs after is its own of which it is not aware, Had the deer known this—or not known this at all—there could have been no seeking on its part. He or That which has turned me a homeless wanderer, that's me too. Only I do not know him. He seems a stranger, so far away. At times the whole thing looks dangerously like a mirage, *maya* or illusion.

Enchanted, like the musk-deer, with my own perfume
I roam across the forest,
From within my own breast the desires reflect like mirage.

Even Shankara in his Vedanta exegesis said much the same thing. Had Brahman been totally Unknown the question of *sadhana*, or spiritual discipline, or Vedic studies, would not arise; had He been totally comprehensible then also there would be no meaning in a search at all. In fact, He *is* known, but imperfectly. All our Vedas, Vedantas and the agony of seeking arise from this duality and the desire to know Him fully as He is in His true nature. Incredible, but true.

VII

When was it that I set out with your song on my lips?
Surely not today, not today!

If what is to manifest lies within me, my search has a longer date. Maybe it is dateless, from eternity—ever since I became aware of my self. Now it is perhaps a little more well-defined. But I have a haunch that from the very begining I had a hope or idea—very different from all other hopes and ideas, desires and expectations .... it is always there no matter what one has gained or lost in the act of living. All that consciousness has made real to me as well as that which has escaped me, beyond both there lies Something-More. This also I must have. It is as if whatever has come my way has come from There, just as whatever I have missed has gone back to that same Source. A vague, supra-sensuous feeling of this kind I had even before, from my early days. As far as memory can take me back. At times it seems that through all my experience, across the vista of many lives, from the first awakening of consciousness, long before I had received this human form, I had been in tune with That, my infinite Self. When the morning light strikes the trees it wakes in me an obscure consciousness, a happy and familiar stir. Without an incipient idea or experience how can one know what one has received or missed? Behind what you have lurks a feeling that you might as well have gone without it, a sense of its possible loss or non-being. The feeling that one might as well have to do without something is, shall we say, supra-sensuous. When the absence of a thing is felt one has to recognise the reality of its non-being. But how can we say anything real about that which is-not? That is, that also is, but in some other way. It is some other kind of being or existence. Again, when one is

aware of a thing that establishes its reality, it is not-unreal. In the everyday world our awareness as well as our unawareness of truth and falsehood is relative. But about that which is, how can one even think that it is not a fiction? In that case one has to imagine that its reality could be an illusion. That is, what is real could also be its opposite. Had this been not possible the difference in the concept of truth-untruth would cease to be. Thus we find that behind the awareness of an object is an emotional feeling or attitude of its self-form or archetype. Once you know that this flower is not, you also know that it is-not. How can a flower exist as well as non-exist, at the same time? The answer to that lies in the mystery of its essential form, in which though the flower does not exist in its present form yet has not lost its essential being. If we look upon this world of external forms as real, this essential condition of Being may as well he called the Void or Non-Being, *shunya*. Otherwise this condition of namelessness and formlessness has to be called true being or consciousness substance. The Madhyamika school of Buddhists and later, influenced by them, the sages of China and Japan, the Zen Masters, have called this Essential Ground as Non-Being. They declare the manifestation of Being out of Non-Being, all things arising out of the Primal Void. What is the flower? You ask. The flower is both that which it is and that which it is not—Void is its true form, *swarupa*. "Walking I do not take a single step, eating I do not take a mouthful, understand that! With the help of such paradoxes the sages have tried to shock and startle our tradition-bound minds and lead them towards the wordless root-reality.

The topic or theme from which all these reflections have followed is that the epistemological ideas which have gradually evolved in the human consciousness had been there already in the past when, let us say, I had existed in the form of a pre-historic tree. That which exists now existed even then. If it had not been there, wherefrom did it come at a later stage? Essentially it must have been. Also when something comes from the outside how does the inside receive it? In fact of course there is nothing outer or external. Even if there is something purely external in nature we shall never know, much less be able to say anything about it. Whatever appears to be outside comes within the scope of my inner world. I know it, only I cannot control it according to the present state of my will. It is not independent of my knowledge but independent of my will as it is. But this sense of a personal will is also something temporary and in a state of flux. Both my personal will and my unwillingness seek to merge in a larger Meaning—in the guiding spirit of the World Existence. Once I know that Meaning and make it my own I shall be able to sing

May your wish be fulfilled in mine.

Or:

From my wishings to the centre of Thy willing, O Lord,
From selfishness to your good deeds ....
O Lord, from me unto The,
A new birth.

Thus all that is, or shall be, was *in* me. Maybe as my consciousness develops I shall get a direct knowledge of things. My present state of knowledge or awareness is limited, limited to the exigencies of existence. What is not within my immediate perceptual field now is not outside my possible awareness. I know that, un-perceived by me, they exist and one day, may be perceived. In this sense they are not beyond the field of perception. In the same manner we may find that nothing escapes the range of my willing. Truly speaking, there are two

—as the waterfall flows down not knowing for whom ....

levels of knowing and willing. One is clear and easy to observe. But there are large areas beyond what we see now. These come within another range of my will and awareness where all obstructions and contraries, like those of inner-outer, known-unknown, I-you are done away with. It is then that I come to know that Varanasi and Vrindaban are within me, just as the sun, the moon, the Ganges and the Jamuna are all within me, part of the same Conscious Existence. All things are but modes of my experience, and what can be the basis of experience but consciousness? I have only to release or realise this self within me, just as the waterfall does, and finds its deep affinity with the Ocean. Ever since the origins of consciousness, like the waterfall, I have been in quest of the ocean oneness:

As the waterfall flows down
Not knowing for whom it seeks,
In the same way have I flown down life's stream
From what dim past who knows.
Who knows who he is, a glimpse I get,
A little I can guess, much I do not understand.

This journey is, however, a chance to look back on the days left behind, the days that are no more. Only when that account has been settled can one really go forward. What I have sought for and received I have tried to argue out, intellectually. I know so far I haven't got much. But behind this logic and sense of loss there is a hint of something else, an indistinct feeling of His own presence. Take this argument itself. Every event has a cause. So, this world has a cause. God is that Reason-of-the-world. In this argument is implicit an idea—that the world is an action or event. Behind the event lies the supra-sensuous idea of a World-Reason or

universal causation. Unless this is so the world cannot appear as an act or even nor can we treat it as part of the causal nexus. If this argument has any meaning it is this, that it is in terms of a prior occult intimation, of a supra-sensuous world, that this physical world appears to us as an act or event. Behind the event is the idea. Generally speaking, we find little bits, discrete events of the world phenomena as separate objects bound by the causal nexus. But we do not either feel or experience the entire universe as an object, act or event. That the world is an aggregate of separate things or objects, such a notion can never become wholly real to us, to our immediate perception. But in our attempt to utilise the same reasoning to prove the existence of God we assume that this world is but the shadow of another. That is, the reasoning is *not* rational. But unless the limits of logic are left behind it is not possible to infer the supra-sensuous. Hence the argument is, strictly speaking, not an argument at all, but the expression of an inner faith or truth. Under the garb of logic it is a meta-physical postulate. The casual relationship on which we seem to depend is not on par with our normal dealings with the world such as the cause of a physical event can only be another event and so on. A "Causeless First Cause" is a plain contradiction in term. Those who look upon this argument as valid have already presumed what they are out to prove.

In support of the idea of God's existence some argue like this: There is an order or law in the world. Every rule or law must have some one to guide it. Behind the world's ordered progress there must be a purpose. That is, one is obliged to admit the presence of a conscious director of the world phenomena. Against this argument voices of dissent have been heard—for instance, order is not present everywhere and in all things equally. The same might be said about the sense of purpose. In our world accident, irregularity, loss and degeneration force themselves on our attention. Also, because a law is in operation that does not mean that it will continue to operate always and in the same manner. Because the sun has been rising every day it will also rise tomorrow, there is no logic in that. One could, however, say that the disorder and purposelessness that one sees in the world is only apparent and not real. Could we see the universe in its entirety, past-present-future, the near and the far, all at once then the sense of disorder would disappear. But this itself shows that behind the logic is an assumption that the universe is whole and harmonious, a knowledge impossible to arrive at by the sense-data and our normal ways of seeing and knowing. At the back is the logician's supra-sensuous awareness or assumption, because of which he is able to look at the world phenomena as the mental creation of a Conscious Being, as a purposeful pattern. Once again we find that the thing that was to be proved has been assumed beforehand and the so-called logic is but the spiritual statement of the logician, whether he knows or admits it or not. In any inference there must be some correspondence between the inferred object and that with whose help the inference has been made possible. But it is only he who has seen or known both God and the world together that can use this logic. But—a paradox here—for one who has seen God what need of logic is left? To infer the presence of fire from the smoke one has first to see the smoke. But, then, how many have seen God frequently and of these how many can assert with finality that one of the two—God and the world—will not exist without the other? The existence of God cannot be proved by inference. Why, then, did the saints and sages try to do so? In answer it might be said that His Infinite Being must have been reflected in their mind. They must have seen the visible world as theophany, as His sign or mode, the way men and animals see smoke and infer the presence of fire.

Afterwards they put forward such argument or interpretation before others because of their belief that the knowledge of God is latent in all men, and that on being told men might awaken to the knowledge. All knowledge is recollection. We can never know something entirely and essentially outside us. What we have never known, how shall we ever know that? Between the subject and the object some kind of relation has to exist or pre-exist. To stimulate the memory one has to concentrate the mind towards the object. But since here the object itself is unkown, towards what shall concentration be directed? and how? The answer to that is: towards One word or idea. This is what the sages have told. At first the formula seems but a word. It is only later that the meaning grows clearer and clearer.

The sages and saints offer other proofs of God's existence. Ethics, they say, is one such proof. Even that which I may not like to do I have to, as part of my duty. Why? Does this not mean that, other than the hedonistic calculus, there is a discrimination between good and evil. I must speak the truth, and keep away from hatred, greed, and selfishness. These moral *diktats* are enjoined by a conscious Being above and beyond normal considerations of selfishness. Else why do I follow these injunctions and why do I suffer the anguish of guilt when I do not? Is it not for the simple reason that this conscious Being is my own inner voice, the higher self? Essentially, I am That. So when I follow its promptings I feel elated and when I do not I feel small and frustrated. The inner conflict goes on. To understand my ethical life I have to understand the melange of the actual and the ideal and their endless debate. Hence one has to know the occult, meta-physical principle of the Divine status. Like the earlier proofs this too is symbolic, and not like the exact proof of logic. Behind the ethical categories there is the will and voice of the Divine which does not come under the sphere of strict analysis. They belong to another level or category described as intuition. At first this will and word of the Divine, and their ground in God-awareness, appear to be but phrases. Here logic is only a pretext—the aim is to open the doors of the inner world, to keep alive the memory. Looked thus the logic and the proof are not in vain. But in order to realise the truth one needs spiritual discipline, *sadhana*. In front of the veil of forgetting one has to wait for the Light. As yet I have learnt only this. And so I am a pilgrim. All that I have read and heard so far, none of it has been in vain. No experience is entirely lost.

O holy sages, poets and wise men! Your words have meant much to me. True, I have left the thousand-petalled message of yours behind, your works that used to be my constant companion. But that is because the time has now come for me to seek That of which you have spoken. Now I go in search of Him whose tidings you brought for me. Salutations!

IX

My very own, O where is He?
Him only I seek.
Roaming through land after land,
But in fact it is within myself that I seek.

All the time it is a journey indoors. The days come and go. Sometimes the amused benign smile of Dawn breaks along the hillside; at others at the

At the forest's end or by the lonely isle in the river I see the day's fire goes down.

forest's end or by the lonely isle in the river I see the day's fire go down. A slice of the lemon moon goes up the *sal* groves and the world plunges into mute melancholy. All the while the endless fountain of Delight, the many changing forms pass before my glad eyes. I wait and watch. I feel that I have lost track of the land that lies behind, that I cannot call it back. These scenes act as a kind of cover and yet it is by looking at this passing show that I am reminded of that others reals. It is far off and yet active behind all forms of things. The two worlds are different and yet the same. They are the mind-words of the Conscious Being, *chaitanya purusha*. In the song of the poet I have heard of Him but I have really not known Him. The words I have heard but not their meaning. But since I know at least this that it has a meaning of its own, that its language is not merely a cluster of words or illogical ravings the rest too will come in time.

In the deep of my songs
His words have reached me
but His abode I have not yet found.

But the search has its own delight. At times it seems the Quest itself is the last word or truth. Maybe that which I am seeking and must one day find I shall lose that again. For unless it is lost how shall one seek? And since it has been lost once, it might be lost again. The game of self-loss and self-finding has been going on for ages.

O my love, only to find you anew
I lose you every now and then.

Such is the law of love. It is perhaps the last word. Love seeks for the beloved, but its greater interest would seem to be in love itself, in separation. Is that what the poet meant?

This is what I seek—
The end of my seeking does not worry me.
Not for the sake of the fruit is the search
—that would be a heavy burden.
As they fall to the ground the fruits
bloom again.

After He has known His self-form God forgets it too. This game of self-finding through self-loss may be, who knows, dear to Him. Otherwise there would be no creation, no variety, no delight. The One, self-forgetful, becomes Many. Based on the I-Thou duality proceeds the play or conflict of union-in-separation, *viraha-milan*. The game of love calls for two, but they must be sides or levels of the same consciousness. It will not do if they are really separate or different. Then the game will be over. Love is between two but it is because of the One. And while the One I seek must be my own self, it must also seem to be 'the Other'. From my side I call Him "Thou", from His side He does the same. And so it is that both seek each other. It is somewhat like the gap between my dream and waking self. His unique experience He relishes alone, in solitude; But in the dream-self there arises the thirst after self-knowledge. It is the self-itself that wakens the dormant knowledge. The empirical self wishes to get back to its base in the unitarian consciousness. In the play of play-breaking He withdraws the dream. The indistinct awareness of God that I now possess points to God's own self-consciousness. Now He looks upon me as "Thou", and so do I. Across the gulf we have longed for each other. In the depths of the dream-state the awareness of the duality was not there, even the waking state lacked that. Duality and, along with that, a sense of unity, the paradox is resolved only at the point when one is waking from the dream. He who is waking me is He who had put me to sleep. Or did He Himself fall asleep? Thus the search after Self or God will go on for ever, without end. This play, *lila*, of finding the self through its loss is His very own. And so it seems:

The Companion who will wake me has
sent out His Call
In my heart sings an aubade.
The dark night has ended.
My mind does not know by what name to
call Him
Yet unfamiliar the form
Across my sorrow I have spread out
His seat.

But, this is my side of the story, my version. What about His side of it, His version? For it is He who is waking me from my sleep—within my own being it is He who rises—it is as if asleep He had been all the while a-dreaming.

X

Since what a long time you have been
coming for our union,
How can your sun and moon hide you
from me?

He too has been coming towards me. It is as if from His side He is waking me up, calling me back to Him. I am but one of His self-forms, His

self-lost form. My world—the body, mind, intelligence, ego—all these are really His. Through me He looks upon the world as real. Just as in the dream-state we look upon our creation, the imaginary person's body, mind and all else as something real. Now He is slowly awakening, and memory returning whispers that this embodied being's experience of joys and sorrows these are not real, but my own play or illusion, *maya*. He wants to return to the primordial condition, to the formless, undifferentiated state, *nirvikalpa*, free from all qualities. This outer world reflected in my inner being is but His play of creative imagination.

In me, poet, you bring to life the magic
of your illusion,
In the canvas of my mind you paint your
imaginary pictures.
With your gold my raft is loaded,
Only to please yourself you play with me.

Now He wants to call the game off. There comes over Him a tiredness, longing for rest. Later, there will again be preparations for another game. I shall be needed once more since I am His playmate, His self-forgotten self. There can be no game without two to play.

Such is your delight in me
and so you have come down.
O Lord of the three worlds, without me
your love would have been in vain.

The Bauls have sung in praise of human love.

The devotee yearns after Him. He too yearns after the devotee. Devotion is but His gift. All my willing, my thoughts and active propensities are His making, *mayashristi*. I have no real proprietorship, apart from Him I do not exist. The self-forgetful Creator creates the ego-sense in me and makes me view similar embodied conscious-forms as 'you'. At the time of awakening from this illusion when a first memory of Being floats back He appears to me as "Thou". He also thinks of me like that, as a 'thou'. Then begins the agony of separation, *viraha*. At the root of the agony lies the urge to union. Behind all this is a deep sense of oneness, because of which He and none else is the Man of my Heart. As I would like to know Him as my own, so would He. To know me as His own.

In our world the love of man and woman has been held to be but a form of that divine and eternal love. That is why the Vaishnava, the *Sahajiya* and the *Bauls* have sung in praise of human love. Erotic love, *Kama*, is a form of love, *prem* or agape. From desire to love, and from human love to the Divine Nature, that is how the human consciousness moves or evolves. It is by accepting and utilising the human form of the divine love that one can find its spiritual essence. As one goes up the ladder of love the movement of emotion deepens, grows purer. It is in order to relish the emotion, *rasa*, of two-in-one that the One, becoming self-forgetful, became Many. The empirical self is but a creation of the same Divine who, while making me, has also hid Himself in an I-Thou separative consciousness. The one and original conscious Being, *chit-sattva*, has been described as *Sahaja* (the Simple One) by the *Sahajiya* saints and sages. In their songs we hear:

Two forms of the Supreme: self and
Nature:
The essential form of Delight dwells in
the thousand-petalled lotus .....

Again:

It is for the sake of Delight that it takes
two forms,
For this reason Sahaja becomes Self and
Nature.

The secret or essence of human love is to found in this divine love. One points to the other. That is why the initiate of the Sahaja cult even while he distinguishes between the different states or stages of love also emphasizes their underlying unity. Apparently the human and divine love seem to be affairs belonging to two different works, between which there is, however, a mystic interchange.

That there is a wide difference between
the two countries,
people know that.
That there is also much give and take
between the two,
do not tell this to anyone.

To reach the Spirit through the form, such is the labour or discipline, *sadhana*. The disciples of the *Sahaja* call it the Path of Super-imposition or substitution, *arop-sadhan*, the super-imposition of the essence on the outer form. At others they call it the simple discipline, *sahaja sadhan*, the yoke is light.

The superimposition of the essence
is that well of delight
and the furthest reach of all discipline.
Only by the worship of the essential form
does one become a spiritual seeker.

Using and accepting one's bodily and mental conditions but going beyond them, such is the way of the 'simple soul', *sahaja*, the Man of My Heart. This is also the way of the imaginative soul. But

with the union of lovers love ends. Once an entire identity or closeness, *sajujya*, has been established, love is no longer possible. Then there rises the need for further duality, and the cycle of love and separation begins over again.

Be that as it may, for some time past I have been following the Way of Return, moving against the current. Towards the Source. I want to know Him and I believe so does He. For the present this is all that matters, the only truth I am aware of. The poet's song comes to my lips:

Him alone I know
who knows me as His own,
In His gift alone I have a share
who has a right to my gift.
He who knows me
by that recognition I know Him too.
In our path of recognition
it is the same light that lights up his life and my life.

XI

Slowly, my friend,
let us move towards the solitary temple.

It is this Inner Man, the Man of my Heart, the 'simple' soul that I am looking for. In this way of looking there is nothing that can be called external. All that appears to be external is in reality a creation of the 'simple' man. It is only my error that makes me think of these things as outside or real. Just as happens in the dream-state. Had these things been really outside me I couldn't have known them at all. Behind the varied experiences of the world that flows past the screen of my mind there is some wayward Person, my own essential Self, who sees and knows it all. My mind is but a conscious mask or self-formation of His mind. Only by an act of forgetfulness and self-limitation has that World-Mind turned into this individual mind. But the essential form is hidden or implicit in this form, just as our normal consciousness is involved in the state of sleep—like the sea within the waves —the sky in a water pot.

One has to take a plunge, go deep down within the self. He whose call has reached me, but whom I have not yet seen, He must have been in hiding all the time. These my thoughts are but a faint glow of His memory. The key to my dream-world is with Him. And when I know Him the divine world will be revealed to me.

The call of the dream-shore I have heard.
Getting up I wonder
Does any one ever find
The key to the world of dream . . .
He whom my songs seek
In the deeps of my heart
The One who has gone down there
It is He who has stolen the key of the world of my dreams.

But how am I to descend within the depths of my being? How to rouse my memory? Before me stands a huge blank wall. But on the other side of the wall there exists another world. There sleeps my own mental self, the Man of my Heart, the Lord of my Being. I now imagine Him as a "Thou" but when He is known I shall but say "Here I am" and to this ego of mine I shall tell "You are but my own form—it is I myself that had become you and been so eager to return to my true self."

This mystery of I-and-Thou is Love's mystery. The semblance of separateness, I-Thou, is only for the sake of union-in-separation, *viraha-milan*. It is a play of the Self with the self. Be that as it may, from my side I can feel my inner being, my Beloved beyond the Darkness. I do not know Him. Yet His thoughts come floating, just as sometimes the faded pictures of one's childhood will come back:

In the lonely and secret room
you lie alone on the wondrous couch
wake up, wake up, O my love.
On the other side of the closed door I stand.
How long shall time pass like this, husband?
Wake up, wake up, O my love.

Waking up He will open the door—then can I go in. It is He who has roused this reflection in me, this awareness. That is why I am now standing by the door. In my slumber it was He who had been calling me by name. For am I not His forgotten self? In me He will light up memory's lamp so that I may learn to know Him as my own. By that Light He too will know Himself anew. The door that He had closed and from where He had once turned me out, He Himself will open that and call me indoors.

When my sorrow brings me to your door
Then you yourself open the door and call me in.

The sorrow too is His gift. The sorrow-in-separation and the joy-in-union, both are His. He enjoys it all, He the enjoyer, *rasika*, the Self of Delight, *rasasvarupa* is He. Without His grace how am I to know Him?

Lord of my Being, in the heart's secret temple you reside,
And the heart is excited by that divine fragrance.
I cannot trace it even roaming the world.
But for the light of your grace
Who can enter the palace of delight?

Sometimes the Inner Person appears to be like the Sleeping Princess. In some dim period of consciousness, which I have now forgotten, I had known her. Now all I remember is that I have left behind someone without whom I cannot live. For it is my inmost self. Cut off from the inner self I am floating, aimlessly, down the stream of Name and Form. Now, against the current, I want to return to the Source.

In the deep of my heart sleeps a princess,
At the door of the mind as the wind lifted the veil
I caught a glimpse of her.

The wind brings back, beyond the shores of Lethe, the early tale of consciousness, when it had not been divided into two, when I had been one with my inner being. Today that message from beyond comes back to me. That which, from out there, reaches, builds and renews this world:

From what world beyond in the deeps of my heart
your message streams down into this life of mine.
In what dark forest by the lonely shores
He weaves and unweaves—I do not know.
In which southern breeze beneath the shadows
He floats and He sinks—in the rhythm of the waves.

XII

In what gust of sudden breeze
your doors burst open.
O take the chance—walk out through the chink
when the doors burst open.

In that gust of wind the veil of forgetfulness will surely lift. I have only to wait for that hour and that opportunity. This encounter with the self is no matter for clumsy hurry. Love that brings restlessness also teaches patience. So all day long, I wander lonely by the hillside. At times under the shade of a tree I rest or fall asleep. At others the

ears are wide open to catch the nightlong whisper among the stars. Sometimes trivial occupations take up the time. I dust the room—clear the weeds from the garden—collect wayside children and pose as a schoolmaster—else make merry and a lot, lot of noise. But, in the midst of all these activities, the mind suddenly remembers. Thou, one day, leaving everything behind I once again walk out—towards the peak. Or spend the night in some temple courtyard. Groups of holy men sit round the fire. I watch their serene, passionless face. From the star-spangled sky descends a deep, nameless assurance. I have not been waylost. I exist and I will surely reach the end of my journey, meet my inner self, the Source. For That am I! This-I is but an illusion or self-limitation, *maya*. He whose Play it is, He Himself will bring it to an end and call me back home.

"Oh sun, unveil thy splendour, let me see the person. He who is but my own self."

But the Call, how does the Call come? In a way I have heard it ever since my childhood. The cry of separation has struck from the very hour of fall from self-knowledge. Every now and then His distant fluting has saddened my soul. But now that I am looking for the Flute Player will the call come to me again, now? Will the notes reach me, sharp and clear? As I want to hear them:

From outside you take your seat within
and play on your flute
in the inner chambers of my life.

When shall I hear that in my inner being, the keen call of Thy flute? To all my outward going thoughts and speculations I have bid farewell. Now there is neither effort nor conscious discipline. All my time passes, waiting and watching, by the riverside. I keep looking for His sails. My eyes and ears are turned towards the road—I have swept the house and the rooms and spread a seat for Him:

In case He remembers me
I have to keep awake

Who knows at what hour He may come?

These eyes and ears I speak of are my inner eyes and ears, the house is the temple of my mind. The flux of appearance bewilders the mind. In the sough of the wind, in the music of the waterfall, the murmur of the leaves the ears get lost. The varied touches, smell and taste of Nature stir and puzzle the heart. So, withdrawing the outer senses, I wait, in the lonely temple of my mind, for the Man of my Heart. Then, coming out of the secluded corner, I again look at the play of forms in the world outside. For all this is also His doing. Through these changing shapes He is surely conveying, revealing something to me. At the same time these outward form of things hides Him no less. It says something or the other—the flute sounds in the solitary court. But the melody is, as it were, faint, at times it is so vague as to seem an illusion of my mind. I want to hear it louder, clearer,—oh, the keen call of His flute! Maybe when I hear that I shall get Him too. He who calls me will allow me to touch Him too. Ah when?

XIII

In a sudden blaze of light comes the happy hour and the need for discipline is over. But, alas, this mind and body remain of the earth earthy. How to turn these into shining mirrors? Maybe at His magic touch they will brighten of themselves.

The discipline, the austerity is a preparation of that happy hour. Before that happens one has to outgrow the little ego and other forms of narrowness. To move from such a clamped experience to the larger world is the work of the Man of my Heart. But His call cannot be heard clearly at all times. Sometimes we move forward, not knowing why. At others ethical ideals or the example of other men move us, as part of His invisible influence:

At His feet the worthy showers all respect
The rich their wealth, the hero his body
and soul.

One has to count the hour—of sunrise—when, tinged like the seven-hued rainbow, my heart shall leap to His light in the wide sky above. And then? Then, getting rid of the ego for ever, I shall merge into that ever-bright Sun-body, in the radiant circles of the Lord of the World. Once again I shall spread my cosmic being in sky and ether. Verily hath the Vedic Rishi said: O Sun, unveil thy splendour, let me see the Person, He who is but my own Self.

XIV

The night when the door crashed
I did not know that you came to my room then.

Yet days pass—and new days are here—while I sit by the landing place. His boat comes not. There is silence everywhere. No wind, the leaves do not stir, the clouds stay as they are. Still, it seems to me, the storm might come. There is a long vigil before me. There is nothing else to be done. What is the point in roaming, from place to place? I shall only be getting further and further away from Him. The saint-poet Kabir has described this situation thus: Neither did he go anywhere nor stay at home nor cause the body and pain. The Zen Buddhists say that looking for His tract one is apt to get lost, for these are as wide and free as the heavens above. To the *bauls* of Bengal it has seemed: "Temples and churches but block His route. He cannot be found through fixed formulas of magic and prayer or worship, His own knots bind Him". According to the Persina sufi, Abu Sayeed, "Unless all the mosques are razed to the ground there will never be anything holy. The faithful shall arise only when faith and scepticism become one". Once someone had asked Sayeed: "Do the devotees of God live in the mosque?" No, he had answered briefly, they may be found in the travellers' lodge as well. Since there is no salvation without Grace, an abundance of arguments or excessive austerity, prayers and formulas is of no avail. As for Grace, what an un-

predictable thing it is! One day, says Sayeed, he seemed to hear a Voice tell him: "Do you really want that I should tell everyone the truth about you? Will they keep you alive afterward?" To which he replied: "Do you want that I should tell everybody about you? about your charity and your Grace? Do you think they will ever bow before you then?" Once more he heard the Voice say: "Say nothing and I will do likewise". This is the supreme secret, that of His own accord He rouses in us God-ward emotions. Of Himself He comes to us. When Abhidharma, the Buddhist monk, visited China, the Chinese Emperor inquired of him:

"Which are the greatest injunctions of a religious life?"

"There are no such injunctions", he answered, "and there is nothing like religion either".

"Then in what does religion consist?" the Emperor continued.

"In your daily thoughts and activities," replied the monk.

From there he came away to a monastery where he spent the rest of his days gazing at a blank wall, Once Vimalakiriti questioned Manjushri: "What strange doctrine is this—that desires and passions, sins and errors contain the seed of Buddhahood?" Then he was told: "The lotus does not bloom on dry land, it grows out of the mud and filth". As Abu Sayeed put it, "One who is truly holy lives among other men, he has his dealings with them, he eats, buys, sells, leads a family life, observes functions and rituals, he laughs. And yet, not for a moment does he forget God".

So, there is nothing much to be done about my present state. You can acquire precious stones and rubies—you may reach a mountain peak—become a king or leader of the people. For each of these there is a recognised method or condition. But God is my own inner self, my 'simple' soul, the Man of my Heart. To get Him, to reach Him, how can there be any royal road to That? We are separated by no physical distance. How does one remember what one has forgotten? Concentrate, focus the mind on that. Repeat the Name, *japa* if you are inclined that way. But do not use it in the way of a lifeless ritual. Best of all be 'simple'. Once the Tibetan yogi, Milarepa, went to his guru, Maropa, to learn the ways of the Inner Science. The guru first asked him to build a stone house. Painfully and patiently he gathered the pebbles. After years of toil the building was ready. By that time he had running sores on his back and his health had suffered. On seeing it, the guru at once cried out: "You must demolish this and build it another place". Accordingly the disciple raised a second structure. This time the guru said: "That stone in the middle, wherefrom did you get that? It does not come from my grounds. You must wreck the building again".

It went on like this, time after time. All the while there were no religious instructions. Whenever the topic came up, he would say: "Learn to be patient. Go on doing your duty. How long, do you think, it will take to learn? When He really does appear, it will be all over in a moment".

Yajnavalka had been to the court of King Janak, the royal sage. It was crowded with holy men, for the king had announced that whoever succeeded in giving him the Knowledge of Brahman would receive a thousand cows. On arriving Yajnavalka coolly asked his disciples to lead the cows to his hermitage. At this the King as well as others present felt intrigued. "What's this?" they said. "Why are you taking the cows away before explaining or imparting the Knowledge?"

"A word will be enough for the king to acquire that Knowledge", answered Yajnavalka. "The Knowledge is not something belonging to the world outside. Once he has the Knowledge (by identity) will he remember the promise of a reward?"

So easy and yet so hard! The Knowledge comes with such suddenness and yet, till it comes, no discipline can call it by calculation or cajolement. According to the Upanishads, It cannot be known by logic, analysis or argument, or intellectual speculation. When It comes It comes of itself.

When will the storm blow? In my life such storms have come before. They have thrown open my doors and windows. Unknown to me, they have come in the guise of pain and danger, and gone back. I did not recognise them at the time. Through repeated hurts they have led this ego with its thousand bondages into a wider world. Revealing my smallnesses they have taught me to depend upon That, other than which there nothing is. But only after the storm had blown away did I realise how it had broadened my inner world. That it was a gift and bore His touch I did not know that at the time. Again, through some deep joy He has awakened me, and my soul has blossomed forth. But I did not know that

In sorrow after sorrow
It is His footsteps that strike my heart
And His touchstone that turns all things
to bliss.

I am now waiting for the storm which will bring Him to me. So far the storms had come from to the world outside, the world of body, mind, life and reason. The sorrows had shaken and the joys thrilled me. But now I long for the tempest within me, in my inner world. That other, outer storm has left its impress upon my emotions, speculations, ideas and thoughts. Now let the other storm come ——let there be a total change of the very basis of my perception and my philosophy, a transvaluation of values.

May the obstinate questionings vanish the brute mystery of this endless to-and-fro! Till one knows Him, the Primal Reason, everything else remains obscure. That Being who is the Cause of it all, I have to know Him as my sole self. Only then will I know Him truly and know creation's *raison d'etre*. Otherwise God and His creation will remain a mystery unsolved. One who wishes to know and has been asking questions has to understand the Mystery through some principle that will come to him with the force of a self-evident proposition. What is that secret, axiom or proposition? The Self. That is all this must be known as one's own self. Till I can get that knowledge by identity there is no rest for me. This passing show which I sometime take to be something eternal and objective is what makes me despair—I am bewildered by its extension in an eternal pasts and future—suddenly that world of becoming, *samsara*, will appear as my own imagination, made solely for my delight. But then that —I and this—I must be slightly different! Perhaps a little change in this—I will turn it into that—I. For that—I has taken this form of this—I. And now, following the Way of Return, this—I is moving towards that—I. It longs for the inner self, to realise its own true nature. The inner being or essence desires the outer form while the outer seeks for its inner correspondence. This cycle has been going on for ages. If the true or the inner form can be called

A group of holy men, Sadhus sitting round a fire.

the idea or the idea-form one could very well say in the words of the poet:

I do not know who it is that works
through creation and destruction.
This constant oscillation between idea and form;
The bounded seeks for its liberation
While the free seek their abode in the midst of the bounded.

XV

In the deeps of my heart who is He, my very own
In the dark, in a flash, I have seen Him
When in the raging storm the doors fly open
whose are the eyes that mine eyes do meet?

Suddenly that evening, the clouds gathered and the storm broke. With thunder and lightning shaking the sky the rains come, an unending stream. The waters spread on all sides, losing themselves in the green earth's cool breast. Against a rain-washed sky there rose a thin silver moon and the fragrance of the rainsodden earth was wafted across the drops of rain that clung to the wet leaves of the trees. Throughout the night what profound peace!

I want Him to come to me on a night like this, the Man of my Heart, through storm, lightning and rain.

Then from far away the near one draws closer,
close to the heart.
At sorrow's bidding He descends into my tears
and the earth receives Him.

That night, soft and cool, I fell asleep in the temple courtyard. And all night I dreamt. I was in a crowded city, where I knew no one. It seemed to me that I was in great trouble. On seeing a school building I went in, looking for a job. But I found out that I had forgotten every scrap of what little I had once learnt. Guiltly I left the place and now I cannot call back what I had been before. Everything went topsy-turvy. I did not know how to get back to my own country and the locality where I had lived before. It was a terrible state of affairs. But all the while I knew that this strange condition was not normal state. I was fully aware that I was a stranger in that place. I started to wander about. Once I even thought of staying on there as one of their own and forgot everything else. But in the end I couldn't do that. Something urged me to get back to my familiar surroundings, to the old habits and associations. At times I would be taken in by the beauties of nature and forget everything else. Then I laughed with the flowers and strolled in the soft air, but after a time a nameless tiredness came over me. To stay on like this seemed to be beyond my powers. The ways of these people are not mine I did not know where they went and why they laughed. Nothing I did seemed to fit in with their ways. I moved from place to place spending most of my time by the roadside.

At last one dark evening I lost my way. Striking through a forest—a road somewhere—and across the shores of an unknown river at last I reached a solitary place. There I came across a group of holy men, *sadhus*, sitting round a fire. The presence of the holy men filled me with a sense of peace and security. Folding my hands I prayed to them humbly: "I have lost my way, it seems I have even forgotten who I am. Please tell me what I should do. I have put this question to so many but no one could answer. They did not even understand what I was saying. O holy ones, please help me".

Their faces aglow in the firelight, they only smiled. The oldest among them, the one with the matted hair, spoke gravely: "You haven't lost your way at all. All this that you see are but your own imagination. What you have done so far is to mistake imagination for reality. This has put a veil between you and your country and kept you away from yourself. Once you understand this, and learn to discriminate, all your imaginings will vanish of themselves. Once more you will become what you have always been". "How can that be?" I asked. "Why should I have brought all this trouble upon myself?"

"Maybe it looks like trouble to you now. Earlier you might have enjoyed it, its taste of variety. Maybe not here, maybe not now. But you have created many such worlds before, whose experience you did relish once. Now of course you feel nostalgic, your heart's grown weary, everything has lost its savour. This is known as the mood of renunciation, *vairagya*. But this too is of your own choosing. In this way you will one day come to know your imagination for what it is and get back to the self and your own country". "But why does it happen like this?" I could not help asking. "Because variety in experience is what you want, that is why". "But I do not want any of these, any more. Neither joy nor sorrow. Both appear to me painful. Who wants to be unhappy, anyway?" "Well, what you call unhappiness that too you are in a way enjoying", replied the holy man. "When in love, one enjoys the sorrow in separation no less. The enjoyer, *rasika*, he who takes delight in all experience, wants this too. It is all His Play, *lila*. Through this sorrow and separation will one day come the joy of union. Separation is a prelude to that union. You yourself have created all these conditions. Think—and every-

thing will come back and then, in a moment, it will vanish like a dream".

"Then you also are part of my imagination?"

"Indeed so. Through our voice it is you who are uttering the truth about yourself. When you hear what we say you seem to remember. But all this is of your own making, your own *maya*. This is how the true self expresses itself to your imagined self-form. It is its mask".

"But," I broke out, "I fail to understand how I can mistake my own imagination as real".

"There is no difficulty about that. Just as you do in your dream. Without such 'mistaking' how will you fully enjoy the experience? The experience, pleasant, melancholy or terrible, how can they affect you if, beforehand, you know that they are unreal? This self-forgetting is the soul's greatest power, its power of inherent self-limitation. It is with the help of *maya* that it enjoys the show, this changing, fleeting world, for Delight is His essence. He is the soul of Delight, rasa-svarupa".

"If Delight is my essence why do I wish to return to Reality from the world of dreams?" I asked.

"It may be that this urge to return is also a prompting of the same Delight, expressing itself differently", answered the sage. "You now want the state of peace or equanimity. To arrive at that you needed, to begin with, the surge of worldly joys and sorrows. Then comes the mood of renunciation or withdrawal, followed by the dissolution, *nirvana*, of all interest and attachment. Only the awareness of Self survives. The heart lies still like a placid pool —all sensations quieted, shining like a huge polished mirror. Along the wide serene sky—the full moon at its edge—the orb of complete self-awareness. Your soul wants to enjoy this over and again, hence it new-creates all these other emotions and experiences—sad, erotic, heroic, disgusting, all the nine emotions, or *rasas*, the entire gamut. Like the calm after a storm, serenity itself becomes more enjoyable after a play of these emotions. But even serenity cannot quench the soul's thirst for fresh experience. And so the cycles go on. The delight-self is a connoisseur, and Thou art That!"

Here a chorus of laughter fell about my ears. The assembly seemed to enjoy the innuendo.

After a moment's pause I again inquired: "This holds true even for my walking self?"

"Of course", the elder sage replied. "Your waking, empirical self is an aspect of your essential being, just as your present dream-state is another. Also you may dream within a dream. If you fall asleep you will see a new world open out before you. There is no end to your games and guises, this everlasting play-with-oneself". "But", I continued, "I hear of reality within the dream-state. The dream looks dubious. What about that?"

At this every one in the assembly clapped hands and sang out:

There is a give and take between the two countries,
Don't tell this to anyone.

When the song and the echo of their single-stringed instrument died away, I heard a Voice: "We are all creations of your waking self. Because you are now getting ready to wake up, you are also getting to be more aware, level after level. All this is a wave of your own delight-without-end. It's nothing but a game. But for you we do not exist". "Then," I went on, with some surprise, "in all this world is there nothing except me and my imagination? And the dream-world which others have created, there also none but they exist? But if I am the creater of my waking universe, then the Great—I has created all these other beings. Are these creatures an illusion? But if that is so, they might as well call *me* an illusion!"

The old sage's looks swayed a little. He spoke in a gentle voice: "We are but masks and instruments of the waking universe of yours. Through these, our forms, it now wants to wake you from the long dream. When this happens, you come across many such worlds, all telling you that they are but your creation. You are the World-Origin, God. Through you they too will be able to see their essential being and all of these as the One Self without a Second. That one Root Consciousness has become Many, in search of the experience of variety. In His particular forms, as the Many, He sees each one under the aspect of I-Thou. But when from one of these particulars He desires to return to the Essence there arises in him the spirit of renunciation, *vairagya*, and, because of the workings of Grace it begins to yarn for the Divine".

"But, sir", I persisted, "one thing is still not clear. It may be that leaving this individual self He returns or withdraws to the essential Being; but, then, don't the other forms, other particularities, remain? And while these separate forms are there, how can He be said to enjoy fully His bliss of serenity? That is, unless all creatures, like me, realise their self-hood how can God, or any one of us, know his true being? For example. If my dream were to end now, along with me everyone else in the dream-world would become free. Will something like that happen in the case of the waking world? Will the liberation of a single individual mean or lead to the liberation of all others as well ?"

Striking his white beard the sage smiled as he spoke. "Son, I can see that you have been thinking on the subject. You are right—your liberation is not entire so long as others are not liberated. When you move from the small, empirical ego to the larger, essential self you will see that both this world and every creature in it are but forms of your own creative imagination. Then, sitting within, within the heart of all creatures, you will relish their emoitons and experiences, their joys, sorrows, greed, jealousy, anger, fear, etc. Just as you identify yourself—and thereby relish—the varied emotions of the characters in a play. Or as you relish your own immediate experiences. When you are able to do that your mind and heart will be flooded with an ineffable beatitude, a state much like the experience of Brahman, the Supreme Self. This, however, is a stage, not the terminus. A kind of *samadhi* or trance in which, freed from the egoistic predicament, you can enjoy all worldly experience as in itself pleasureable. This brings a kind of joy and peace and release. Instead of being pulled by the fleeting thoughts and emotions the mind is full of joy, equal and indivisible. But this, as you suspect, is not the same thing as the sense of abiding serenity. Even the form of the world-creator, Brahma, is not your essence. And the longing for the essence, for your unchanging, unmoved qualityless self of Brahman will be there in you. When Brahma longs for his Brahmanhood everything dissolves, all the world and individuals merge into That. Then in this formless state of utter non-duality He enters into an ineffable trance. There all the play of I-Thou ceases and only an omnipresent supreme Peace abides. There one knows the ever-pure, awakened, liberated Self of Delight—of whom all these creatures are but forms and for whom some of them yearn. But when, after reaching Brahmahood or Godhead you proceed towards the realisation of Brahman all this mutable universe, *samsara*, along with all its beings, at once vanishes. Just as when you awaken from this dream-state this kingdom too will collapse. When you waken from sleep the

dream-world disappears. So when Brahma's sleep is over the world becomes nought."

"Then a day will come when everybody will wake up," I continued "when everyone will find liberation?"

"Of course, since they are but dream-children of Brahma Himself.

When the imaginative web is withdrawn, how can these survive?

In the great dissolution of forms, *mahapralaya*, all sinners and sufferers, everyone will find Release."

"This I did not quite follow," I said.

"When Brahma desires to get rid of His imaginary creation, that is the world," the sage explained, "and return to the purity of His essential Being, He dreams of the dissolution of forms, *pralaya*, and it happens. Then all component things are as if broken, burnt or washed away. Through a state of utter chaos all things vanish into nothing, leaving no touch or trace behind. Just as in your dream-state you sometimes smash things all on a heap. A flood, an earthquake or a fire somewhere, and it's all over. Just as while playing a game of dice you do not wish to continue any more—you crave for a little rest or relief—leaving aside the world of false and futile conflicts you want to be your real self within. You give a tug at the board, the dice scatter on all sides, the game is over. The flood of destruction, *pralaya*, is like that. From the individual's point of view it is no doubt something negative and terrible, but for the Destroyer it is but the last act of the play, its *denouement*."

My mind, however, seems to stir with other ideas and I cry out, "But how can the individual ever know of these states? If after the Great Flood every creature is dissolved into the Brahman-Consciousness—the way you all will disappear when I wake up from this dream—then who remembers all this? In the Prashna Upanishad, Bhagavata, Veda, Vedanta and other sacred texts of the world are recorded statements about God and Brahman. But how could men ever know about these? That is what I am wondering at."

At this the holy one laughed outright. "Questions again? But tell me: How is it that we're able to tell you that this is a dream and also help you to wake up from the dream at the same time? In reality your true self is listening, we are but its instruments. This is a strategy and a pretence. Similarly in the world of men saints and sages act as messengers, of the divine tidings. It is their function to awaken others." "But not everybody wakes up," I added readily. "The world continues till the hour of the last dying. Then nearly everyone wakes up at the hour of death, the crack of doom."

"There is no need for that, son", spoke the holyman, his eyes quietly cast down. "For the love-play of the Lord it is enough that a few persons should wake up. Rousing in a few the desire to get back to their buried selves He continues the old game of union and separation, He relishes the joys and sorrows, the worldly love, hatred, fear and sorrow of the rest of His creatures. When He tires of the game and longs to get back to his original self, in a trice he blots out everything and enters into a state of trance. Those who, while in the body, have realised the Presence of God are not afraid of *pralaya* or death—why, indeed, should they? They know the inner sense of all these happenings. Those who have achieved their Godhead, the question of their being afraid does not arise, for they do not return to the cycle of births—merged in God-consciousness they enjoy the wordless Bliss—they have no separate self to call their own—they become one with the Supreme and the Unique. As for God He too enjoys the fear and trembling of mortal men in the face of the flood of dissolution—for all this Play is for Delight alone."

I remained silent. The ascetics kept looking at me. Then one of them said: "What or whom have you to fear? Your call has come. You will soon awaken from the long dream. All this is your play. A little while later you'll know that we've been talking to you only about you. This intricate game, it is all yours—with all its nuances of experience and feeling. You first make youself two and in that dual state what varieties of love and emotion, wave on wave! It is out of the need for delight, *rasa*, that the game of self-forgetfulness begins, it is the same need that later prompts self-awareness. Self-forgetful, but only to relish secretly the play of emotions in every form of life; and then to rouse within it the other dream of the true self finally, to unite with the Self. This game of hide and seek of consciousness, you will know it all when you return to the Supreme Self. It is that which is making you ask all these questions. Through listening, thinking and contemplation the self understands the meaning of its own words. Do you understand? Then get up!" At this point the dream ended and I woke up. I saw before me a few *sadhus* sitting round a fire in a corner of the temple courtyard. Then, I thought within myself, even in this dream my inner self had a role to play. Had the ascetics not been there I might have dreamt differently. Maybe in a fit of absentmindedness I would have wandered across some moon world or lost my way in this region of dreams. Then, instead of the dream breaking through self-knowledge, it might have been an awful awakening. Just as for most men the dream of life snaps at the hour of death. The word with which the Man of my Heart has roused me from my sleep is like the holy dying of the *jivanmukti*, the soul liberated even while in the body.

XVI

The sleep from which your tune wakes me is indeed dear,

A companion of my awakening, please give him your touch. I went up and quietly sat by the fire round which the *sadhus* were gathered.

"Come, sit down", they spoke affectionately. "So sleepy?" one of them said with a smile. "When will you look for God? On dark nights like this He wanders about the sky and the forests."

"He comes even in one's dreams," I added.

At this they kept quiet. Then, after a pause, the seniormost amongst them spoke: "You are probably right. When it is time for Him to come, do what you will He comes, He is everywhere and in everything."

"Please tell me one thing," I said. "At the final dissolution, *pralaya*, everyone is saved. But some devotees find their release before that. What does the devotee gain by this? What is the difference between the two forms of release?"

"At the time of the final dissolution, *pralaya*," as he started to speak slowly the old ascetic's eyes seemed to close of themselves, "the liberated souls reach Brahmahood directly, but they have not God-experience, while the true devotees remain for long enjoying their God-intoxication. Then, at *pralaya*, they too reach Brahmahood. Secondly, the individual fears physical death and, reborn, he undergoes the joys and sorrows of life. The true devotee is free from all such fear, because at the end of the body's dissolution he will merge into God-consciousness and inherit a variety of joyful expe-

rience. The emotions and experiences of mortal creatures will become the objects of his aesthetic contemplation. After he has his fill of these, he will, in search of serenity, withdraw the world of imagination and achieve Brahmahood or merges into his original self. The liberated devotee gains the God-realisation and all its emotional richness. Bounded mortals know nothing of these."

"In that case we all ought to be devotees!" I exclaimed.

"That's a wrong notion, I am afraid," replied the old ascetic with a smile on his lips. "Maybe the devotee thinks like that. But, in fact, not everyone can be like that. In any case it all happens according to His will. He does not call everyone at once. How can He, then, enjoy the wild play of their several worldly attachments? To God they are both equally dear—the bound, ignorant creature and the liberation-seeking devotee. Both fulfil separate functions. It is He Who has made them both. The first provides Him with all the eight emotions or *rasas* while the second gives him the emotions proper to a devotees or the love of the Lord. With the devotees He continues His game of love, while at the time of *pralaya*, by withdrawing all creatures and conditions, He enjoys serenity. Once you are in the know of the subtle principles of Godwards emotions You will know it all . . . . . ."

After he had spoken there was silence again. A ray of moonlight fell across a corner of the temple. One of the holy men poked at the slumbering fire. Their shadows, grown large, trembled along the walls and the courtyard. Soon after on the edge of the forest appeared the first faint glow of morning.

XVII

Filling this life and body
what heavenly drink do you seek,
O my Lord?

Forgetting one's self and nature, coming down and assuming a limited form, treating one's moods, emotions, experience and their operations as real, only to be able to enjoy their variety—such, then, is the rationale of the Consciousness at play with itself. On different levels of being and reality the game goes on for ever. Dreams within dreams, the game of creation-destruction is for ever. A dream within the night's other dreams, and this too latent in my morning hours of awareness, this again is an imagination or waking dream in the Divine Consciousness. And the Divine Consciousness, in its turn, is but a dream-picture in the Brahman-Consciousness. The self-form, *swarupa*, or base of all forms is the Brahman-Consciousness in its ineffable Serenity. It takes many shapes, runs through deviations, leaves, trees, boughs, flowers, God, ego and this dream-state, these are but its own forms. Losing Himself in these forms and enjoying their various manifestation He returns, withdrawing His *maya*, to His own essential self-awareness, *swarupa-chaitanya*. Again and again, through alternate rhythms of making and unmaking, it spreads the net of *maya* for the purpose of fresh creation. So the cycles continues. I am but a wave of that great cyclic movement. My homing mind turns Godward—but in this there is nothing personal. Everything appears delightful, an indescribable harmony. Now there is no room for question or argument. When God-consciousness is there it will bring with it the awareness of the Delight of the Many—all my being thrills with that single thought or possibility. Delight-without-end. This body of mine is His handiwork, all my joys and sorrows come from Him. They are no longer a burden, since all this is for His adoration or service. Between my life in the world and Heaven there is no line of demarcation. My blind attachment and freedom kiss each other. To my land is wafted the breeze and the water from that other land—there is a tinge of colour in all things—the flowers open—the birds sing. Why should I worry myself with vain seeking any more? Where is the hurry? and for what? I am not avid of Godhead—or Brahmanhood—for I am That. The joy that is now mine is enough. Had I been one with that, *Sajujya*, then this experience would not have been there. An odd affair, really. The bhakta, devotee, does not wish to be at-one with the deity, the Godhead, he runs after no *samadhi*. He wishes to continue to love, from a distance. It is this condition, which is the Lord's gift, that He likes.

Lord, these eyes are awake for you
but you are not to be seen
I only watch the road . . . . . .
And am happy . . . . .
All round me the eager green earth fills
with honey
whose love makes me cry;
but you are not to be found;
it hurt
and yet I am happy.

Even this is His play, *lila*. This delight of wayfaring and the touch of the beloved that comes through suffering, He enjoys it both. In this unending stream of delight of cosmic awareness I too wing along merrily. I too have asked for it, the delight of total awareness, this enlarged awareness of God in all things. He who had so long maddened me from a distance and roused the spirit of love in me I have hungered to be with him and see the world through His eyes. Which means that, leaving the small ego behind, I wish to possess and be-one-with the World Being. Short of this there is no other happiness. This zeal in me for self-vision, *swarupa-darshan*, is also His, for through manifestation He has lost the self. Hidden within the individual He enjoys, all unknown, the secret sap of the ego's varied experience. But through some He also achieves the awareness of His self. When I come to close to Him, it is but He who knows Himself. Since God is my true self, this means that I know and possess the self. The difference is only in this—God is also within the many other-than-me and by awakening each of these from within He wants to know or get back to Himself in a variety of ways. It is the Spirit of Delight that impels Him to do this, to adopt a variety of strategy in the soul's way of return. But just as creation carries its own delight, so does destruction. In this game of making and un-making I am but a means, an instrument.

On what dark and lonely shore
Under the shadows goes on the mystery
of His making and un-making.

XVIII

I shall sail for unknown shores and be
born in the World of Light
In death's own delight I shall fill my pitcher
from the fountain invisible.

It is only when this personal self, the ego dies that one begins to live! Just as the rivers lose themselves in the sea—to find themselves! On a single dewdrop the light scatters into so many colours; but when the drop dissolves the colours fade into the original, pure white. Brahman broke into Godhead, and Godhead into individuality, *jiva*, and through it all He drank, at first unconsciously, the delight of all experience. But the consciousness is never entirely lost, just as in the dream-state we do not lose it either. That is why there arises the yearning to return. Just as there is the impulse to move on there is also an urge to return to the

roots. In some men there grows an awareness of one's true, buried self. Impelled by the whim of the Invisible One, they follow the Way of Return. In this way God gets back a little of His self-awareness. From these returnee souls the Godhead too grows aware of His own true self, and in the end disappears into the Source,, the Brahman. Thus, with some free and the rest bound, souls and their common source in world-nature, *prakriti*, making a clean sweep God withdraws Himself into the Absolute Brahman state. That is, the state of dissolution and emptiness, *pralaya* and *shunya*. From this, again, comes the cylce of new creation. The Dance of Consciousness, of Nataraja,, is made up of two contrary states or movements:

Your world-dance binds as well as frees,
Down the ages, in tunes and rhythms
And one cannot make out Who the Dancer is.

XIX

Your seat that is spread over the world
Now spread it in this heart of mine.

It is hard to say what happens and why. The story of our inner life is a mystery. One has only to observe the phenomenon of memory to be convinced of this! How many forgotten details of childhood return, down to the last detail, in and out of time. One almost feels as if all our memories, of this no less than of the previous lives, are stored layer after layer in the Great Memory. Now and then the veil lifts and there emerge, the new and unbidden—a descent or an invasion.

One day I was looking at the evening sky, feeling quite relaxed, care-less. Across the western sky, helped by a southern breeze, floated many-coloured cloud racks. Suddenly, I do not know why I felt that what I was looking at was but my own creation and that whatever I wish, as though impelled by some magic formula, things would take that shape. It is as if I have a foreknowledge of things and the turn of events follows my bidding. Amazed, I look round myself. The feeling was gone—it was as if I had fallen far below. But the flash of that momentary realization thrills me. To quieten my excited spirit I closed my eyes and made an effort to sleep. Next day in the evening I sat there again. With a slight effort I withdrew my mind from outward things, as if I am uninterested and there is nothing I need or want. In a vague sort of a way I was looking at things round me, but really all the time I was keeping myself ready for some unique inner event to occur. I was completely relaxed, whistling some time to keep the mind light and free. And, then, came the epiphany and I had a distinct feeling that all this—Nature around me—the passage of hours—the swaying trees—the warbling birds—the sudden dash of the cowboy across the ridge—these were all my own creation. That I had willed all this. Looking at a tree I felt the presence of a flock of birds hidden behind the leaves and I knew that they would soon fly away. When, after a while, they did actually fly away I shivered with excitement, I had gooseflesh. I said to myself: "Oh, this is unbearable. If all that is past and future, distant and near, if All comes to my consciousness comes like this, what will happen ?"

Along the skyey path down a thousand streams
The world purs forth like a waterfall.

The synoptic vision of such a world, of the universal form of things, is as attractive as it is terrible. Afraid and anxious, I wanted to hold on to my ego for support. I tried once more to [illegible] myself in trifles. It was as though I wanted to escape from the enlarged awareness to a small little hole or corner. To myself I said: "I now understand. I do not want these experience any more—this is all right for me."

At that moment I, however, became clear in my mind about the so-called occult powers and experiences of the saints and the *Yogis*.

The yogi is able to see or forsee what will happen at any particular moment because his will has become one with God's. The laws of causation are His to keep as well as His to break. The rules are for the sake of the game. How otherwise will wordly men conduct their lives ? But for the sake of another play, love-play. He may, if He likes break these rules and call a few souls to join Him. He enjoys, simultaneously, different levels of being and experience. But in fact we too live a vastly assorted life, mixing the real with the imagined. How enormously sympathy and memory extend the range and quality of our living ! How different are the tunes and melodies of our life ! Can a bird or an animal ever guess that ? Even ordinary folk have an occasional prevision. A mother sees her child lying sick in a foreign land. A child coming to live in a new house comes across a ghost, one who had died a long time ago. The occult is taking place all over the world all the time. People who remember their past lives do exist. Leaving aside the example of yogis, if we are to make sense, philosophically speaking, of these unaccountable experiences we have to admit our world as God's imagination (which the individual takes for reality). But according to spiritual discipline, we can arrive at the God consciousness if we will. This the yogis and saints have said again and again. But in order to realize this truth and its significance one needs direct vision or experience. Even a little of it is enough to induce belief and it is only then that all the conflicts of the inner and the outer cease.

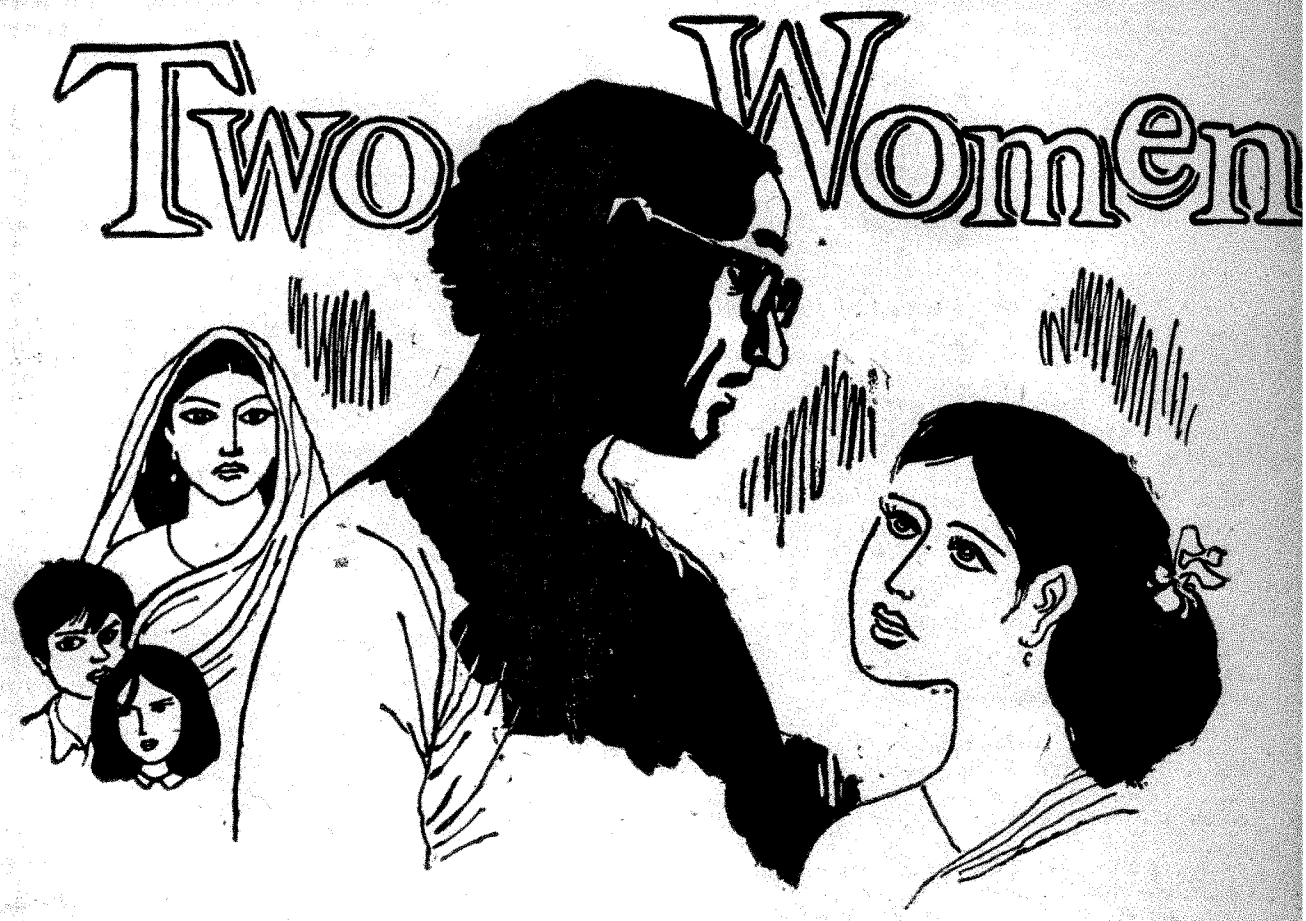
His creation is time-less. What He sees in a moment, we take aeons to see. That is, one has to admit that, causally or ideally, this universal movement has already existed or happened. When we say that He empties one vessel to fill another—or that movement is the law of His being—we are but describing His multiplicity. But in and through these movements we sometimes want to know the time-less reality. But in suprasensuous knowledge there is, in effect, no sequence or succession. It may be called either a moment or an eternity. Hence while according to our normal measure the world appears to be endless, it may also seem to be momentary. With intuition all becomes simple. To the empirical view the suprasensuous is a riddle and self-contradictory.

Hence the Upanishads declare: "Brahman or Self cannot be the object of discursive knowledge, but it is, for that reason, not something unknown." Rather is He self-manifested and the Ground of all knowledge. That is why it has been put in the form of a puzzle :

"He who says He knows, knows not. And he who says he knows and knows not, he alone truly knows." In other words, he who says that he knows it by intuition and not like a visible object, but as a principle, *tattva*, beyond the phenomena he alone truly knows. The distinction between levels of degrees of knowledge is the first word of yoga. It is for this reason that men have sought for different discipline, *sadhana*. But the Simple Way, the way of *Sahaja*, is also one. One has only to relax and surrender. He has made the indivi-

(Continued on page 57)

Two Women



By "DEV DAS"

IT was indeed a hectic year for me. As a commercial traveller I had to be frequently on the move shuttling between Kabul and Karachi and Khulna and Kathmandu. Though it was tiresome, yet it had its own compensations - primarily financial and there the matter ended.

It was in one of such sojourns I met Gauri Shankar after sixteen full years and short of take leave of my senses I could not have wished for a more suitable place for our meeting.

I was on my way from Dacca to Khulna in connection with a big commercial deal. I had to visit en route Sylhet and Mymensingh and had therefore to take rather a circuitous route. As I was waiting to take a ferry at Jagannath Ganj Ghat, I saw Gauri Shankar. He was not alone. He was in the company of a smart, pretty girl whose eyes seemed so full of love and admiration for him. Evidently she was his newly-wedded wife. She put on a lily-white sari with a broad blood-red border and a matching choli—of course exposing her midriff in the contemporary fashion. She was seldom smartly dressed. Now she looked a bit carelessly dressed; yet that very carelessness gave her an added attraction. But, whenever she turned, she seemed to be scared stiff of some impending danger; yet the moment her eyes met his, the terr vanished and the eyes became moistened wi tenderness and love. I did notice that.

I had no doubt felt a little caddish in minutely observing that girl and I make no secr of the fact that. I took a fancy to her. Whenev she swung her head, her snake-like plaited ha danced to the rhythm of her movement and I d envy Gauri his luck. But before long I had to dra myself forcibly away from her when I noticed th I was also being watched by the very girl who I was admiring all the time.

So I saw luggages lying about on board th ferry. To make quite sure I rubbed my eyes har and saw two small suitcases with about half dozen destination labels pasted at random and neatly packed foam rubber mattress proclaimin that Gauri Shankar was now a University Professo at Doodhshahi, a provincial town in what used t be called Northern Bengal before partition.

After a while, the ferry began to move south For a moment, I forgot my long-lost friend and hi newly wedded wife who were apparently fres from their honeymoon trip. When I wanted t enter the first class dining room to eat a goo breakfast, I found Gauri and his girl were already seated there side by side. That girl hardly ate any thing; it seemed she was not hungry. She looke at his passport put a question or two and then sai

something very nice without waiting for an answer.

When once I had established the identity of Gauri Shankar beyond doubt, I could not resist the temptation of talking to him but had to restrain myself. But at the same time, I did not wish to butt into their privacy. After all, I consoled myself, even after reaching Sirajganj Ghat, we would still be travelling together for about four hours or so and then, I thought, I would introduce myself. As I now know his address, I can call at his place and be his guest any time I chose.

It was then she accosted me observing her again. This time there was an intense fright and hatred in her eyes. She said something to Gauri Shankar who, in turn, gave me a scowling look from head to foot. I had obviously disturbed their privacy. So I pretended to be fumbling for a box of matches and came out of the dining room.

For the next two hours they had the dining room all to themselves. I ate my breakfast in the second class dining room and busied myself with a letter from my wife and children. Yet I could not altogether help looking at Gauri and his wife. Now they were on the fore-deck and had no eyes for anything except themselves.

II

At Sirajganj Ghat I met a businessman; a friend of mine and I talked matters over with him. It was only when the train was about to pull out, I managed to get into the compartment where Gauri and his girl were seated. Now there were two other passengers, a foreign technicians and his wife —the latter dressed in blue jeans and was awful looking.

I could now discern that Gauri's wife no longer bore the look of hostility towards me. Gauri seemed so much relaxed and I even felt that he gave me a friendly smile whenever our eyes met. I pretended to get through a paperback but could not succeed.

After a while, I was at the end of patience. No longer did the formalities of the West come in my way. So I got up, made up my mind and went straight to Gauri who also simultaneously rose with an outstretched hand.

"Pardon me, aren't you Mr. Gauri Shankar of....." He did not let me finish.

"Cut it short, Dev! What blazes are you doing here?" so saying he gave me such a squeeze that I felt my bones breaking.

The foreign couple gave us an amused glance and then lapsed into their incomprehensible lingo.

Gauri then introduced me to that girl as his old friend and a short-story writer. Her name, he said ,was Sandhya Mookerjee. I was a little surprised at her surname, not that there was anything unusual in it for her Bengali features were unmistakable but that she should still retain her former surname. Perhaps he wanted to show me that he had won a beautiful 'foreign' bride. So I left it at that.

Formal introductions over, Sandhya spoke to me for the first time. She seemed to speak poetry. There was a far-away look in her eyes which I missed very much in the eyes of other girls.

So you are a short-story writer, Mr. Devdas?" she asked me at last. The initial hostility which I met with was no longer there. Evidently she made friends with me.

'Oh, no! Mrs. Shankar." I protested, "You see, I was once a Sub-Editor and a short-story writer. I am not one now. I gave up that avocation long ago." I added uncomfortably.

"Why did you give up short-story writing?" asked Sandhya like an eager child wanting to know an immediate answer. "You see, Mrs. Shankar, it was a precarious business. Besides, the newspapers were not quite prepared to take the real, hot stuff I gave them. Anything unconventional they were reluctant to try. They said I was too rash and daring and was after excitement at the cost of "set values of things." So I had to give up!"

Then Gauri butted in. "No, Sandhya! It was not like that! This fellow thought that he was a Somerset Maugham in embryo but the editors felt otherwise! They did not want to finish up fighting libel cases by obliging this chap. So he was told to quit! Am I not correct, Dev?" Gauri was in such high spirits that nothing would have stopped him from spilling the beans!

"Funny way of introducing one's own friend!" replied I indulgently. "Surely you don't expect me to tell your wife all about my mis-adventures at the very first hour of our meeting?"

Sandhya seemed a bit shocked at the suddenness of Gauri's intrusion but when she saw that I didn't least mind that, she just laughed it off.

At Ishurdi I took leave of them. Gauri did not press me to go with him. Though hurt, I readily forgave him. I did not want to foist myself upon him then and there even though I had so much to talk over with him. At the same time I would be less than honest if I didn't admit that I could not help envying him his good fortune!

III

A year rolled by before I was able to call on Gauri Shankar at Doodhshahi. He was housed there in a big residence which once belonged to a rich Zamindar who had fallen on evil days.

Since my arrival there was intimated to Gauri Shankar well in advance, he had a tight programme drawn up for me. The day began with the usual courtesy call on the Head of the Indian Mission there, a lunch appointment with Dr. Basu, a teacher turned Government servant and an intimate friend of Gauri and was rounded off with a cocktail-cum-dinner at Gauri Shankar's which lasted past mid-night.

When we assembled for the cocktails, I did not fail to notice that Sandhya was not only dressed in a puritanical manner but appeared to play a definitely subdued and sub-ordinate role. She did not chat with the guests assembled there. I was puzzled though; but I did not breathe a word about it to anyone.

The next day, I reminded Gauri that this sort of hectic rounds of parties was not for me and I had come all the way just to spend a couple of days in his company. Gauri readily agreed to save me from further ordeals.

It was then I asked him. "Well, Gauri, no kids still?"

He smilingly replied: "Why not? I have two. Both are boys!"

"Two boys!" I shouted in sheer joy. "Cheat! You never told me you had twins" I complained. But I did not for a moment doubt Sandhya's capability to present him with twins at the very outset! In my 40 years, I had seldom come across such a devoted couple.

It was then Sandhya came to us with cups of delicious coffee. She must have obviously heard our entire conversation and in particular the reference to the twins. She was blushing all over.

"You have not shown me your children yet, Mrs. Shankar?" I protested to Sandhya. "I feel so bad now for having come empty-handed."

Sandhya gave me one of her saddest smiles but said nothing; Involuntarily I shot a quick glance at Gauri. He was sitting glum. I was ill at

ease for having raised what I felt an embarrassing topic. It was clear that something was wrong somewhere. I felt it straightaway but could not place it then and there.

* * * *

That night when we sat for dinner everything was different. Dr. and Mrs. Basu were the only other guests and they added colour and gaiety to the party. Sandhya was dressed in the typical Bengali style. There were perfumes and flowers everywhere. Her hair was decked with full blown jasmines which made me really nostalgic.

After dinner Sandhya sang a few songs of Jayadeva's "Gita Govinda." To say that she merely sang them would be an insult to her. She poured her heart out. Even the legendary Radha would not have cried for her Krishna in that manner. Dr. Basu was good enough to preface the songs with a little commentary of his own. Then he suggested a few Tagore songs which both Sandhya and Gauri sang together. We were relegated to the realm of music. I felt as though Sandhya was deliberately mystifying; her influence was overpowering.

The party broke up late.

IV

It was past midnight when I woke up with a sudden start. I could very well hear the heart rending sobs of Sandhya. I could not, even for moment, imagine that Gauri could be so cruel to such an affectionate and devoted wife.

Then I heard him distinctly. "Don't weep, Sandhya. Please don't", Gauri was pleading entreatingly.

"Why then do you kill me alive? Don't you know that I live only for you?" Sandhya was asking him amidst her sobs.

"I know that, Sandhya. Because I love you so much, I do not want to do anything that will tarnish you" Gauri was saying endearingly.

"If you protest so much love for me why then do you spurn me? Am I not worthy of your love? Say yes or no." She demanded of him.

"Please, Sandhya, I love you with all my heart but as you know, I am not a free agent. I say I am already married but you refuse to believe it. If I treat you as my wife it will be just immoral. Oh, please try to understand!" Gauri was weeping his lot in a pitiful and despairing tone.

A cold shiver ran through my body. What was I hearing? If Sandhya was not his wedded wife, what else was she? Was she his mere servant and a house-keeper? Or was she his mistress? After hearing the conversation between the two, the very thought of it was nauseating. I became thoroughly puzzled and I could hardly believe what I heard. Or was I dreaming? I wondered.

"Stop talking about morals, Shankar," I heard Sandhya saying in an extremely agitated tone. "In any case, this is not India. Don't you know that by staying with you I have already branded myself as impure in the eyes of the world ? Do you think that I can redeem myself after all this?" pursued Sandhya relentlessly.

"But Sandhya, you know very well that I never attempted to take any advantage of your feelings towards me. Did I?"

"You know you mean so much to me. That's why you are torturing me thus. Oh, God! How I wish I had put an end to my life on that fateful day instead of coming with you?" Sandhya was crying her heart out.

Gauri obviously caught between loyalty to his own wife and love for Sandhya seemed to be on the horns of a dilemma. "Sandhya" he called her affectionately. "Let Devdas go! I don't want that

You have not shown me your children yet, Mrs. Shankar ?

he should get wind of all this. He is in the ne room and what will he think of all this?"

Sandhya would not budge an inch but h crying suddenly stopped. She seemed to assess t situation caused by my presence there. Then s defiantly asked "What is there to think about i He is already addressing me as Mrs. Shankar a you have never corrected him. Will it matter mu if he thinks that I am your mistress?"

Shankar did not reply immediately. I cou very well imagine him in deep distress. A fe minutes later I felt some overpowering sensatio Perhaps I had had a glass too many of Sandhya excellent cocktails. I thought. I tried to keep awa but without success.

When I woke up at the crack of dawn, found Gauri sleeping on an easy chair in the drawin room; at his feet lay Sandhya sleeping like a bab

V

When I was back from the morning wal Sandhya and Gauri were awaiting me. The breal fast was eaten quietly. It was Sandhya who brok the ice. "Had a good night's rest, I suppose" sh ventured.

"Indeed, Yes, Mrs. Shankar" I said affabl "Thank's to your excellent cocktails."

"No pink elephants?" teased Gauri.

I grinned but did not reply.

After a while Sandhya retired to look after the household chores.

Again we lapsed into silence. I tried earlier t probe but it ended in failure. I deliberately address ed Sandhya this time as Mrs. Shankar but neithe she nor Gauri corrected me. The suspense wa becoming oppressive.

"Do you think, Dev, a man can love two wo men at the same time? What is your opinion?" began Gauri. His eyes were already red and h seemed fully worked up. He looked as though h would beat me up if I didn't answer that query in the affirmative.

As I was living in one or the other nearby countries where one can have more than one wife at a time with religious sanction, I wanted to say

es" but Gauri, I felt was dead serious. Perhaps was going to justify his relationship with San-ya on the basis of my answer. It was clear that auri stood in need of the moral backing of some e he could trust before he could regularise and stify his affair with Sandhya. I now know that en an encouraging word from me, which has its nction in conscience would make Gauri take an etrievable plunge which will mean tragic end of least five precious lives. So I decided to feel y way to it.

"I am afraid I cannot answer that question an off-hand manner. It is too serious a matter to disposed of by a cut-and-dried answer. By the ay, what made you ask this question? Is it to stify your affair with Sandhya? I countered.

I must have touched him on the raw. He red up as was his wont but tried to restrain him-lf with effort but failed. "What did you say? My ffair with Sandhya? You are a beast! You are a eartless buggar!" he shouted at me. "You say you e a damned short-story writer. You can't even nderstand this?" Then he darted forward with a harp knife, caught hold of me holding the knife ying that he would do me to death.

I really got frightened. Before I could recover, e was yelling at me. "You call it an affair! San-ya would willingly die at my hands—if neces-ary? Will you do that?" The beast in him got the etter of him.

I thought Gauri was going to finish me off r not sorting out his love affair and I closed my es. As I opened them again, I saw the knife in andhya's hands. She is stroking him gently and auri was almost a lamb now. She gently led him his bed and gave him some sedatives.

When he woke up later, Gauri was extremely ologetic for his behaviour and I assured him. I as none the worse for the experience! At that mo-ent he seemed to take leave of his senses and auri asked me almost pathetically "Have you ow at least understood what Sandhya means to e? Sandhya, who was standing nearby, was cry-g like anything.

Then he darted forward with a sharp knife, aught hold of me holding the knife saying that he would do me to death.

I left Doodshahi that night. As Gauri had been taken suddenly ill, Sandhya accompanied by Dr. Basu came to see me off at the Railway Station.

As I took leave of Sandhya, an overwhelming sadness overtook me. Her moistened eyes were now truly grief-stricken. They were quivering and I could see the same terror and fright which they expressed when I saw her first aboard the ferry.

"Bless me, dear, with all your heart" said Sandhya as she bade me good-bye.

I stood still for a moment and then spoke. "You need them now more than ever, Sandhya! I shall always pray for your happiness." Then I hugged her affectionately and got into the train as it pulled out.

I saw Sandhya crying like a child. Was it indicative of any impending disaster?

After I grew up, I had seldom cried. Perhaps an occasion or two which I shall tell nobody. But today, all alone in my compartment, I burst out crying, for my friend, crying for Sandhya whom I have accepted as my sister.

VI

It was exactly two years today that I saw Gauri Shankar at the Howrah Railway Station.

I had to be always on the move. From Kathmandu I went to Karachi and thence to Kabul where I spent a very pleasant winter. Off and on I would remember Sandhya but the pull of home and business worries would make forget her. Sandhya in flesh and blood stirred me, excited me, overwhelmed me; Sandhya away from me, drifted into background.

When I met him at the Howrah Station, Gauri of course accompanied by Dr. Basu was busy giving instructions as to the disposal of his crated luggage etc. Nearby stood, Radha, Gauri's wife and a distant cousin of mine who years earlier declined to marry me because I was only a commercial traveller with an uncertain future! The luggage indicated a destination in Canada.

Radha was quick to recognise me and warmly greeted me. The children were introduced but they were not interested in me. But there was no sign of Sandhya anywhere.

All were really glad to see me. Radha, confident of herself, her charm and her destiny was tantalizingly teasing. She said she was looking forward to her trip to Canada. She had no time for thoughts for anything beyond her husband and children. She seldom looked beyond her nose.

Gauri and I exchanged greetings. Gauri said he was going to Canada to take up a new chair that was being specially created for him in some university there. He then spoke of the task awaiting him.

I very much wanted to ask him about Sandhya. But as Radha and her children so near around, and as Dr. Basu eyeing me so listlessly, I had not the guts to mention her name. I didn't want to be a home-breaker though I had not completely forgiven Radha for her rejection of me.

A little later the train pulled out of the Station. As Gauri boarded the train he gave me a heart-searching look and turned to Dr. Basu. Dr. Basu nodded as if he had fully understood Gauri. We waved good-byes.

VII

Dr. Basu and I drove straight to my favourite hotel bar and seated ourselves comfortably. We ordered some gin and squash. When the drinks came, as I filled our glasses, I asked Dr. Basu, "How is Sandhya now?"

Sipping his drink with emotion, Dr. Basu replied: "Before I tell you that, I must ask you a

question. Do you know her story in full?"

I became annoyed. Years ago, when I used to write short-stories, I had always enjoyed keeping the readers in suspense as to what was coming next. Dr. Basu was trying to turn the tables on me now.

Sensing my annoyance, Dr. Basu slowly began. "Sandhya told me that she saw you first at the ferry ghat at Jagannath Ganj. Yes, you were trying to recollect and recognise your friend but Sandhya mistook you at first. But Gauri was not slow to recognise you; knowing your weakness to wait for a formal introduction, he kept you on tenterhooks for quite sometime before he spoke to you!

"You see, while she had developed a great regard and respect for you, somehow she had a feeling in her bones that it was I who came in her way of completely possessing Gauri. It was only towards the end, she revised her opinion of me.

"As you know, Sandhya was an uncommonly gifted girl. Who saw life at close quarters. Freedom cost India much blood, many fears and endless suffering. Sandhya's parents sacrificed their lives at the altar of freedom. The entire family was wiped out in a communal riot. Sandhya alone escaped. She was about five or six years old at that time. Seeing her extraordinary charm, a British ex-army officer, who later became a planter, adopted her as his daughter and brought her up. Just as she picked up the western ways of life from her foster father, he also saw to that she received a good grounding in the Hindu way of life too.

"When Sandhya finished her high school studies, she was sent to Shillong for higher education; when she came back after four years, she was already a beautiful girl, well-accomplished and widely read. She had already set many a heart fluttering. There were suitors many but none was good enough for Sandhya."

"I do not know whether I have told you that Sandhya was a good angler too. To the old man, angling was so dear to heart; to this girl who was much too Bengali it was no less. Father and daughter loved to catch fish. Many a Sunday they would set out together in the morning only to return late in the evening. Then Sandhya would cook the day's catch with her own hands and feed the old man. It was a companionship without parallel.

"It was on one such fishing trips that tragedy smote them. After a good day's catch, when father and daughter were returning home in high spirits, the old man was brutally done to death. Sandhya was gagged, drugged and abducted.

The suspense was too much for me. Yet there was nothing that I could do.

Dr. Basu continued his narrative: "Well then, Sandhya was taken from place to place for full 7 days. Her captors kept her in a river boat and moved only by night. It was then she came to know that her abduction was due to the treachery of two of her neighbours.

Since two men were involved in this affair, she decided to use all her wiles. To set one against the other was her first objective. She played fast and loose with them. But it soon became clear that her abductors were in ugly mood and no longer prepared to wait. Now she knew her crucial hour had come. She decided to act.

"When Sandhya tipped the two men that one was trying to possess her at the expense of the other, they became sullen, suspicious and quarrelsome. Their enmity, over a pretty face, exploded in the open.

"Sandhya had nearly lost count of days; she was kept concealed in the house-boat and was not allowed to show her face in the day time. She was given a black purdah hood to wear. The boat avoided landings frequented by people. It sailed during the nights only. During the day time, it was kept nestled in some creek which other boats either altogether avoided or people seldom used.

VIII

"Gauri Shankar was returning from Dacca after attending some important seminar. He got a coupe reserved exclusively for himself and was spending a sleepless night. When bored, he would attempt to read some pages from James Michener's "Tales of the South Pacific" where he spent a pleasant time couple of years back.

"Suddenly the train stopped with a jerk. Then there was an eerie silence broken only by the noise emitted by the nocturnal insects. Gauri having nothing else to do, put away his papers carefully and gazed out wondering why the train had so suddenly stopped.

"It was full moon outside though every now and then it was obscured by clouds that floated across the sky. Nearby there was a railway bridge which the train had half crossed before it came to a sudden halt. A house-boat lay in its moorings at the landing. Ahead lay another arm of the river which joined the mainstream further down. Gauri was lazily looking at the house-boat which showed some signs of life by the flicker of an oil lamp. It was a chill mid-wintry night.

"Then Gauri heard a shrill cry of a woman and the groan of a man. Couple of seconds later he saw a figure, clad in a purdah hood darting forward and merging with the bushes which were almost in front of him.

"At once he switched off the lights in his compartment and opened the door of it. Outside it was pitch dark. Even with his trained eye, he could, only with difficulty, spot where the hooded figure had taken refuge.

"Minutes later two men, obviously in a state of high excitement came running and breathing heavily. It was past midnight. Not a soul in the nearby compartments seemed awake. Gauri, just to defend himself, unsheathed his dagger and kept it ready for use.

The two men, on seeing Gauri in a first class compartment and standing aggressively stopped for a while and asked him. "Janab, did you see a purdah woman running this way?"

"Yes, I did. But why? What is the matter?" Gauri asked in turn.

"Then one of them said 'Oh, Janab! She is my wife but she is a bit mad!" The other fellow just growled.

"Gauri pretended to think for a while. Then he said aloud: "Why then stand here and stare? Run right now. She was heading towards that river. I suppose."

The two men let off choicest invectives and ran like madmen. After a short while there was a sound of agonised cry and a little later a splash of something big and heavy falling into water. Then there was silence.

Gauri was watching all this with bated breath. The hooded figure then threw off its hood and made straight for Gauri's compartment who instinctively helped it to get in and closed the door behind it.

The train, as if the purpose of its unexpected halt was over, began pulling out. Gauri was breathless now. But he was ready to use the knife if

necessary. The figure—it was a woman's—lay prostrate.

"Gauri put on the lights again but only after the train had covered a good mile or two and was picking up full speed. Then what he saw was startling beyond measure. She was a young woman in her full bloom. She had fainted.

"Without second thoughts, he kept away his dagger. Then he pulled up all the wooden shutters. Now nobody could disturb him for the rest of the night.

"Slowly he lifted young woman from the floor and gently placed her on the opposite vacant lower berth. He spread his bed, took out his spare pillow and made her head rest against it. Then he took his out-size flask from which he poured out a steaming cup of coffee and gave her. The girl slowly revived as she took it but there was unspeakable terror in her eyes. She apprehensively looked around: the train was moving, it was doing

I owe my life and honour to you, she spoke in a soft voice.

some 40 miles an hour and there was nobody else in the compartment. Tears rolled down her eyes.

"I owe my life and honour to you" she spoke in a soft voice. It was clear to Gauri that she was a well educated girl.

Gauri was relaxed now. He tenderly asked her. "What is your name?"

"She gave him a sweet smile and said "Sandhya."

Gauri persisted. "Sandhya what?"

"Sandhya Mookerjee—if you must know" she said sweetly.

Gauri poured out another cup of coffee for her and took one himself. "Drink this coffee now and take a little rest. When you feel better, let me hear your story." he told her.

Shortly after Sandhya was in deep slumber. The terror on her face was gone. It was now a relaxed face. She was smiling serenely in her sleep. Gauri's heart was pounding with excitement.

It was roundabout 4 o'clock she woke up again. Gauri was fighting off his sleepiness with doses of hot coffee but to no avail. Sandhya was well refreshed now. She pleasantly wished him a good morning and got up and said, "I think I should have a face wash first and then tell you all about me. Thank you for letting me sleep. This is my first undisturbed sleep during the last seven or eight days."

When Sandhya came after the toilet, she looked a picture of beauty. As she took her seat, she handed over Gauri a sharp, small dagger.

"I don't think I shall have use for it any more. I know I am safe now". She said.

Gauri had a look at the dagger. It was a dagger used mostly by commando troops. How she came to possess it, he wondered. His sleepiness was gone the moment Sandhya woke up.

"That's my father's gift for occasions like the one you witnessed last night." She said tersely.

* * * *

"Now you could tell me your story, Miss Mookerjee" began Gauri offering her another cup of coffee.

She accepted the cup of coffee gratefully. "But, Mr. Gauri Shankar, you haven't introduced yourself as yet!" she reminded him gently.

"Well then, you know my name already!" replied Gauri somewhat sleepishly having been caught napping. "Well, anybody could guess my identity by looking at the label tags of my suit cases, etc." he thought before he got reconciled.

But he was impressed by her candour. Then he asked her softly: "Can I trust you Sandhya?"

Sandhya did not immediately answer. "You have saved my life and honour, Mr. Shankar. Didn't I even surrender my most precious dagger to you?" Won't you trust me at least now?" She was heard asking.

Gauri was deeply moved and replied, "Yes, I shall trust you Miss Mookerjee! Now tell me your story."

Sandhya then told her story from the beginning. As she concluded, there was terror again in her eyes. "Now, Mr. Shankar, I must not go home alone. For the first time, I feel I am utterly helpless." She said in an agitated voice.

"I can very well understand that, Miss Mookerjee, after what you have gone through."

"Oh! Please call me Sandhya." she said pleadingly.

It was nearly dawn now. Within a couple of hours, the train would reach the ferry ghat at Jagannath Ganj. Now what to do with Sandhya? Gauri was in a fix. She was certainly not in a position to be sent back home unescorted.

Gauri was now all absorbed in Sandhya. She had no ticket in the first instance. A ticket would have to be purchased. He was beginning to feel that willy nilly he had to accept an unwanted but inescapable responsibility. He was wondering whether he would not himself get into some big trouble or other on account of her.

In a split second, as if she had read his mind. Sandhya startled him by asking "Have I become a thorn in your flesh, Mr. Shankar?" Gauri felt awfully ashamed but managed to say "Oh, no! Miss Sandhya. I just wanted to know how I can help you further but I am afraid I won't be able to accompany you. Will you therefore care to come to Doodhshahi? You may perhaps be back home as soon as you are able."

Sandhya tossed it over in her mind for a moment and then said decidedly. "Yes, Mr. Shan-

kar, I think I should go with you if you will take me."

Gauri felt at last relieved.

He lowered all the window shutters to let in the cool fresh air. The crisp morning air, though invigorating, was still chilly enough. As the first draught entered the compartment, Sandhya showed signs of shivering. Gauri then fixed up the glass shutters.

Presently the train stopped at a way side station. A friendly railway guard whom he knew accosted him and seeing him with Sandhya warmly greeted them both and politely asked if he could be of any service. Gauri took the opportunity to obtain a ticket for Sandhya on the plea that he did not have the time to purchase a ticket at Dacca itself and her decision to accompany him was a last minute change of programme. But the guard, who was an elderly fellow, did not leave them easily. He badly needed somebody to talk to and he did not want to lose a golden opportunity.

"Begum Sahiba looks very tired" he began as he handed over the ticket to Sandhya.

"Yes, she did not have good sleep for the last seven or eight days. She had little rest" replied Shankar without showing his annoyance.

"The guard sized up Sandhya from head to foot. Then he pursued, "When is the happy event, Sahib?"

Sandhya blushed all over. Gauri felt highly embarassed. The old chap was obviously enjoying their discomfiture. And then he left them much to their relief.

"Now nobody will believe us if I say that we are not a married couple observed Gauri somewhat self-consciously.

"I guess so. Well, I shall play my role alright if it comes to that!" said Sandhya with full of mischief.

* * * *

"You need a change of dress, Sandhya" observed Gauri after a long pause.

"Yes, I know. But where am I to go in for that now?" replied Sandhya in a hurt tone. She was certainly not happy to be pointed out that.

"I have some with me. Why not try them on now? May be they will fit you well" Gauri suggested helpfully. Sandhya then watched him with wonder as he opened his suitcase and pulled out a couple of white saris with broad blood-red borders; then a few ready-made blouses and other accessories from a well known clothier. "I guess these sizes should fit you" he added with a twinkle in his eyes and the assurances of a professional outfitter.

Sandhya feigned anger in the first instance but the very next moment she melted at Gauri's spontaneous generosity. "Whom these are meant for?" she asked him hardly concealing her surprise.

"Well, a friend of mine asked me to get all these from Dacca for his wife. He has not paid for them and will not pay for them for another year! I shall tell him I couldn't make the purchases as I had little or no leisure."

"Oh! how sweet and considerate you are" exclaimed Sandhya in a rapturous voice. Then she chose a sari; and as she was choosing other items of outfit, Gauri was pretending to look away.

When Sandhya came back dressed anew, she was indeed a sight. All she needed was only some 'kumkum' on the forehead and a little 'sindhoor' at the parting of her hair to make her look like a married woman.

* * * *

It was full morn now. The ferry ghat was only two stations away. As the train stopped again, an elderly couple got into their compartment. They were friendly and went on chatting incessantly putting all sorts of embarrassing questions. Gauri kept quiet. It was Sandhya who was handling the situation and expertly too!

Then all of a sudden the elderly lady demanded to know why there was no 'tilak' on Sandhya's forehead. Sandhya was flustered for a while but managed to add apologetically that her kumkum container was missing. But the old lady was undaunted and would not take it so easily. She took her own container of kumkum and herself applied 'tilak' and "sindhoor' to Sandhya. Both Sandhya and Gauri became speechless. Then she affectionately took out a few conchshell bangles, which she said she was taking to her daughter-in-law, and slipped them into Sandhya's wrists.

Gauri noticed the shock, surprise and the satisfaction writ on Sandhya's face. "So you are playing the role of a bride! Well, go ahead! But let this not land both of us in some big trouble" he thought to himself.

Soon after they reached the ferry ghat and the rest you saw yourself", finished Dr. Basu. Then he ordered for more drinks.

IX

Then silence fell upon us. It was evident that Dr. Basu was going to give me some tragic news about Sandhya. I neither had the courage nor the heart to anticipate anything tragic about Sandhya though I knew it was inevitable.

"Was Gauri ill for a long time after I left Doodshahi?" I just enquired to break in the silence into which Dr. Basu had lapsed.

"Yes" Dr. Basu replied slowly. "It was a stroke of luck that he survived at all. For one month his life was hanging in the balance. He had no trouble during day; by night, he would be developing delirium. But for that girl Sandhya's devotion, he would have finished long ago.

"Didn't his wife know about his illness?" I asked.

"Oh, no! She did not know it at that time. In fact even his friends did not know the grimness of the situation as he was soon afterwards removed to Calcutta for expert medical attention. Oh, God! how terrible were those days! With what devotion Sandhya nursed him back to health! She would keep awake throughout the night to minister him. In the morning she would be found sleeping in sheer exhaustion at his feet curled like a puppy."

It was then I recalled the conversation that took place between Sandhya and Gauri on the night before I left Doodhshahi and what I saw the following morning.

"Yes, their was indeed a strange relationship. Gauri resisted Sandhya for one full year which itself was remarkable feat. Then he fell ill and Sandhya, with unwavering devotion and loyalty attended on him and nursed him back to life. She literally gave her blood to save him from certain doom.

"You see, Sandhya too, I felt, was suffering from some inexplicable complexes. Somehow she came to believe, resolutely, that Gauri was her husband! I was shocked at first at this development but later dismissed the entire affair as the utter

nonsense of a self-willed, obsessed girl who was trying to snatch somebody else's husband taking advantage of the other's absence. I even risked Gauri's friendship by pointing out to Sandhya that it was all due to auto-suggestion on her part. I also warned her that it was high time that she did something to see reason before things got out of everybody's control. But Sandhya paid little heed to this and silenced me saying that as their relationship was ordained by God others could neither understand nor break! I was put out completely and I could not do anything. So I kept quiet.

"She never went home then?" I ventured to ask.

"No, when once she came to Doodhshahi, she did not want to go back. Nor was Gauri willing to let her go! You see, Gauri was at that time in his late thirties which I consider to be the most dangerous period of a man's age. She became so much indispensable to him. She wrote to her father once. He came to Doodhshahi and was quite pleased with the "catch" his daughter had made! He even offered the Superintendentship of his estates if Gauri cared to accept. But it didn't work. Well, coming back to Sandhya, when Gauri recovered from his illness, he was already through with the intense emotional conflict which was the real cause of his illness. He no longer felt fettered by the restraints imposed by the Society. With the inner conflict that kept his relationship with Sandhya within moral bounds totally removed, he did not any longer resist Sandhya.

To Sandhya it was the fulfilment of her destiny.

X

Her happiness did not, however, last long. Her very charm and accomplishments proved her own undoing. She was never taken kindly by some of the colleagues of Gauri who hardly relished her polished and winning manners. So some one tipped off Mrs. Shankar—of course adding his own version and colour to the entire affair.

I gave Dr. Basu a searching look. "No, it was not I" he protested vehemently and then continued: "You see, Mrs. Shankar was an extremely practical woman. She did not waste time. She came straight to Doodhshahi with her children on the pretext of spending the children's vacation. After all, a married woman does not need an excuse to join her husband. Or does she?"

"Neither Gauri nor Sandhya was prepared for Mrs. Shankar's sudden visit. If Sandhya was shocked, Gauri was perplexed and paralysed. They were caught in a corner as it were. Only the children did not know the immensity of impending crisis.

"When Sandhya was introduced, Mrs. Shankar hardly showed her emotion though she had already guessed everything about the relationship between Sandhya and her husband. You see, she was another Valerie Hobson and she was determined not to lose her husband by default. She readily befriended Sandhya and tried to outwit her. She complimented Sandhya at the way she was running the household and praised her ability to mix excellent cocktails. She hardly interfered with Sandhya when she went about the household chores—but not a single detail missed her keen eyes. And then she struck

"Mrs. Shankar now knew what would hurt Sandhya most and accordingly took her next step. She sweetly insisted that she would, in future, look after Gauri's needs and in one stroke relegated Sandhya to a mere head domestic servant or a governess in-charge of children.

"Sandhya's humiliation was now as complete and thorough was as Gauri's helplessness. He had been intensely loyal to his wife but Sandhya broke that spell some time ago; now the wheel had turned a full circle. With Mrs. Shankar about, he was not only cut off from Sandhya but saw her subtly and systematically reduced to nothingness by his wife's manoeuvres.

"But never once Mrs. Shankar was rude or mean to Sandhya. Since Sandhya was quite familiar with the western etiquette, Mrs. Shankar took full advantage of it and in no time showed Sandhya that her role in Shankar's life was no more than that of an employee versus employer. Thus without exchanging any hot words, she jockeyed out Sandhya from the pivotal position she once enjoyed.

"Sandhya never took Gauri seriously though he had always maintained that he was already married. She knew his weakness for her but she never counted on Mrs. Shankar as a force to reckon with. There she erred and erred grievously.

"Sandhya then took her decision. She could not just bear the thought of sharing Gauri with any other woman; losing him altogether seemed more tolerable. It was not without a wrench in her that she decided to leave Gauri.

"Sandhya's absence was not noticed at once by anybody. She did not touch any of the presents that Gauri had lavished upon her. She left a note for Gauri, kissed the children and bade them goodbye and left never to return.

"When Mrs. Shankar came to know that Sandhya had left, she was at first elated; but soon her elation gave way to extreme panic. What would happen if that girl committed suicide? Thoughts of all kinds of complications—her husband's position in jeopardy, children's uncertain future and the like haunted her. Added to this it was Gauri's reaction to Sandhya's departure that upset her completely. If he had bawled at her, scolded her or created a scene, she would have thought it perfectly normal under such circumstances. But no! for two days Gauri spoke not a word; on the third day after her departure—I was also not aware of Sandhya's departure—when I went to see Gauri prior to my trip to Dacca, Gauri merely said. "If you meet Sandhya, please tell her to come back to me at once." I said okay and departed. Sandhya's father was somewhere in the Surma Valley. I just did not expect to meet Sandhya. Nor was I very keen to bring about their re-union.

XI

"I stayed in Dacca for about a week in connection with office work and it was then I saw a newspaper item to the effect that Gauri Shankar had been admitted in the Doodhshahi Hospital in a serious condition after an overdose of sleeping pills. I therefore rushed back to Doodhshahi.

"At Jagannath Ganj ghat just as I was recalling that fateful ferry-ride of Sandhya and Gauri (you see, neither Sandhya nor Gauri ever concealed anything from me) I came face to face with Sandhya, now accompanied by her foster-father and almost in tears. She did not say anything; she did not have to. She showed me a telegram. It was from Mrs. Shankar. The latter had not minced words: the telegram read: "Please do come back at once; only you repeat only you can save him now."

The suspense was becoming intolerable for me; as if he had sensed it, Dr. Basu said. "Well, we are coming to the end" he continued. "The river was so swollen on the day; there were very heavy rains all around; river storms were not infrequent at that time. Well, you don't have to be told about the condition of the rivers of Bengal during the

(Continued on page 58)

IN QUEST

(Continued from page 48)

dual mind or consciousness in which to reveal Himself as when He will, when the time is ripe.

This flute you take for your own
and play in the deeps of my heart.

But the Way it is not as easy as it sounds. Many Indian Buddhists and Bauls have been pilgrims of this path. In China and Japan the sages and saints have for ages followed its tract. According to them,

"Do all your duties but keep the mind open to the Great Demand. Suddenly the Light will come."

The followers of Zen call this 'Satori'. According to their way of seeing no one can predict who will get 'Satori'! and when. The Indian *Baul* sings: "We do not have to build our true self, *swarupa*, according to any strict rules or disciplines. He is for ever and He will reveal Himself just as and when he wishes." The Vaishnava *sahajiyas* seek for, enjoy and imagine their Godhead in the individual creature, the devine form in all phenomena. In their schools human love turns into an object of devotion. It is thus that they get their desired object the "transferred" or "superimposed" Godhead:

Leaving the country of names, austerities,
it is better to pursue, with one mind,
the path of superimposition . . .
He who can superimpose the inner self
he surely will get his lover delighted
and the charmer of Eros.

So we find that our God-knowledge or self-knowledge is not on par with the rest of our pragmatic knowledge. One cannot reach God according to the laws of the physical sciences or the methods of acquiring worldly wisdom. One has to acquire either the ways of suprasensuous awareness or else surrender completely in His hands. In India Tantra and Yoga systems there is to be found a science of the supra-mental, with its own know-how. Apart from such systems Indians have also pointed to other 'Simple', *sahaja* ways. One can also get God through simple devotion and non-attached action. All these different paths are God's own. For each person or type of temperament there is an appropriate approach to divinity. Here the question of competence, *adhikara*, comes in. In keeping with one's capacity, taste, morals, faith, feelings and attitude the ways of salvation differ. This is not unreasonable. Like the universal laws this too is part of Providence. Nor are exceptions to the rule irrational. The main, the important thing is that all these roads finally reach the same goal. Each road brings its own delight and justification, each way is a way of God's infinite joy.

XX

To-night
towards the shoreless shore shall move and meet
swept by the happy waters
your sing as well as mine . . . .

Back to my old room as before. Once more I sit down under the gusty shades of the jamboline tree. It seems as if in meantime I have crossed many lands and seas. And now am back to the old abode—the narrow, familiar 'I', one's own little one. The object of all my seeking had been to glimpse the Vast, the *virat*. But I felt no great eagerness to become one with it. Its smallest touch was enough for me and all my inner and outer being was flooded with its Light. True, I have come back to my earlier self but it is really no longer the old I. I am filled with a wordless peace, an absolute conviction. There is nothing more to receive, nothing more to become. Everything, everything has become an object or occasion of my delight. I do my daily chore, I have my hours of rest, there are the festive days, all goes on as before. But there is no hurry about it as there used to be once. No needless anxiety, hence no feeling of strain, or unease. Selfish, interested relationships have ceased—there is no personal attachement to anything or anyone—and no fear or hatred. I look upon all with eyes of sympathy and tenderness. I do my duty such as it is—without pride or self-pity—and with no ambition to fulfil. All this seems to be for the sake of Delight—scenes, characters, incidents from some cosmic drama. I am content to play my part. Life is sweet! On Time's refreshing river whatever comes—whatever goes—

This flute you take for your own and play in the depth of my heart...

all is well. From youth to middle age, then the lean years, in times these will come in order. I welcome it all. One day I know death will come, it will be the simple fulfilment of life.

That ineffable I have glimpsed! Now where's the hurry? He will prepare me and, one day, He will call me to Himself. According to the nature of my aspiration I shall move towards new and newer levels of realization, and know Him in His fullness. If not in this life then in some other. Whatever He wishes to get out of me will be His one day. I am like a reed in His hands. It will play as He wants to. His melodies are without end! Even if He wants to break the reed and throw it away that would be liberation!

In His hands there is no perishing. All things come from Him and at the final end, *mahapralaya*, all things return to Him too. In whatever way or state He wishes to keep me there I shall gladly be.

(Continued on next page)

TWO WOMEN

(Continued from page 56)

monsoon. Couple of big country crafts were reported to have sunk in the midstream between Jagannath Ganj and Sirajganj only the previous night. Nobody could even estimate the loss of life. Everything was so confused and chaotic.

"Well, the Captain of the ferry decided to ply the ferry after much deliberation and to Sandhya's immense relief. Oh, God! Never had I seen a woman in love in so much distress. Sandhya was crying all the time. No words could console her.

"Well then, the ferry started its final journey so to say. When it was half-way through that is after an hour's downstream journey, the weather became foul; then came all of a sudden lashing rains with thunder and lightning. Dark clouds gathered over and enveloped the whole area in no time and it soon became a blinding storm. The ferry—which was of the 1916 vintage—notwithstanding its sturdy construction was tossed like a toy boat and was already taking water. There was panic everywhere.

"Frightened passengers have already started crowding the upper deck and began to offer prayers to their Gods. Only Sandhya's father remained stolidly silent. He cursed the weather in the typical Anglo-Indian jargon. Sandhya's distress was indeed pathetic. "Will I ever see him again, Dr. Basu?" was her only cry.

"Buck up, darling! Let us too pray for our dear lives" said Sandhya's father at long last and started singing a hymn to the accompaniment of thunderclap and rain. Soon Sandhya also joined him. I never knew that Sandhya could sing Christian hymns so well. Well, a few minutes later, when I saw her, she looked quite composed. The distress which was writ large on her face only a few minutes ago was no longer there. She whispered to me then. "Dr. Basu, I have prayed for him. He will now recover. But I may not, perhaps, see him again."

"She had hardly finished these words when there was a tremendous collision with violent impact. We were swept off our feet. The ferry had struck, with full force, some fully loaded country craft and had broken into two. There was hue and cry. Passengers got frightened and ran pell-mell. I just managed to cling to a railing nearby and before I could extend a helping hand to Sandhya, she was swept off before my very eyes, by a giant wave. Even as she was swept off, she did not give up her Gauri. I could still hear her desperate cry for Gauri—her cry of anguish, her cry of unfulfilled love and her cry of affliction. Simultaneously I also fancied, mind you I am using the term "fancied" deliberately, Gauri Shankar from nowhere similarly crying for Sandhya. Then I lost my consciousness.

Soon Sandhya also joined him singing a hymn

"When I woke up again after two or three days I was in the Doodhshahi Hospital. Gauri Shankar and his wife were sitting by my side.

"Where is Sandhya? Has she been saved?" was my first query.

"Sandhya is gone, Dr. Basu. She gave her life to save my husband's." It was Mrs. Shankar who answered me in a low voice. I was startled. "How did you know that?" I was gasping.

"I saw the entire thing as if it were a dream. When it was all over, I became completely alright." replied Gauri. He was a picture of pent-up distress."

I did not know how long I was sitting there stupified. As I came to my senses, the orchestra was playing a melancholy dirge. The bearer said that Dr. Basu had paid for the drinks and left me sometime ago.

As I stepped out of the hotel, the rains came with all their fury. As they lashed mercilessly, I could hear, even the tiniest drop of them, crying for Sandhya in unison with Gauri Shankar.

IN QUEST

(Continued from previous page)

Even if there are no Godward emotions I am ready to remain a creature in bondage. I have lost all sense of the doer the ego. All things in the world, material or conscious, are born of the same Spirit of Delight—all my separate punctilios are gone. It seems He wishes to play some melody through me—but then everyone and everything else is equally material for His Delight. Nothing is insignificant. In His creation there is nothing superfluous as in a painting by a Master there can be no irrelevant line or colour. The smallest things in the universe, the minutest movement, all are included in His joyous play. I have not heard that Infinite or Root Melody but I have accepted, utterly believed that it exists. Thus I have no pride left any more. I am become like the dust, the grass, the leaf. These too are not small or insignificant. No longer. When I look at this world as a cosmic harmony :

In the very dust sounds His supreme Word

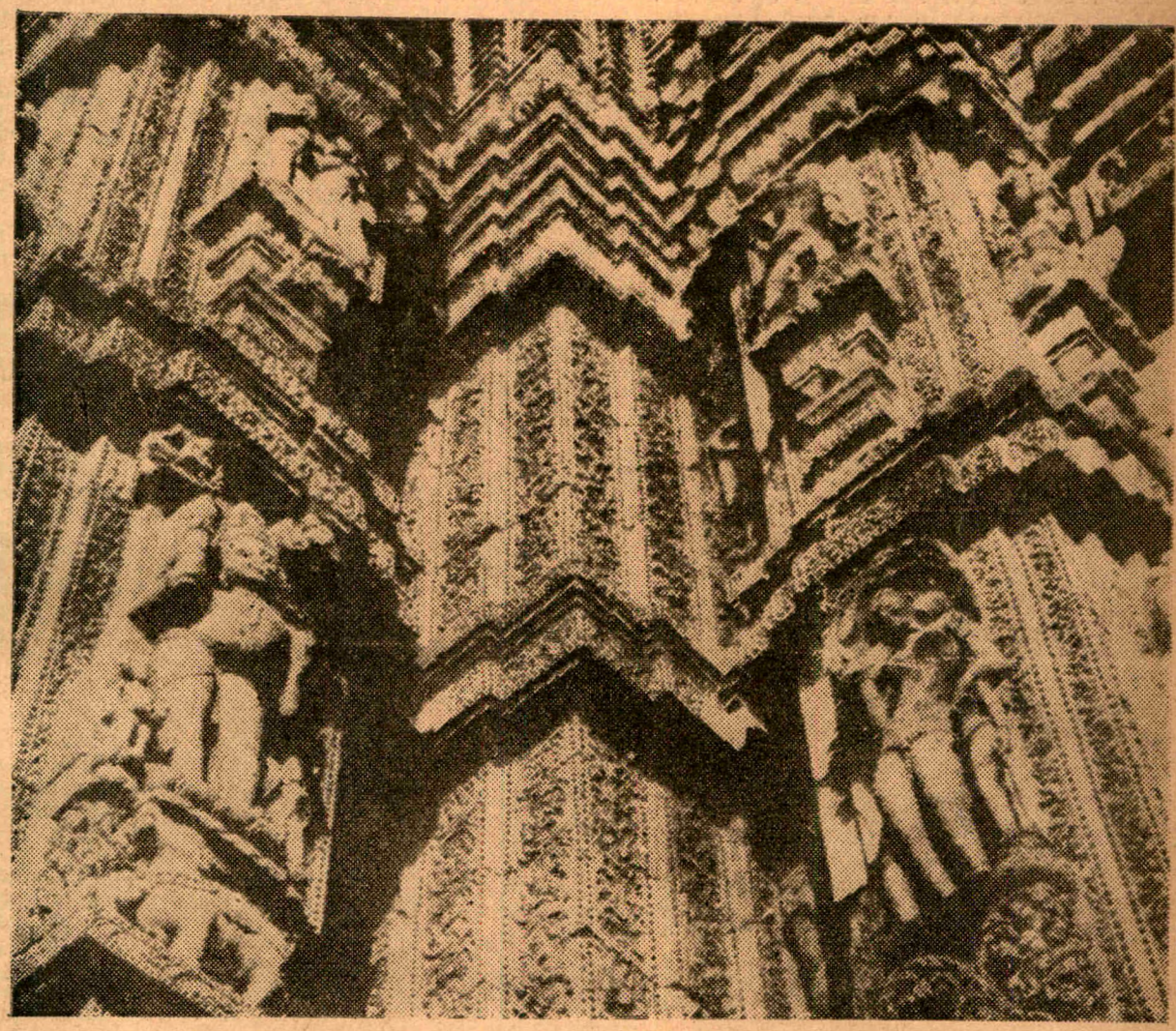
All separateness, between the near and the far, between getting and not getting, between the small and the great are gone, gone for ever.

To be lost in the joy of rhythm, that is really
to see and to get,
Today union and separation have grown one.

Let me stop here, at the borders of the Doctrine of Delight, *rasa-tattva*. Let me spread my bed in this courtyard of the Mysterious Palace. Who knows its numberless balconies, windows, and inner chambers ? To me it has been a great solace as it is. I feel a sense of utter fullness. It is a bliss to have been alive.

At the hour of parting may I say this—
That what these eyes have seen cannot be
compared with aught else.

(Translated by SISIRKUMAR GHOSE)



Ornamental carvings on the walls of Rajarani Temple at Bhubaneswar

BHUBANESWAR

By JITENDRA KUMAR NAG

THE new capital of the State of Orissa, Bhubaneswar was also a capital of the Government of an ancient Hindu monarchy that reigned in this part of the country from 474 to 940 A.D. Known as "Cathedral City of India" it is also one of the famous pilgrimage centres of the Hindus. Its historical importance dates from the rise of Yajati, the first of the Kesari or Lion dynasty that ruled over the region from the 5th century onwards. To the Kesari kings is attributed the foundation of the marvellous temples of this city many of which are covered from top to bottom with exquisitely beautiful relief carving with delicate floral and geometric ornaments, with figures of god and godlings, nymphs and dryads of the woods and couples in amorous poses. The architectural grandeur and some of the wonderful sculptures simply feast the eyes of the tourist.

In about a hundred temples worship is going on for about thousand years but the rest that may be five hundred in number or more, is almost ruined. Bhubaneswar was a great seat of Shaivism and there the temples of Lord Siva, the Lingaraj Bhubaneswar or Tribhubaneswar, the Parasurameswar, Mukteswar and Brahmeswar and the temple without deity, the Raja Rani are fine examples of the Orissan architecture of the medieval period.

The great temple of Tribhubaneswar the finest example of Hindu temple in India was built by the king Lalat Indra (Lalatendu) Keshari during the 7th century and later annexes like Natmandir and Bhogamandap etc. and many of the sculptures were added by his successors. The mighty spire, the Vimana (tower) of this temple can be seen from as far away as 10 km. or more dominating the entire

andscape as a sentinel of the universe. It is 160 t. high set in a compound with many other shrines nd every inch of the structure is elaborately arved. Constructed without mortar it is divided nto vertical sections on a basement of 66 sqr. ft. The surface is sectioned into niches and on side vall facades there are life size images of Parvati, Kartikeya and Ganesha. In the next row are igures of lokapalas, guardians, dancers, maids and lomestic scenes in bas relief all in stone. The ngles of recesses contain miniature Vimanas and n the top below Amalaka is a lion (Kesari) crash- ng an elephant.

The porch (Jagamohan) originally built with he tower and the dance hall (Natmandir) and the efectory (Bhogmandap) both added later are in erfect harmony with the architectural beauty of Orissa, the outer walls being lavishly carved and embellished with sculptures of fine execution. Within the quadrangle there are about sixty five emples of which the temple of Bhagabati Parvati, onsort of Lord Siva (Bhubaneswar) takes pride of place, the surface though eroded looks to be pro- usely carved in rich florid style, with statuettes, bas elief and bands.

MUKTESWAR :—By the approach to the main emple arena is a big tank, Bindu Sarovar said to be riginally filled with waters of the holy rivers of ndia. On sides lie smaller but magnificent temples f Ananta Vasudeva, Sisireswar and Baital of eculiar pattern. The famous Mukteswar temple of rnamentation in abundance is not far from here to he east adjacent to the Kedar Gauri Kund of the ealthy potable spring water and the Sidheswar emple situated in a cool shady place. It is barely 35 ft. high but it is a beautiful piece of architec- ural structure bearing elaborate carvings. The floral bands are neat and well executed, the bas eliefs sharp and impressive, the statuettes vigorous, full of action and decently draped. The tracery work and seductive female figures are fascinating. In front of the porch of Mukteswar there is the orana (archway) of repute supported by two olumns of elaborate workmanship. The dancing Siva on the top is so fascinating that the entire structure of high craftmanship was called by Fergussen as a gem of Orissan architecture.

RAJARANI :—Close to Mukteswar westward, the oldest temple Parasurameswar is an example of early Orissan architecture of post-Buddhist period. The shape is different but no less profuse is the carving at places showing events of Ramayana and Mahabharata. About a kilometer from this site lies the most prefect of the temples of Orissa the Rajarani with its irresistible charm, standing in the midst of verdant fields. The beautiful structure having no idol inside endears itself to the visitor in its isolation. The writer used to spend days, looking at it. It was built of yellow red sandstone and the walls are richly carved with foliage flowers and figures of nude denizens of jungles and couples in amorous poses. The carvings are delicate, ingenuous and full of interesting details. The sculptures are simply fine.

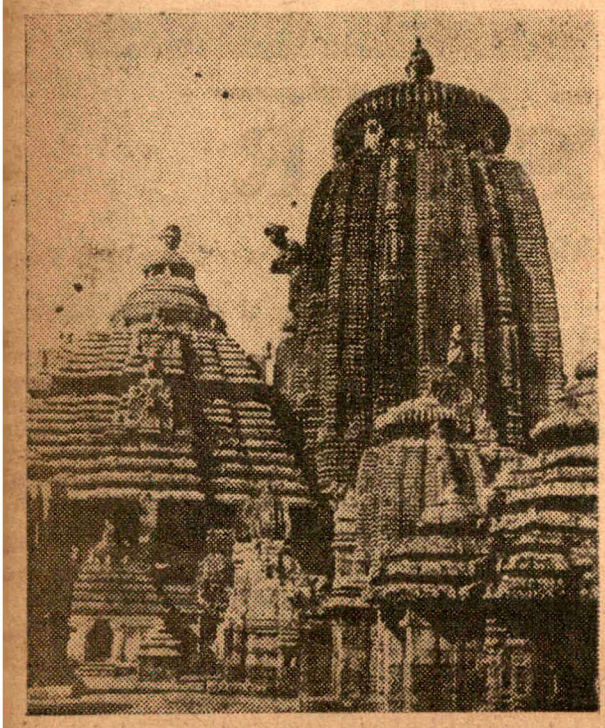
OTHER SIVA TEMPLES :—In the outlying areas are a group of temples of the usual form, Rameswar, Yameswar, Megheswar, Bhaskareswar and Kapileswar. The Bhaskareswar at a distance from Rajarani is a unique temple of square tower rising from a platform built over a huge 'linga' of stone reaching the spire. Brahmeswar has all the panoply of Orissan architecture in full force, beautiful carved gods, men and animal etc. A later shrine the Megheswar temple exhibits twelfth century workmanship. The statuettes are daintly elegant and the zoological forms are executed in such high esteem that the iconographics delightfully interest a visitor. All these temples show an architecture pattern of Indo-Aryan style influenced by Dravidian form as is much evident at Konarak.

DHAULI AND SISUPALGARH:—About 5 km. from the Lingaraj temple to the south-east stands the hill Dhauli bearing a rock edict of King Asoke (about 250 B.E.). The edict depicts in the ancient Magadhi language the horrors of the Kalinga War that brought the King to the path of non-violence. The inscription is surmounted by a terrace containing the graven forepart of an elephant in stone 4 ft. high. The excavations at Sisupalgarh reached by Rajarani Megheswar Road show a fortification of the 2nd Century A.D. Towards the centre of the ruined fort there are 16 monoliths indicating the existence of a pillared hall.

UDAIGIRI AND KHANDAGIRI:—Beyond the new town of the capital on the other side of the railroad lie two hills, Udaigiri and Khandagiri where there are remains of caves of an old Jain monastery that existed about 2000 years ago. The caves many with pillared porch are fine specimens of Jain art. The noteworthy caves are the Rani Gumpha or Rani-Ka-Naur, a two storied cave with strikingly carved relief decorations, the tiger cave, shaped like a gigantic jaw of a tiger and the elephant cave bearing a Brahmi inscription of King Kharavela of Kalinga (153 B.C.) depicting the main events of his reign. Besides these there are Swargapuri and Ganesha (gumpha) caves, also interesting to see.

About the Swargapuri gumpha Rajendralal Mitra said that it was excavated at the instance of the queen of Kharavela and the Ganesha cave contains a beautiful image of stone of the Lord Ganesha with elephant head and the approach is flanked by finely chiselled elephants holding lotus flowers.

Standing on the summit of Khandagiri one beholds magnificent panoramic views of the surrounding country—the developing new city, the plateau where the runway was built only 25 years ago, deep woodlands, undulated zigzag roads and the skyscraping temple of Lingaraj Bhubaneswar by the depleted forest of Nux Vomica where the plateau smoothly descends.



BHUBANESWAR — Lingaraj Temple

the Test

by Augustus Somerville

THE Camp Commandant stood stiffly erect on the low dias before his tent and watched a file of soldiers bringing in the latest captives. The sight was a familiar one. Daily the soldiers brought in some poor derelict, found wandering in the vicinity of the Camp, for the forest never failed to contribute its quota of starving humanity. Occasionally the scene was enlivened by the apprehension of a spy or informer, and then there would be the usual firing squad to settle the argument, but in this instance he sensed a difference. Uneasily he waited till the captives were driven before him, then, as he turned to question them, the words died unspoken. Before him stood an aged Burman, whose dignity of bearing and obvious intelligence, proclaimed him to be a man of position, while clinging to his arm, with all the pathetic beauty of youth and innocence, was a slender girl. Hardened to the horrors of war and callous of all human suffering, the Commandant could not suppress a surge of pity as he thought of the fate of this girl, little more than a child, when his brutal sex-crazy soldiers took hold of her. For it was the rule of the Camp that all males captured in the forest, irrespective of age or physical condition, were sent to the Labour Camps, while the women were handed over to the soldiers in an attempt to make the lives of these brutalised creatures a little more bearable.

"What is your name?" he demanded of the Burman, proud of his ability to speak the language so fluently.

"Maung Sein, your Honour. I am a Doctor by profession."

"Then what were you doing in the forest last night?"

"I was returning from a distant village after treating a patient." At this moment a soldier thrust a sheaf of papers into the Commandant's hand and whispered a few words.

"This is strange Maung Sein. You say you are a Doctor, yet I find in your possession a map that indicates clearly the position of this Camp. I thi you are a spy in the pay of the British."

"That is not true, your Honour. The map not mine."

Impatiently the Commandant turned to o of his soldiers. "Bring Paw Mat. We must find o more about this man."

A few minutes later, a young Burman, dres ed in a brilliant silk *lungi* and with sandals on h feet, hurried up to the Commandant, *salaamin* profoundly.

"Paw Mat, do you know this prisoner?"

The young Burman turned to look in th direction indicated by the Commandant, but th instant his eyes fell on the prisoner, his whol attitude changed.

"Your Honour," he stammered, "it is Maun Sein the Sorcerer."

"So Maung Sein, you tell me you are a Doc tor. My soldiers find papers that show me you ar a spy, and now Paw Mat, my Informer, states tha you are a Sorcerer. Tell me what are you?"

"As I have said before, I am a simple villag Doctor."

"It is not true. It is not true" Paw Mat inter rupted. "In all Burma there is not a Sorcerer a powerful as he. His spells and incantations are re nowned, while his charms and amulets have kep hundreds from snake-bite and wild animals. You Honour, this is the man who cast a spell aroun San Pe the Dacoit and anointed him with a specia unguent that made his body impervious to bullets."

"Very interesting Paw Mat. Tell me Maung Sein can you give me an amulet that will keep me safe from snakes and wild animals?"

"A brave man needs no amulets. His courage is his safest shield against harm. Only the weak and ignorant need charms."

"A philosopher as well as sorcerer. But San Pe the Dacoit was definitely protected. Can you

ake me an unguent that will make my body in-ulnerable?"

Maung Sein appeared to consider the request or a while. "Yes", he replied, "it can be done, but a price."

"I had expected that" laughed the Commandant. "And what is this price?"

"The unconditional release of my daughter nd myself and a safe conduct out of the Camp."

The Commandant watched the face of the urman for some time before he replied. "Maung ein" he said, "you may be a Doctor, a Philosopher nd a Sorcerer, but you are a very poor judge of uman character. Look around you at the faces of ese bestial, sex-starved creatures and tell me ow long do you think you would live if I handed ou and your daughter to them, even on a safe nduct? I tell you, you would not reach the oundaries of this Camp before they would shoot ou and molest your daughter savagely. But I have nother offer to make. You see the gallows standing ere. It was my intention to have hung you from ose chains and your flesh whipped from your ones. Your daughter I would have thrown to the oldiers, as it is their right, but if you can make is wonderful preparation that will protect me om bullets, then I will give you your life and send ou to work in the Labour Camps. Your daughter will take into my own tent and keep her for as ng as she pleases me. This is my final offer: I can o no more."

Like a man stricken by an insurmountable orrow, Maung Sein hung his head. At last he ooked up and his eyes encountered those of his aughter fixed on him. What passed between these wo no one could tell, but the girl visibly tensed nd then flung back her head with a pathetic little mile. From his girdle Maung Sein took a small kin bag, from which he poured a reddish powder nto the hollow of his palm. For a while he held his firmly, muttering strange incantations, then electing a thin skiver of steel, cleverly interwoven nto his hair, he gashed his wrist swiftly and as the lood gushed out he pressed the wound over the owder on his palm. A moment he held it thus,

"...And the brave smile to her lips"

then removed his hand and the bystanders saw with amazement that the blood had not only ceased to flow but that the wound had practically healed. With his finger he slowly mixed the blood and powder on his palm, then selecting a leaf from the ground he transferred the mixture to the leaf and stepping up to the Commandant he offered the leaf to him.

"Here your Honour, is the protection I promised. Apply it to any part of your body and no bullet will ever penetrate that part, or if you desire complete your protection, then dissolve this mixture with water and anoint your whole body and for six months neither snake, wild animal, knife or bullet will harm you."

The Commandant smiled but shook his head. "No, Maung Sein, I do not want your gift. How do I know you speak the truth. I want proof, not words."

A wildness seemed to grow and gather in the eyes of the Burman. "Your Honour wants proof, then I will give you such proof that even you cannot doubt." Turning swiftly he strode to where his daughter stood. With a single wrench he tore the blouse from her frail body. For a moment her face blanched but a whispered word from her father brought back the defiance to her eyes and the brave smile to her lips. Where her heart fluttered and trembled like a trapped bird, the father calmly painted a red disk, then stepping back, he shouted to the Commandant, "There is a target no man can miss. Fire and see if I have lied to you."

But the Commandant still smiled cynically. "Clever, Maung Sein, clever, but too obvious. To such as her, death is the swiftest and most merciful escape from the horrors that await her. But I have still one more test." Shouting a sharp command, he took from one of the soldiers a rifle. Working the bolt till all the cartridges but one were ejected he handed the gun to Maung Sein.

"Now Maung Sein we will test the strength of your magic. There is but one cartridge in the chamber. It will avail you little to swing round and put that one bullet into me, for at the first treacherous move you make you die and your daughter goes to the soldiers. We will see now what faith you have in your own power."

Maung Sein took the gun without a word. For a moment his eyes held those of his child, then swiftly he threw the gun up to his shoulder and fired. For an instant the girl stood looking at her father with a queer expression of wonder on her face and then slid quietly to the ground. Grasping the gun by the barrel, Maung Sein swept the weapon round his head and with a roar of rage sprang directly at the Commandant, but long before he reached the dais, a dozen rifles had cracked and Maung Sein's body crumpled to the ground.

Though inured and hardened to the brutalities of warfare, the men stood in shocked silence at this double tragedy, then as they realised how they had been tricked, a sullen murmur rose and they started moving towards where the bodies lay, lust and anger and revenge distorting their faces, but they never reached their objective. At a fierce command from the Commandant they stopped and in the silence that followed, watched the amazement as the Commandant stepped over to the bodies. Drawing himself to his full height, he saluted reverently. "Burman", he said, "you win. I salute you and your child. To the brave, death is better than dishonour."

PUZZLES TO PUZZLE YOU!

By MAHAVEER SARAN

PROF. John Neuman, one of the greatest mathematicians of the present century, was once taken off his guard in a party when one of his students gave the following problem to him.

Two boys on bicycles, 60 miles apart, started towards each other at a constant speed of 10 miles per hour. Simultaneously a bee on the handle of one of the bicycles started flying towards the other bicycle and as soon as it touched the handle, it flew back. It kept on doing this until the two handles met. If the bee had a constant speed of 15 miles per hour, how far did it fly?

Neuman as usual with him put down his beer and specs, closed his eyes and was lost in thought. He gave the answer in six minutes time. "It was fortyfive point zero zero zero zero—well it is 45 miles".

"Easy isn't it, unless you go the infinite series way," said his student. "With equal and constant speed, the two bicycles must meet in the middle, that is 30 miles in three hours and the bee by that time has flown 45 miles, bicycles or no bicycles."

"What" exclaimed Neuman with some embarrassment, "but I solved it by the series way." The mathematician evidently failed to catch the puzzle in the problem.

Puzzles are as old as the civilization. Ancient Egyptians, Arabs, Indians and Greeks knew most of them with which they are familiar even today. Take for instance the traveller's problem of crossing a river with his possession of a panther, goat and betel leaves. There is no room for more than two in the boat. Neither the panther nor the goat could row. With the man away with the panther, the goat will eat the betel leaves and betel leaves going first with the man, the panther will be eager to eat up the goat. Egyptians and Arabs only changed goat to camel and betels to pappyrus or grass.

Niccolo Fontana in the 16th century suggested similar puzzle. Three beautiful brides with their jealous husbands came to cross a river and found only a small boat which would not hold more than two. To avoid any embarrassing situation, the crossing was so arranged that no lady was to be left with a man on either side of the river unless her hubby was also present as a guard. How the crossing was arranged.

Ancient Indians as well as the Arabs also knew the familiar problem of three slaves and their master. The Greeks learnt it from the Arabs. Three were blindfolded and they were asked to stand one behind the other when their master who had five caps in a bag, two of which were green and three red, brought out three at random, put them on their heads and took off their folds. When the slaves were asked about the colours of the caps the last man who could see two heads before him could not tell. The second man who saw only one head, that of the first, cut a sorry figure. The first slave who saw nothing but heard what the two other slaves had said, thought for a minute and correctly named his colour. What colour he had and how could he say so? This is indeed an excellent problem and requires razor sharp logic for the correct answer.

The Eleatic philosopher-mathematician Zeno of 5th century B.C. set all the contemporary mathematicians and logicians fly at each other's throat by evolving a series of puzzles of which the most important was the proverbial race between Achilles and tortoise. With the ancient Indian mathematicians, it was a race between the fox and tortoise. Achilles runs ten times faster than the tortoise but the latter was a hundred yards ahead of the former at the start. So argued Zeno that Achilles would never be able to overtake his rival as by the time he covered hundred yards, the tortoise would be ten yards away. And when he covered this distance, the tortoise was still one yard ahead of him. And when Achilles covered this distance also, his rival still led him by one-tenth of a yard and so on.

There are again many problems which though very amusing and deceptive, present no mathema-

tical problem although apparently they seem to do so. In fact the very mathematical approach itself causes deception. An excellent example is the proverbial problem of wine and water known all over the world. Caught unaware, mathematicians would still rack their brain over it. There are two glasses one half filled with wine and the other half filled with water, both liquids in equal volumes. From the first glass one tea spoonful of wine is taken and poured in the second glass containing water and then out of the mixture one tea spoonful is taken and poured in the wine glass. Now which is greater—the quantity of wine in the water glass or the quantity of water in the wine glass? (Ans: They are same).

The following puzzle which was published sometime ago in Life International made the heads of three crores of its readers reel. In their bid to solve the puzzle, employees deserted their offices, engineers their shops, businessmen their trades, students their class and housewives their household duties. In England, there was even slump in football pool as people had no time for the forecast. A mathematician bewailed, he could not solve the puzzle even in six months. An astute logician was in the same darkness after three months. So was a newspaper sleuth. An intelligent housewife and another teacher of logic solved it in half-an-hour's time. A student also needed the same time to solve while an army officer solved it in little more than an hour.

Here is the problem. There are five houses of different colours in which live five men all of different nationalities. Each has his own pet, favourite drink and special brand of cigarette no two of which are common. Following 15 data are given:

1. There are five houses.
2. The Englishman lives in the red house.
3. The Spaniards owns the dog.
4. Coffee is drunk in the green house.
5. The Ukranian drinks tea.
6. The green house is immediately to the right (reader's right) of the ivory house.
7. The Old Gold smoker owns snails.
8. Kools are smoked in the yellow house.
9. Milk is drunk in the middle house.
10. The Norwegian lives in the first house.
11. The man who smokes Chesterfields lives in the house next to the man with the fox.
12. Kools are smoked in the house next to the house where horse is kept.
13. The Lucky Strike smoker drinks orange juice.
14. The Japanese smokes Parliaments.
15. The Norwegian lives next to the blue house.

Now the questions are : who drinks water and who keeps zebra.

The problem, surprisingly, is not a new one but an improvement on a 13th century puzzle, quoted subsequently both by the celebrated mathematicians Euler and Leibnitz Here is the original problem :

Three men, John, Jack and Joe are *each* engaged to two occupations which are chauffeur, bottlegger, musician, painter, gardener and barber. None of the three has a common occupation. One has to find out their trades from the following data.

1. The chauffeur offended the musician by laughing at his long hair.
2. Both the musician and the gardener used to go finishing with John.
3. The painter bought gin from the bootlegger.
4. The chauffeur courted the painter's sister.
5. Jack owed the gardener five coins.
6. Joe beat both Jack and the painter at quoits.

Here are two of many hundreds of puzzles in which mathematics is involved. The first one was given by Sam Loyd the great mathematician and a genious of puzzles who was alive in the wake of the present century. Combined ages of Mary and Ann are 44. Mary is twice as old as Ann was when Mary was half as old as Ann will be when Ann is three times as old as Mary was when Mary was three times as old as Ann. How old are they now ? (Ans. Mary 27½. Ann 16½)

MYTHICAL MATCH

Finally here is the famous 'Bradman Puzzle' which raised great stir among the cricket lovers in the world some years ago. This problem of a mythical cricket match was originally evolved in 1930 by Sir Arthur Eddington. Bradman came to know of this problem years ago but could not solve it. Neither could he give it the proper attention it deserved in his active cricket life. Finally in 1956, during his voyage from Australia to England he solved it on board the ship during his long leisure and the world heard it over the wireless. Next day, the whole cricket world was taken by storm. Within ten days, nine persons solved it, two of whom were Indians, one of them a student.

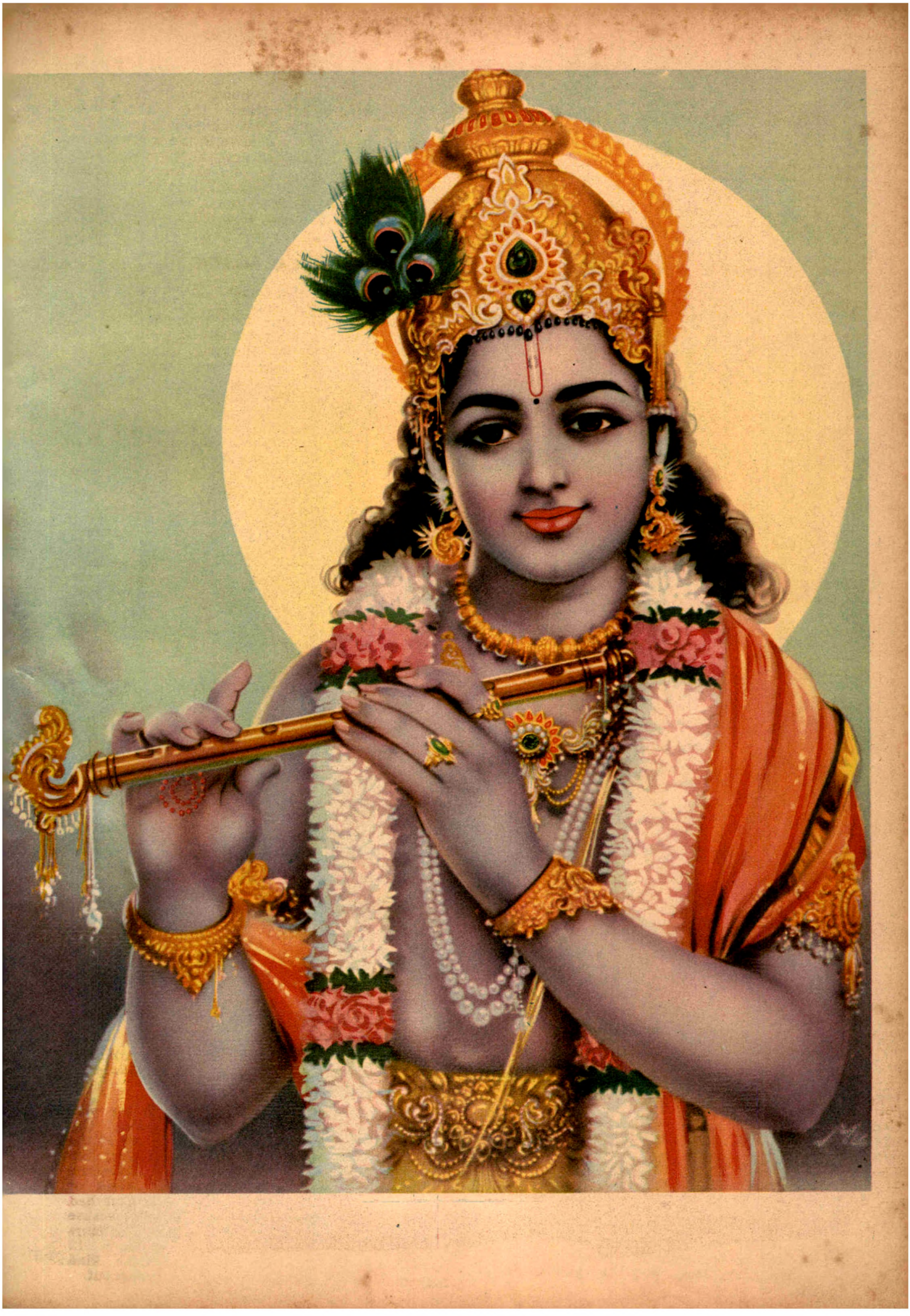
Sir Donald has warned all prospective solvers of the problem saying, "To those who are not interested in Mathematics and are not prepared to spend many hours on the subject, my advice is—don't try". Here is the mythical cricket match with the score, the batting order and the bowling analysis.

			Bowling Analysis			
			Over	Maidens	Runs	Wickets
Atkins	6					
Bodkins	8					
Dawkins	6					
Hawkins	6					
Jenkins	5					
Larkins	4	Pitchwell	12.1	2	14	8
Markins	7	Speedwell	6	0	15	1
Parkins	11	Tosswell	7	5	31	1
Simkins	6					
Tomkins	0					
Wilkins	1					
Extra	nil					
Total	60					

Following are the data given :

1. Scores were composed entirely of singles and boundaries of fours.
2. There were no catches, no balls or short runs.
3. Speedwell and Tosswell each had one spell of bowling.
4. Pitchwell bowled the first ball to Atkins.
5. Speedwell was the other opening bowler.
6. Overs were of six balls each.

Three answers are required : (a) Whose wickets were taken by Speedwell and Tosswell. (b) Who was not out. (c) What was the score at the fall of each wicket. Difficult as the problem is, Sir Donald has given a suggestion how to tackle the problem. Tosswell who bowled seven overs of which five were maidens for 31 runs must have had seven fours and three singles hit off him because we are told that total scores were made up of fours and singles. No other combination of maximum 12 balls can give a total of 31 runs. That is the kind of hypothesis which must be applied throughout.



THE VIGILANCE CONTINUES

Defence awareness and preparedness of the country started with the Chinese attack in 1962 on our Northern Borders. Last year our immediate neighbour who has been having aggressive designs for a long time sent infiltrators to KASHMIR and attacked our borders.

The Armed Forces are required to be constantly on vigil and be in a state of readiness to meet the threat posed by China and Pakistan.

In the Independence Day message to the Armed Forces, the Defence Minister said, "This is our 20th Independence Day, it claims a peculiar precedence over others so far celebrated. It has come at a time when you have proved our mettle and when by virtue of chivalry and spirit of sacrifice you exhibited last year, you have largely widened the circle of your admirers in the country. The people of India know you better today than ever before. The threat to our country's freedom and integrity continues unabated and in some way it has become even more serious. As you all know, Pakistan has been arming herself at a frantic pace and there is also no change in the belligerent attitude of China. What is more important is that we must face the fact that this threat is not of a short duration. It is a long term threat and it is necessary that we remain ever vigilant and prepared. You must, therefore, keep yourself in trim and maintain your high standard of training of which you are legitimately proud."

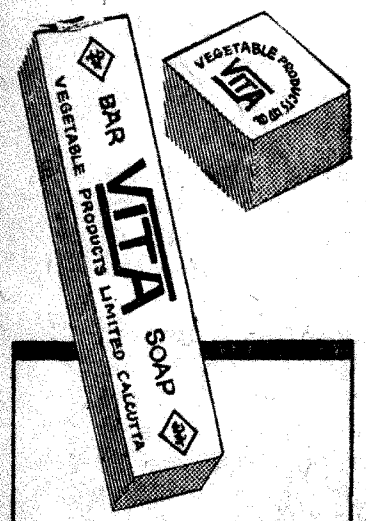
The training is the key-note of the preparedness and operational efficiency, and to achieve self-sufficiency in Ordnance Stores by relying on an indigenous production. Looking forward to the over-all strength of the Army, Navy and Air Force is increased. The new Mountain Divisions have been raised, equipped with the automatic rifles produced by our Ordnance Factories. The older aircraft and equipment are being phased out and replaced by the new ones. The new tank "VAIJAYANTA" the Victorious, manufactured by our Defence Factories, has rolled out of the factory giving additional strength to our Army. The Air Force is also being given additional Gnats and MIGS, air-craft. With long coastline of 3,500 miles to defend, our Navy though small is quite capable of fulfilling their role in safeguarding our lines of communications, defending themselves and protecting merchant ships, in their care.

With this new outlook the Armed Forces are prepared to defend the independence and integrity of our country from foreign aggression.

wash with
VITA
and
see the
difference

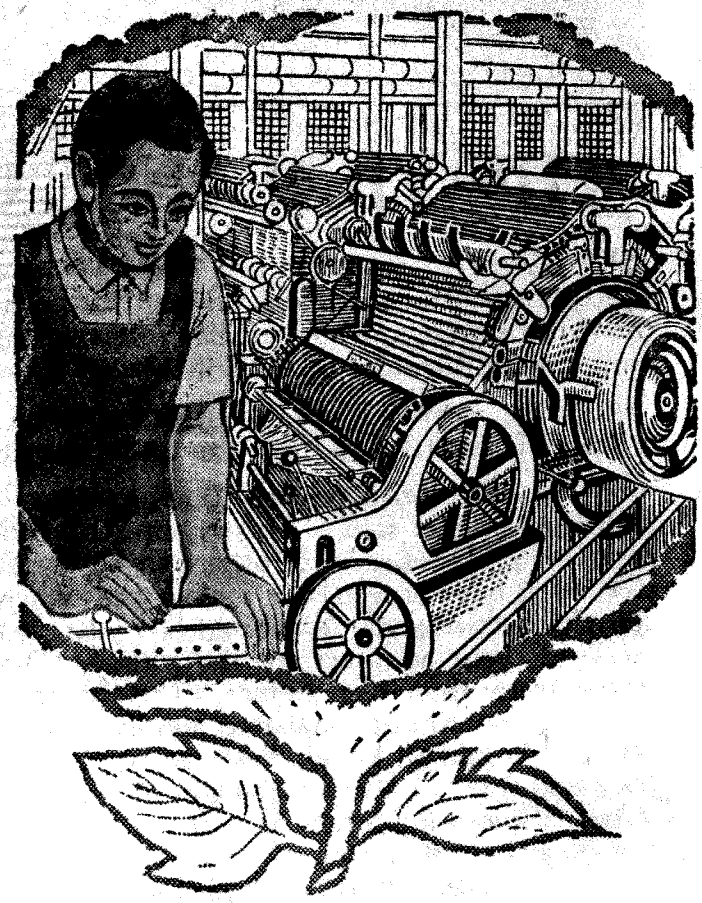
VITA

CAKE & BAR
SOAP



VEGETABLE
PRODUCTS LTD.
Calcutta-1

PRESSMAN-VP-1

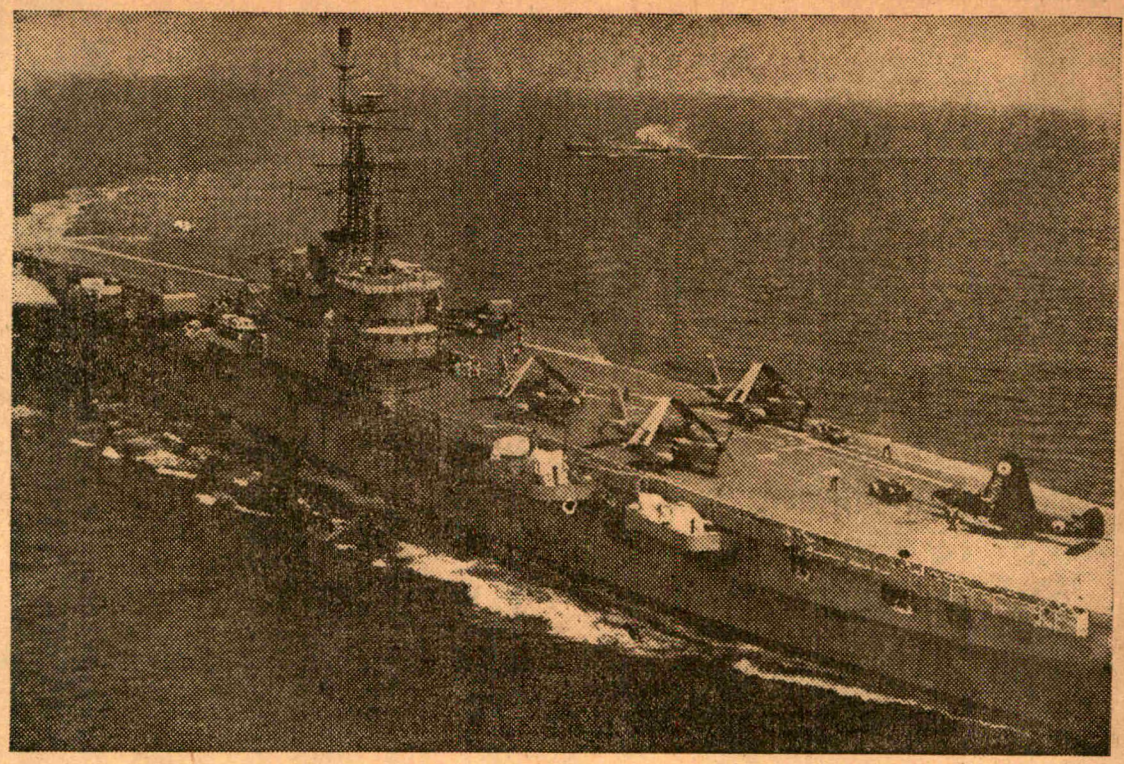


Tradition Built on
Continuous Progress

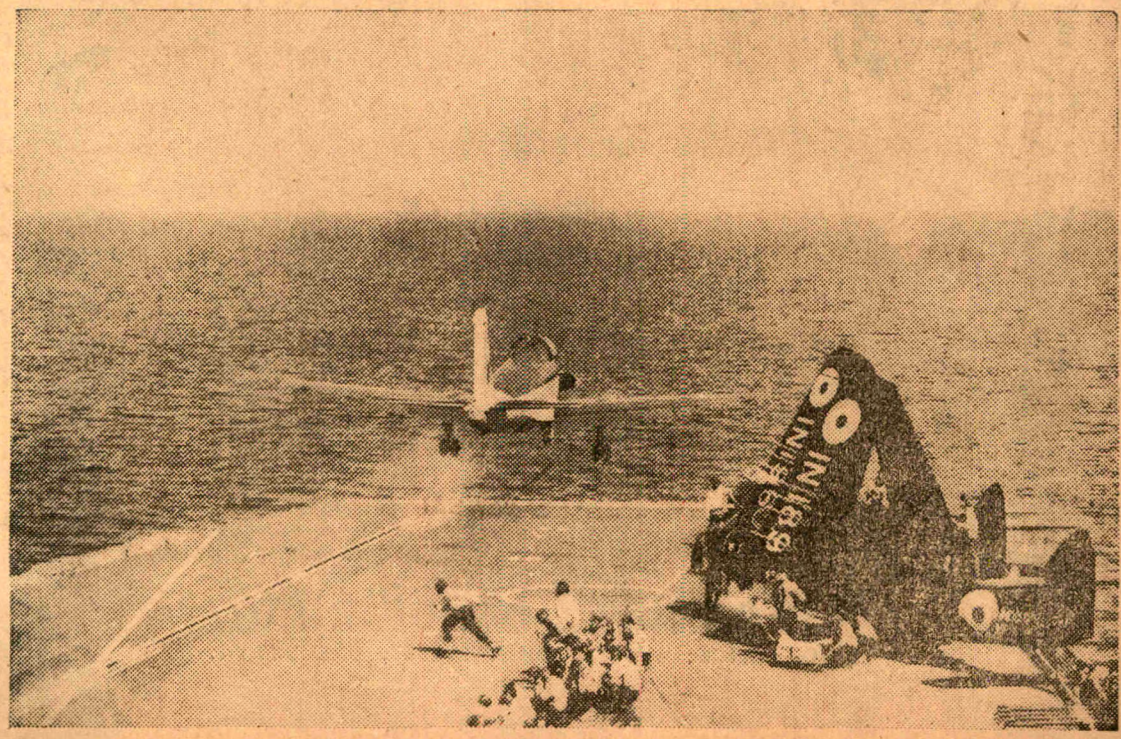
Bangaluxmi occupies a proud place in the textile industry of West Bengal. This reputation of excellence is built on their continuous endeavour for over half a century to serve their patrons with only the best. Today it has modernised and expanded its productive capacity by the installation of improved machinery to meet the ever-growing needs for textiles in the country.

THE BENGAL LUXMI COTTON MILLS LTD.
7, Chowringhee Road, Calcutta-13

KALPANA-BLS



INS VIKRANT taking part in the Fleet manoeuvres.



A Naval fighter takes off from INS VIKRANT during exercises.

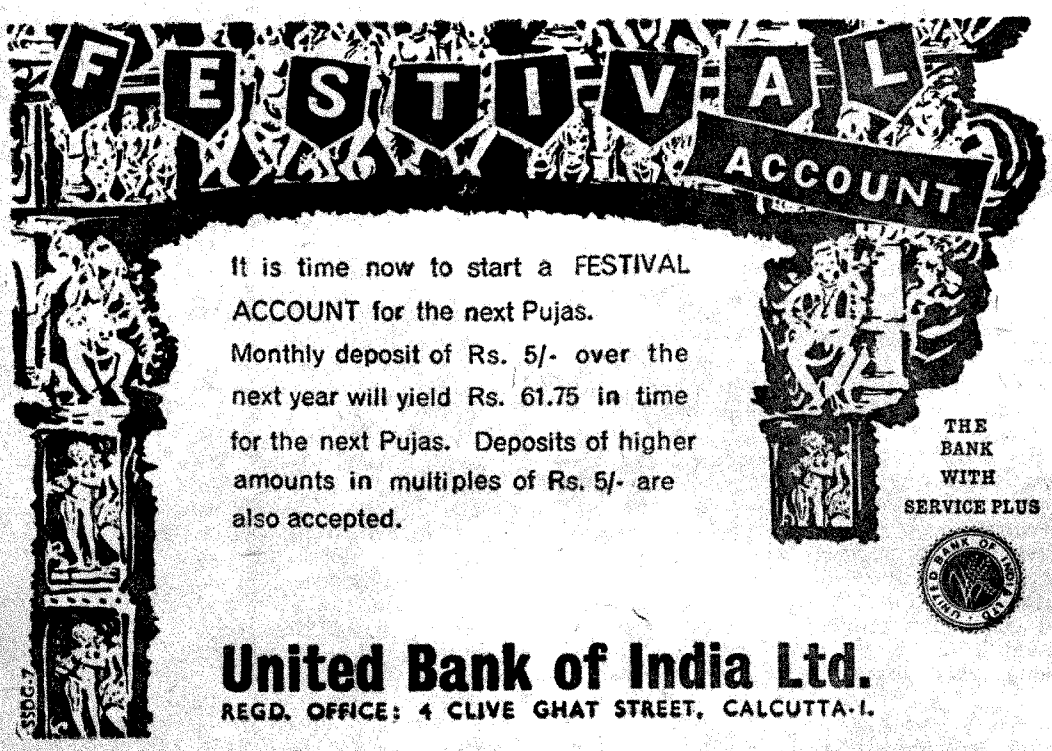
HELP US TO HELP YOU

"CLEANLINESS IS NEXT TO GODLINESS."

according to an old adage. Clean surroundings rediate joy. More than that they help in controlling diseases. On Railway Platforms, in Waiting Room and in Carriages, etc., where people gather, it is of paramount importance to maintain proper hygienic conditions, to preserve the health of the passengers. You can help the Railways in this fight against diseases by :

EXTENDING YOUR CO-OPERATION FOR KEEPING THE SURROUNDINGS CLEAN AND BY AVAILING OF THE SERVICES OF SANITARY STAFF PROVIDED AT STATIONS WHENEVER REQUIRED.

NORTHERN RAILWAY



It is time now to start a FESTIVAL ACCOUNT for the next Pujas.
Monthly deposit of Rs. 5/- over the next year will yield Rs. 61.75 in time for the next Pujas. Deposits of higher amounts in multiples of Rs. 5/- are also accepted.

THE BANK WITH SERVICE PLUS

United Bank of India Ltd.

REGD. OFFICE: 4 CLIVE GHAT STREET, CALCUTTA-1.

WHAT is exactly meant by *chhatra ?* Have you ever thought on it ? 'Pupil' does not exactly cover its connotation not does 'student'. A *chhatra* does not merely study and is not merely tutored. He is in a permanent companionship—perhaps spiritual companionship—with the teacher when the teacher is teaching and the *chhatra* is learning.

Does not the teacher learn ? He does it in profuseness, specially if he has been in the profession for a quarter of a century. I am not speaking of learning from the shastras as or the treatises on modern theories, but simply learning the lessons of life and that not from the elders but from the *chhatras*—the eternal youth.

Indeed a teacher, specially a college teacher like me—usually though inappropriately called a 'professor'—is rather fortunate in that, from his youth to his old age, he lives among eternal youth. Scores of boys and girls pass out from the college and scores shortly take their place—the same youthful looks, all the virtues and vices of adolescence and youth, the same honesty and dishonesty, the same sincerity and trickery, the same valour and vanity, the same plenty and poverty, the same attempts to learn and unlearn, the same constructive and destructive talents, the same industrious and the idlers, the same hopes and despairs of parents —but always interesting all the same. Amidst this permanent companionship of youth, one ages but only in a leisurely way and wakes up to a sense of surprise when temples begin to grey.

My temples have greyed in the midst of this eternal youth, called *Chhatra.* If, however, another middle-aged gentleman suddenly steps forward and says with a smile, "I was your chhatra, Sir", do you feel like being taken aback or just pleasantly surprised ?

(2)

I, however, was pleasantly surprised on the first day of my career. It was a mofussil town, now in East Pakistan, where I ran in hot haste within twenty four hours of receiving a telegram which I was requested to treat as the appointment letter. Just imagine what I was only the *Chhatra* of yesterday. As I alighted from the Light Railway train with a suitcase and a bedding and was looking out for a cooly on the platform, a tall boy with a dirty shirt upon a rather frail body suddenly ran towards me and touching my feet said with a broad smile, "I am your Chhatra, Sir".

Instantly realising the thought that was passing through my brain, he added, "I am a student of this college, Sir !—a second year student !"

"Arts or Science ?" enquired I, not being sure as to which of the scores of questions that were crowding my lips was to be put first.

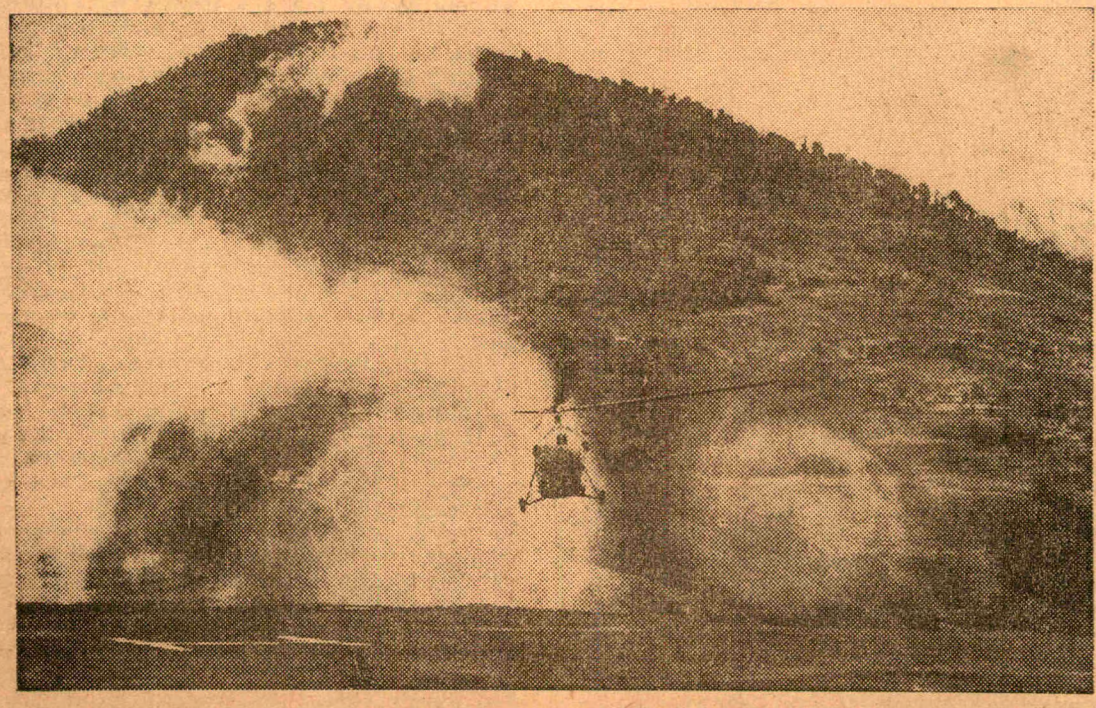
"Arts, Sir, your own student, Sir". So saying without giving me any chance of dissuading him, he lifted my bedding on the left shoulder and the suitcase in his right hand,—a remarkable feat considering the frame with which God endowed him—and proceeded towards the gate past the ticket collector and placed the lugguge into a cycle rickshaw, I had no option but to follow him.

He brought me straight to the quarters of the Principal. He was very glad to see his new recruit and gave a long lecture, there and then, on the duties of a teacher and the great opportunity of service that lay ahead, but all the time casting inquisitive looks at the boy standing at a respectful distance. At last he asked me, "from where did you pick up Sanat ?"

I understood who Sanat was and replied, "I did not pick him up, rather it is he who picked me up," narrating in brief how he promptly spotted me on the platform and brought me straight into his presence.

"Take your teacher to the hostel, Sanat, and ask Murari Babu (the Superintendent) on my behalf to accommodate him in the hostel. He knows it," so saying the Principal bade me goodbye for the moment, not forgetting to express once again his extreme pleasure in getting a bright young man like me in a small mofussil college like that. I wondered what a dreamland of employment was it where the employee obliged the employer like that. Then Sanat solved the riddle. The Principal had, only two days earlier, been beseiged by yelling "Chhatras" who demanded the filling up the post in the Department which had been allowed to remain vacant for two months. When the *Chhatras* had

Taking off on a mission, this IAF helicopter appears spangled against a backdrop of snow-white Ladakh mountains and a lofty monastery.



An IAF helicopter, taking off from a forward helipad in the Himalayas for a reconnaissance mission, weaves whorl-like patterns in the mists rising from the valleys.

suggested that he had been following the deliberate policy of keeping some posts vacant for months on and to economise in expenditure and make an impression upon the governing body, he lost his temper and took up the file of applications, dusted it and called for the clerk.

But solution of one riddle was followed by the emergence of another. The Superintendent welcomed me with a rather unusually grave face and after doing the needful he took me aside and said, "You are a new-comer but I feel it my duty to tell you.....beware of Sanat."

Beware of Sanat !

It appeared rather strange to me. Sanat had given me very valuable voluntary service and had solved for me many problems of intitial adjustment and that for no selfish interest but only because of the fact that he was not exactly he was but was going to be—my 'Chhatra'.

(3)

Not for two weeks thereafter did my eyes land upon the frail body called Sanat anywhere within the precincts of the college or outside. Every time I met the second year class I tried to spot that long face with protruding ears—but in vain. Frequently I felt tempted to enquire of my collegues or other Chhatras after Sanat, but everytime I checked the temptation, remembering the warning the hostel Superintendent had given me on the very first day.

It was about a month before Sanat appeared again. It was in the morning when I had just finished the cup of tea and was going to open a book useful for that day when Sanat with a broad smile and accompanied by three or four other 'Chhatras' entered into my room, did very respectful obeisance and enquired very anxiously after my health. In reply to my query, he said, he had gone to jail where, he volunteered to add, vociferously supported by his compatriots, he had to go every now and then at the irresistible call of the motherland. And then without much ado he brought out a bill book from his pocket and sought to know whether I was going to pay Rs. 20 the usual subscription which Professors pay for the worship of goddess Saraswati, while another compatriot suggested that there was no need of asking my formed consent, for consent may be presumed since the teacher must have known by this time the convention of the college.

Imagine what a dignified professor I was : I smiled and paid twenty hard earned silver pieces as an offering to Saraswati, the goddess of learning at the behest of the devoted 'Chhatras'. As he put the money into the pocket, Sanat warned me not to pay any subscription to *their* fund. In reply to the query as to who *they* were, Sanat replied, "The Communists, Sir."

One of Sanat's companions volunteered to satisfy my curiosity. The Communists, he said, were arranging a separate Puja within the college precincts and could not for obvious reasons get the co-operation of the general body of students who were arranging the genuine Puja. To my *naive* suggestion that there could not be two Saraswati's at the same college, and Saraswati should not be made a divine and therefore authentic witness of their quarrel, he replied that they were determined to avoid quarrel with the 'Peoples War' group and that was why they were arranging the Puja outside the college precincts, so that even the slightest chance of a clash could be removed.

When I wanted to know of the specific fault the Communists were guilty of so that even the goddess had to be dragged out of the campus, another companion of Sanat suddenly exclaimed "Are you a Communist, Sir ?" Sanat was almost furious at the audacity of his friend whom he immediately pushed out of the room with a sharp rebuke ending with the sweetest words that even entered into my ears: "Such a god-like teacher cannot be a Communist. "Then apologising a thousand times for the audacity of his friend, Sanat hurriedly left me with his retinue.

I discovered the truth—if truth can ever be discovered—only on the Saraswati Puja day. It was a forlorn Puja Pandal by the side of a grocery with a torn cloth above four lean bamboo poles underneath which the goddess was sitting supremely indifferent to the surroundings and the conspicuous absence of her devotees. As I turned back I calculated that the maximum expenditure for such a Puja would be one-fourth of the subscription that

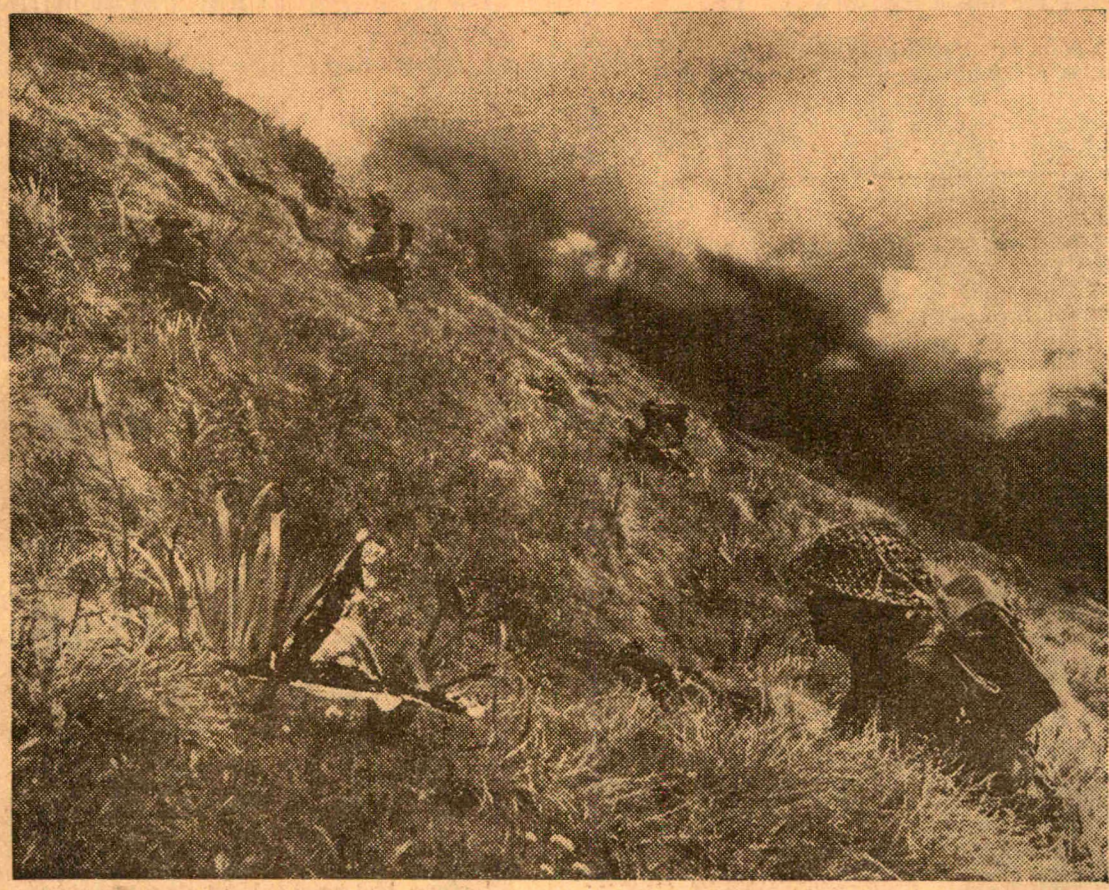
"I was your chhatra Sir".

I alone had paid. Next day I caught a glimpse of Sanat lustily joining the immersion procession as it was gathering *within* the campus. Thereafter Sanat was scarce and vanished from my life altogether. I learnt later that he dropped out from the final for reasons not known to his friends. Somebody suggested that the Government had again put him in for his desperate attempts to serve the motherland by all means.

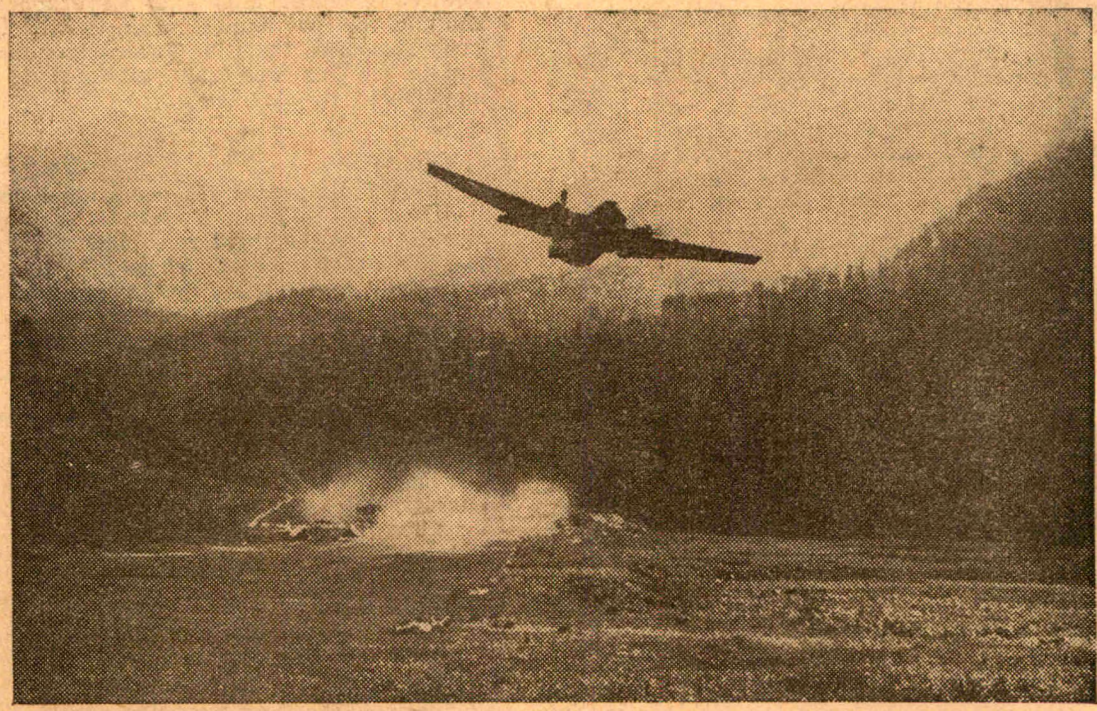
(4)

But I discovered his companion—the boy who had wanted to know if I was a Communist. I found him in the third year class always sitting on the last bench in every room into which the class as a whole moved. He always sat erect and being fairly tall could always see at his front ; but he never looked at me, he always stared at the benches at the righthand side of the dais. Those benches were 'Ladies Seats' in the class room. Whenever my eyes fell upon him, I found them infinitely patient and soft with undefined affection. I did not disturb him, since he disturbed me neither, nor could his looks injure the tender frames put under my guardianship for fortyfive minutes twice a week, and even that, if no holiday intervened.

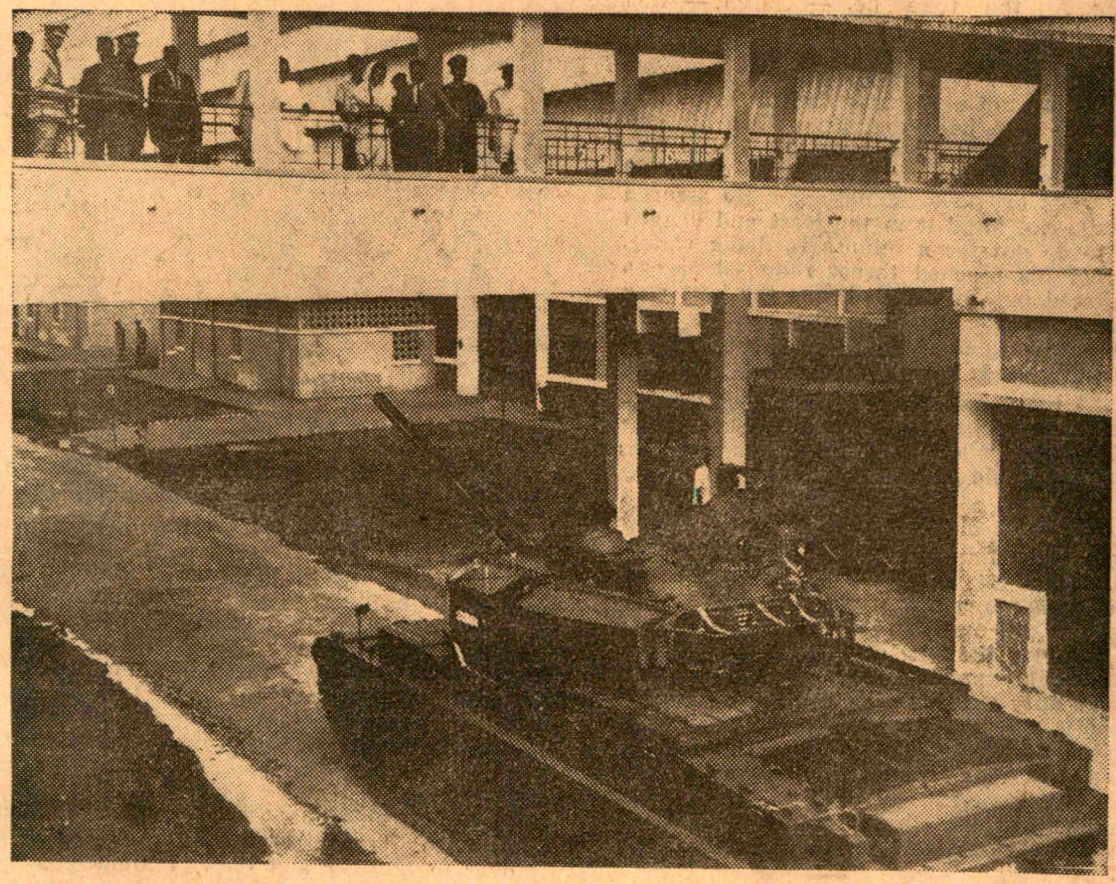
But I could not help disturbing him in the examination hall on the first day of the hardy annual. Bent to his answer script he was writing with great sincerity but not continuity. Every now and then he was lifting his face and trying to locate the eyes of the invigilator. That attracted my attention but I feigned that I did not notice him. I wanted to catch him at an unguarded moment. But in the end I found that I was a mere novice ; as I suddenly ran up to him and asked him to stand up, he obeyed



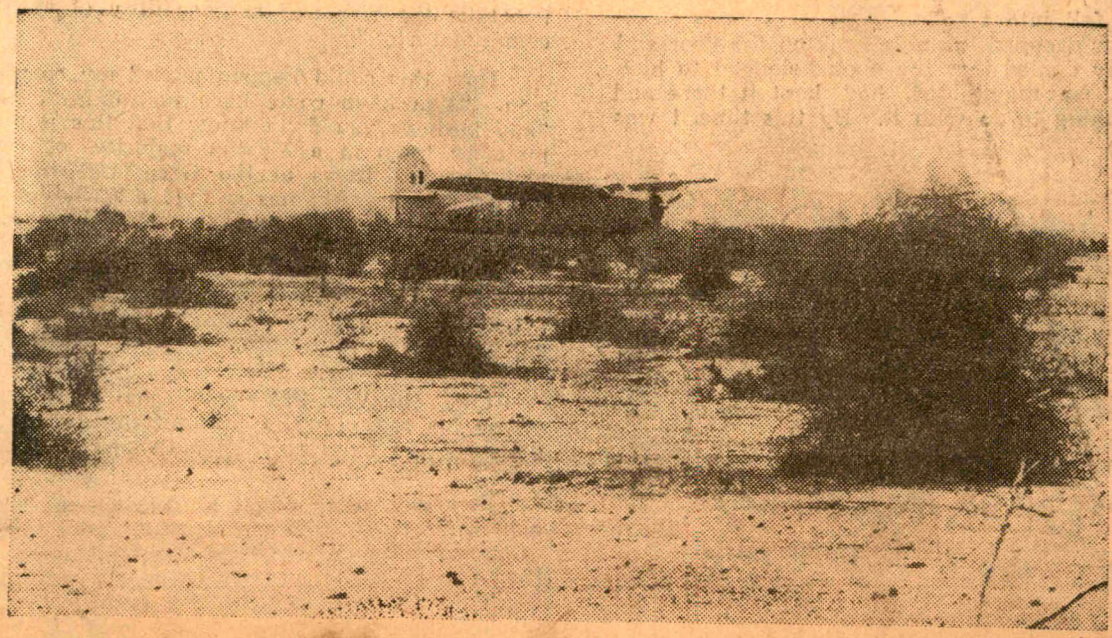
A patrol takes position on a steep Himalayan Mountainside.



An IAF light transport aircraft takes off from an advance landing ground somewhere in the Himalayas.



Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi watching a Vaijayanta tank at the inauguration of the Avadi Heavy Vehicle Factory.



Vast trackless desert borders need constant vigilance. An I AF reconnaissance aircraft, on a routine flight, keeps low to avoid detection

me immediately and, to my great surprise, very cheerfully. And nothing dropped down on the floor, what was it ? A miracle ? An optic illusion? My first attempt of life to catch a culprit dissolved into nothingness. Still I laboured on. I took up his script and turned every page and found nothing incriminating. All the time he, — Haren — was standing with folded hands in the posture of a 'namaskar'. I pitied myself what a fool I was to have suspected such a polite and innocent boy. All starers at girls are not necessarily dull in brain and his brain must have been dictating what his pen was writing. Only my brain betrayed me. I expressed my profoundest regret for having disturbed him in the midst of the examination. He assured me that he did not mind it in the least and begged permission to go out for a minute to drink water. I realised that his parched throat required acqua and I acquiesced immediately—it was the best way to relieve me from my own embarrassment.

Within a few minutes Haren returned wiping his wet lips and hands with his handkerchief.

I realised the secret after ten years of experience as a teacher—invigilator. I realised later, that Haren had literally washed off his hands—nay his palms — of the whole affair.

(5)

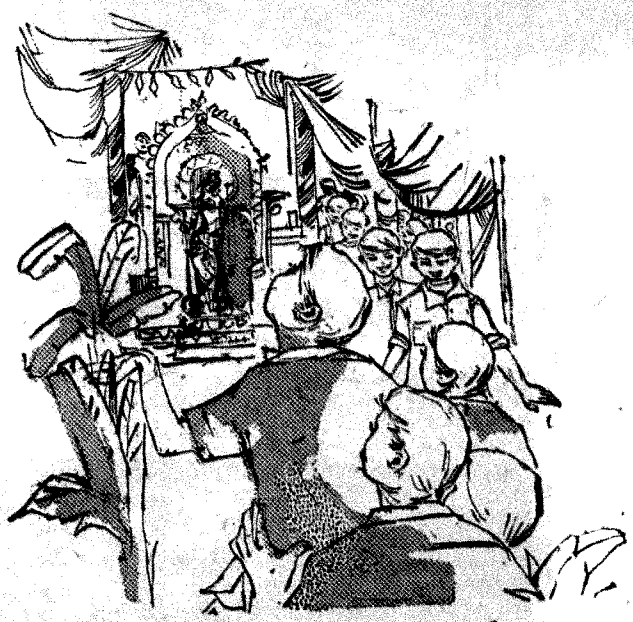
If Haren had palmed it off as honesty, Majibar refused to pocket an insult. I changed my old college and came to a new,—one of the biggest colleges in the pre-partition days in the district of Dacca. I joined the new college on the last day of the periodical examinations, and unfortunately my first day's duty was not a lecture but an invigilation. As I was distributing the question papers, all the students were looking at me curiously and even I could find some among them exchanging remarks among themselves—my poor self being obviously the object of them all. I did my job and took my seat and the examinees got to their work and forgot me.

Barely an hour passed before Mujibar caught my eyes. He was clearly copying. I rose from my seat and walked in the opposite direction to where Mujibar was sitting—so that he could not suspect that I was after him really, Mujibar fell into the trap.

But I fell into a calamity.

Mujibar dropped the note book on the floor and then stoutly denied that the book belonged to him. Somebody, he maintained, had kept it there and he had nothing to do with it. By this time, I was

"As I suddenly ran up to him and asked him to stand up he obeyed me immediately and . . . ."



"I discovered the truth—if truth can ever be discovered — only on the Saraswati Puja Day".

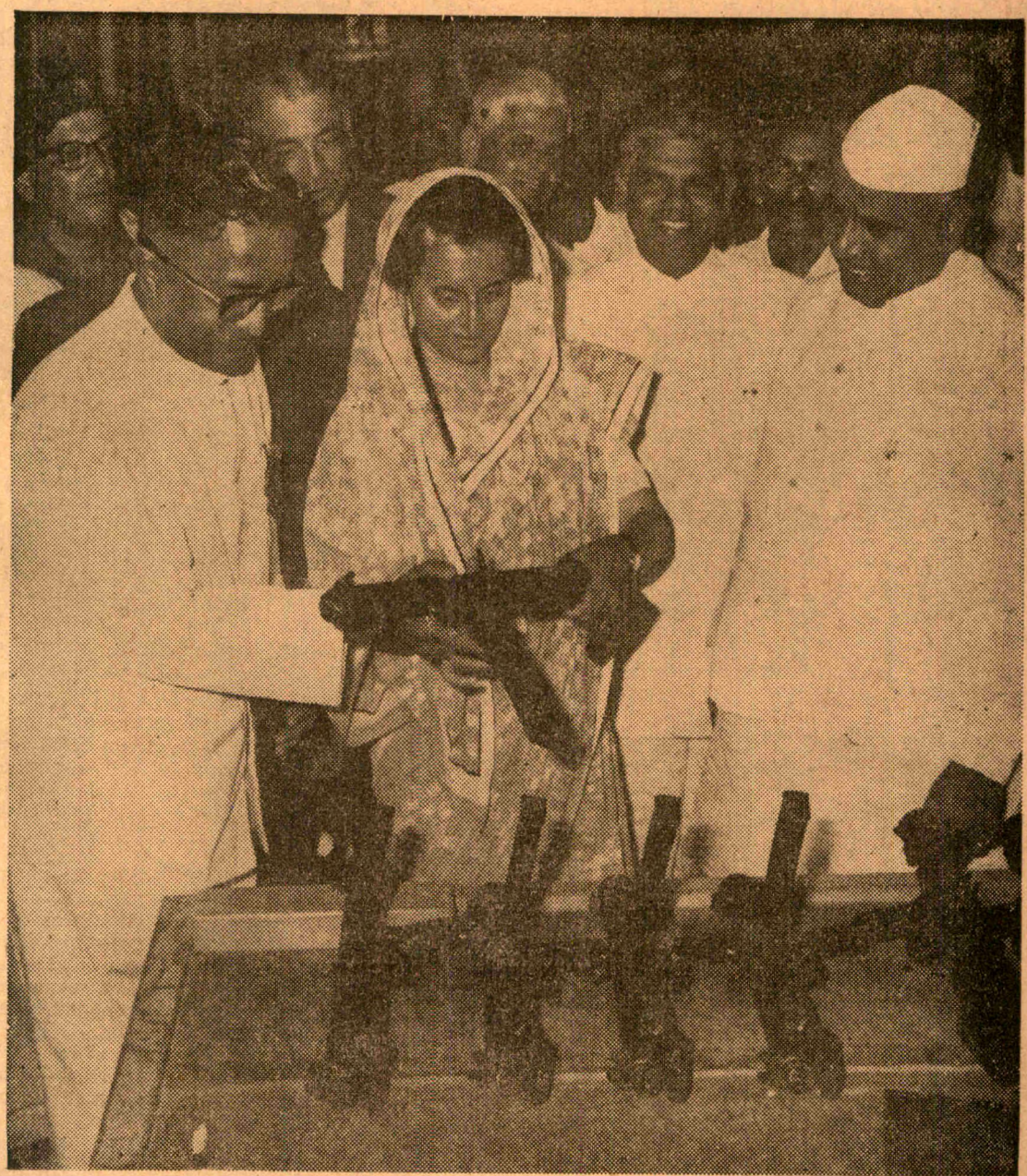
a bit experienced in the line. I did not think it prudent to argue with him. I picked up the paper and went straight into the room of the Principal. The Principal whom I had seen only once in the morning was not there ; so I took the script, followed by its writer, to the room of the Vice-Principal whom I had not met at all. The Vice-Principal looked at me and Mujibar ; while he knew the student he did not know me. As I explained the matter, Mujibar pleaded his complete innocence and implied how misguided I was. The Vice-Principal calmly took the answer-script in his hand, handed it over to Mujibar and said, "I allow you to write on until the Principal comes and makes the decision."

I was amazed and rather felt humiliated. But as soon as Mujibar left, the old man looked straight at my face and said, "I know you have joined just today and the first brush with the student is rather unfortunate. I fully know he is guilty. But I cannot take the risk and responsibility of starting a communal riot."

How this could happen passed my comprehension. "You have come here just today", he said, "and perhaps you don't know that this is a Hindu majority town in a Muslim majority sub-division and district. News of the Great Calcutta killing for the last 3 weeks has created a serious sensation here. Although nothing had happened, every thing is ready for something to happen. This Mujibar is the son of an influential person who is a fanatical Leaguer. I don't know what spark will start what conflagration. I live at a place which is completely surrounded by Muslim families and Muslim Leaguers at that".

I left the Vice-Principal's room but unconvinced by his reasoning. I brought the matter to the notice of the Principal by a formed letter. And then I almost forgot it.

One day, after about a fortnight, at about 10 p.m. when I was about to retire to bed I felt something was happening "round about my room. I felt that quite a large number of people were silently collecting in the front of my room. They were talking among themselves sometimes in whispers and sometimes in suppressed tones but all were rather excited and very serious. I tried to find out

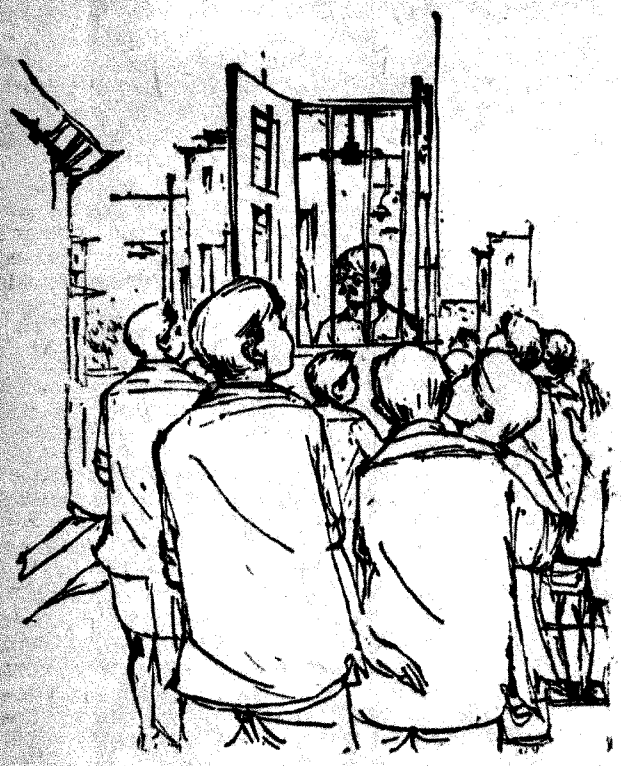


Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi looking at a sub-machine carbine manufactured at the Ordnance Factory at Tiruchirapalli. Defence Minister, Mr. Y. B. Chavan, and the Minister for Defence Production, Mr. A. M. Thomas are looking on, as General Manager Mr. Sinha explains various features of the carbine to the Prime Minister.

who they were but placing the lantern between the bars of the window I could find nobody whom I particularly knew. But I had never seen such a large gathering of *lungis*.

My legs were shaking and my heart beating faster. I could clearly percieve that. I stood motionless behind the window. I had left my native village a few hundred miles away in search of a lean pay pocket but could not imagine that a sincere discharge of duty could cost as a teacher his life. Yes, they must have been demanding my life. All the pictures of killings of helpless people in Calcutta in August flashed before my mental eyes. How do you feel facing death from behind six iron bars in a room dimly lit by a lantern with darkness all around ? I looked at the door. It could resist the crowd for not more than two minutes.

Seeing me behind the window, the crowd stood motionless and silent. This was rather strange. They ought to have demanded my head. After few seconds, I gathered courage and accosted the crowd.



"Why are you all ? Why are you here ? Why have you all come to me at this unearthly hour ?"

"Who are you all ? Why are you here ? Why have you all come to me at this unearthly hour ?" I asked.

At this, a few young men from within the crowd came forward towards the window. As I hastily retreated a pace or two, I heard them saying: "We are your *Chhatras*, Sir."

Yes, that I could see from their faces *now*. These faces had become a bit familiar to me within the preceding weeks.

"Yes", said I, "but what is the matter ?"

Then one of the young men brought Mujibar from within the crowd by literally holding his neck and made him sit near the window. As Mujibar broke into a loud cry, I recognised the young man who brought him by the neck as a promising and very well-behaved *Chhatra* in the fourth year class. He introduced himself as the elder brother of Mujibar. And what he narrated (all the time punctuated by doleful protests and importunities of Mujibar) was this.

The Principal, who had a strong personality and a judicious temperament, took action on my report and expelled Mujibar from the college and personally carried the news to Mujibar's father who was a personal friend of his and being a member of the Governing body had been instrumental in bringing him as the Principal from a more lucrative post he had been holding outside Bengal. The Principal had gone personally to Mujibar's father to request him not to misunderstand the action he (the Principal) was taking in the due discharge of his duties, even if the action hit his own son. Inspite of great mortification and anguish, Kaji Mujibar's father had asked the Principal to stick to the decision. Then he had entered Mujibar's room and had demanded an explanation of his conduct. When Mujibar had fallen on his feet he had kicked him on the face and driven him off. Subsequently, at the importunities of the brothers and the mother he agreed to take him back at the home only if I (the teacher concerned) agreed to pardon him for his misbehaviour.

And he added "My father, Sir ; is a strict disciplinarian. He never allows his politics to tamper with discipline. Specially, he has taught us from our childhood to be very respectful to the teachers —Hindus and Muslims alike. We are five brothers, Sir ! and this one is the exception to our standard of personal behaviour and discipline."

I sighed relief and readily granted my pardon. "But what about the pardon of the Principal ?" I asked.

"No, Sir !" replied Mujibar's brother, "father is a member of the Governing Body and he is the last person to request the Principal to rescind the order and take him back in the college. That order of expulsion stands. He feels competent only to withdraw his own order of expulsion from the home."

I smiled and enquired : "Why have so many people come with you ?"

They are all your *Chhatras* Sir, and all of them came in a body simply to request you to forgive Mujibar. They all love you, Sir."

I wondered how so much of love could be gathered in so few a weeks and that not through an act of kindness but an act of vengeance !

(6)

Do you wander if a teacher's life has moments of humour ? Yes, in plenty.

I had a habit, in those days, of frequently approaching the boys and girls and going round the class putting questions to the *'Chhatras'* individually. Some answered correctly, some incorrectly, some tried, hard to remember but could not, some posing as if they knew everything, only the lips were betraying ; while the majority stood silently with the heads down only counting the seconds at the end of which I would ask them to sit down.

One day in course of this usual practice I put a question to a boy who was, so it appeared to me, older than the other boys in the class by several years. Even before I had finished uttering the question he stood at and said, "Please do not ask me any questions, Sir !"

"Why," said I, "have you not prepared your lessons?"

"No Sir !"

"Why?"

"Sir ! for the last two months many people are frequenting our house and there is much disturbance."

I asked, "How long will this continue?"

"For another two months."

"Why, what is the matter?"

He stood silently for a few seconds, then lifting his face looked first at the girls, then at the boys and said, "Marriage Sir !"

"Whose?" I asked quite innocently.

His face flushed but his eyes sparked. He did not mince matters and said, "Mine Sir !"

The artificial gravity in my face melted as I broke into laughter. The whole class roared.

This reminds me of another incident. I asked a student to tell me briefly the characteristics of a government. He immediately began a fulmination against the Nazimuddin Government. When I stopped him within few minutes, he said.

"Beyond this, I cannot say anthying Sir."

"What's the reason?" I enquired, "Don't you mind your lessons?"

"Yes, Sir, only occasionally."

"On which occasions?"

"Only when the private tutor attends regularly."

It was getting difficult for me to check my temper. The boy sensed and blurted out, "Please don't be angry with me, Sir !"

"Why shouldn't I be".

"I have never read alone in my life, Sir! All my readings have depended on my tutors. They have selected the questions and prepared the answers and then I have memorised. Until the tutor himself prepares for me the concise answer to this question, I cannot know and give the answer."

You wonder, what was my reaction, do you? I almost felt the urge of slapping his face. Not knowing whose face to slap, his or his guardians, I stood motionless. Would it not make news if really I had slapped him? Have you ever heard a professor slapping the face of a college going "chhatra"? Perhaps, not. But have you ever seen a Professor chasing a Chhatra, out of the class, through the corridor, down the staircase, on the ground floor verandah, and then into the playfield right to the end of the campus and failing to catch the boy, holding the 'Kancha' of his dhoti in one hand and the "Koncha" in the other, and returning slowly while breathing heavily.

Professor X was reputed to be a good teacher but Master Y was determined to whistle in the classs room. Hard looks and persistent and insistent searches did not yield the identity of the whistler. After many days, Professor X succeeded in discovering it. No sooner had he done this than he jumped from the dais and headed towards the boy. The boy, perhaps anticipating detection one day, had taken his seat just near the door which opened on the corridor. Sensing danger the boy immediately made for the exit. Normally the matter would end there. But Professor X was determined to catch his life's enemy. He ran after him. It was a sight for the gods to see.

Master Y threw down his books and began to run and Professor X chased him.

The whole class came on the corridor. Other classes felt disturbed and thinking something unusual to have happened, other professors also came out to see and the whole college was in uproar. After a few minutes Professor X came back, breathing heavily with his Kancha and Koncha in his two hands only to be confronted by inquisite looks of his colleagues and not so kind looks of the Principal. At the end however boys and girls laughed so heartily that even the Principal could not help joining the laugh.

Next day, Professor X discarded his dhoti and punjabi and came to the college in trousers and shirt.

(7)

Everybody knows of the importance of proxy in the college life. Most of the professors simply overlook it. Only in cases of double response to the same roll number being called does a professor look up. This extra anxiety on the part of the boys concerned (now girls too) to reinsure an assurance dissolves the effect.

On one such occasion I looked up and found out one of the two boys who had just responded simultaneously. Finding it impossible to overlook it, I called the boy to me and wanted to know his real roll number. But he gave the roll number to which he had just then responded.

Then suddenly an idea struck me. I asked his name and he uttered one which I guessed was the name of the friend who really bore that roll number. He was standing with his head erect and with extreme self-composure, confident that none in the class would betray him. But I suddenly asked his father's name.

When your friend requests you to "give a proxy" you try to remember his roll number and scarcely care to ask and remember his father's name. So the boy was dumb struck. He paused to think. One does not pause to remember his father's name.

"My father's name is .... is .... is....."

"I want the correct name of your father. A self-respecting boy should not give another name as his father's name. That is an insult to the family."

The facial expression of the 'Chhatra' changed thoroughly. He stood with head down and tears rolled down his cheeks. For the first time in my life another man's tears brought a broad smile to my face. And that was enough to make the whole class gay and hilarious for at least five minutes.

The next such compelling event, however, did not evoke laughter. It was a Calcutta College and evening classes. The students were tired (most of them being office going) and so were the professor who had already lectured much during the day time. So the students and the teachers did not disturb one another but did their respective jobs and left quickly for the hard earned rest for the night.

But sometimes you required to look up. And I looked up one day in the class with a peculiar feeling that a particular response to the roll call was not genuine. How the feeling came to me, I cannot really say. I detected the boy, interrogated him and played my old trick of asking his father's name. He felt offended and asked, "what fault has my father done, Sir !"

"No fault, but you need not have any objection to uttering your father's name."

He immediately gave his father's name. The surname perfectly tallied with that of the boy under that particular roll number which I still remember as '246.' I asked the boy to sit down but I was not still sure whether I was right or wrong.

Thereafter every time, I entered the class and called the roll number, by sheer habit I used to raise my head and take a look whenever I called out 246. But to my surprise I noticed two conflicting things. The boy was responding every day in a clear voice with perfect self-composure

Jawans patrolling the snow-covered heights in the Himalayas.

smiling or feeling amused. Gradually I began to think that the latter sign was not very important and the boy was really innocent.

Quite a few days thereafter when on boarding a crowded tram car, I was trying to balance my body with a rather heavy bag in the one hand and an umbrella in the other. I noticed a young man suddenly standing up and offering his seat to me. As I was hesitating the young man said, "Please take your seat. I am your Chhatra, Sir !" Then after exchanges of a few words of proper unwillingness on my part and courteous insistance on his, I took my seat. Then I took a close look at his face—oh yes, he was that 246.

"Is not your name Samir Sarkar?" I asked.

"Oh, yes Sir!" .. you remember my name? My roll number is 246, Sir !"

"That also I remember" said I, "I don't know why it attracted my attention and that for nothing."

Then our respective roles changed. I was sitting and he was standing. I was hearing and he was talking. Talking on what?

Talking on the duty of students. As citizen of tomorrow they should show highest standard of conduct. But now a days there had been great deterioration in the conduct of the student community ! They have lost their honesty and idealism etc., etc.

In the end I felt extreme remorse in having suspected such a boy.

Then days rolled on into weeks and weeks into months. The summer vacation was approaching and the usual annual examination of the college commenced.

On the third day of the examination, after finishing my conventional one and a half hour duty as an invigilator, I handed over the charge of my hall to a colleague and was returning cheerfully. On my way as I was passing another room, I stopped for a few seconds to exchange a smile with the invigilator therein. As that gentleman was reading something I waited for him to raise his head when my eyes fell upon a bright young man writing his answer very attentively. Oh : I know him very well—Samir Sarkar, Roll 246.

Have you ever felt that sometimes you do something good or bad for inexplicable reasons? That happened to me just then. My legs carried me, perhaps to my own astonishment, to the bench where Samir was sitting. Samir must have felt that somebody was approaching the bench and looking sideways he saw me. But instead of smiling or nodding at me, he started.

I clearly noticed his pen shaking between his finger.

I now realised what subconscious feeling of mine brought me there. This subconscious feeling took the shape of systematic thought now. A student may respond falsely to a roll number which is not really his and maintain the performance throughout the session, asking the other person to respond to his roll number, but in the examination hall he must write his own name and roll number on the answer script.

I picked up his answer script saying, "How are you writing Samir? I think the questions are not difficult." As I was uttering these words in a whisper, I was refolding the pages to get a look at the first page. Samir in the meantime stood up but kept completely silent.

Lo and behold ! Name—Asoka Chowdhury : Roll No.—123. I gave back the answer script and left silently and did not feel like reporting the matter to the Principal at all. Why? for a seat myself. After the summer vacation, I did not find Asoka in the class; he had in the meantime, taken out a transfer certificate, and left the college for good.

(8)

My temples have greyed. So by this time must have been those of many of my old *Chhatras*.

The other day I had an occasion to travel in a train to go to a place about 30 miles off Howrah Station. I was rather late in reaching the station and when I boarded a compartment of the electric train, I found it almost full. I found two middle aged gentlemen, busy in a rather animated conversation among themselves, stretching out their limbs rather more extensively than was strictly necessary for even a comfortable journey. At my request they agreed very relunctantly to close up but talking all the while. As I took my seat in the very narrow space the two gentlemen condescended to grant me, I wondered where I might have seen them before. I ransacked my memory but did not succeed in locating the two faces.

In between their conversation they began now and then to look at me—not straightaway but askance. One of them was smoking one cigarette after another and only stopped lighting a new one after consuming four at a stretch. In the meantime my failure to locate them in my past life was tormenting me as suggesting a sure mental decay, a loss of memory. Were they my relatives? My class mates? My colleagues in some colleges?

At last I could not check myself. I drew the attention of the smoker by a movement of my hand and said "Excuse me. Have we ever met in the past? Have you ever seen me !"

While his companion was smiling, the smoker wore a stern look and simply said, "No ! Never !" and turned away his gaze to the window. As I looked at the smiling gentleman he looked at the face of his friend who in the meantime lighted another cigarette; and they resumed their conversation.

As the train halted at the next station, the smoking gentleman got up, picked up a bag from the rack overhead, bade good bye to his friend and hurried past me towards the door. I watched him walk on the platform towards the exit.

As the train moved again the friend—forsaken gentleman smiled at me, touched my feet and said, "How are you Sir !"

I was very astonished.

"Do you know me?" I asked.

"Yes, Sir !", he replied very politely "I was your *Chhatra*, Sir!"

Then after preliminary exchange of information, we entered into a long conversation which ranged from academic life to blackmarketing. He explained away his earlier indifference by saying that being engaged in a conversation with his old friend whom he met after many years at the Howrah Station, he did not clearly look up at my face. Moreover my appearance also changed much from what it had been in the forties—about twenty-five years ago. That was quite true, I readily agreed.

But I could not forget his friend's face. So I put it to him straight "I must have seen your friend somewhere."

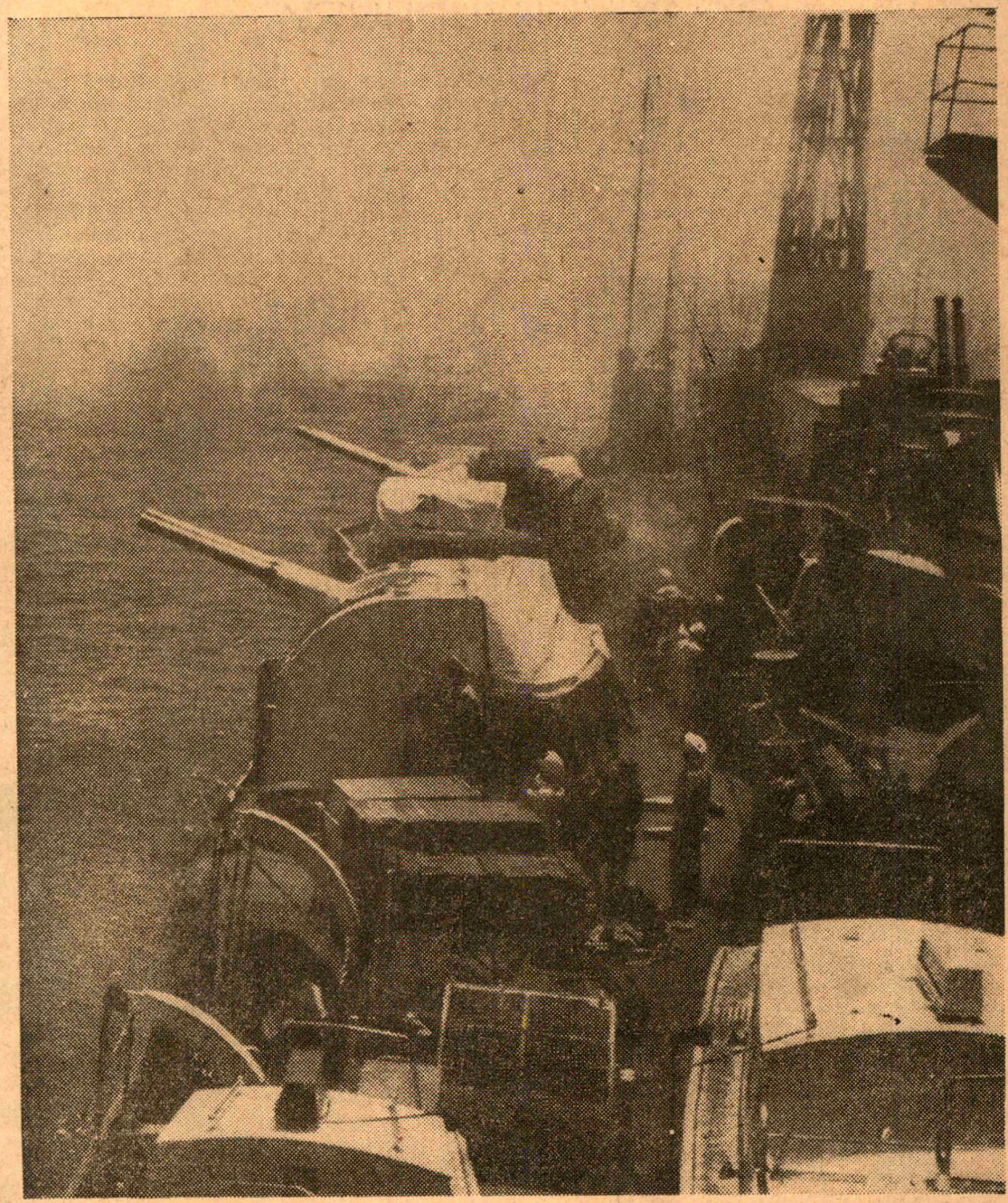
He smiled broadly and said : "Yes, Sir ! He too was your *Chhatra* ! An Honours student and our class mate. His name is Niranjan."

* * * * *

A curtain lifted from the front of my mental eyes.

Niranjan passed I.A. examination in the first

A long-range patrol sets off, somewhere in the Himalayas.



Naval guns boom during exercises in the Arabian Sea.

A GOLDEN BOUGH

P.C. ROY CHOUDHURY

(1)

Sri Prafulla Chandra Roy, that great self-less-scholar-servant of Bengal had first introduced Gandhiji to the Calcutta public as the following letter shows :—

University College of Science
92, Upper Circular Road,
Calcutta, the 5th Oct. 1921.

My dear Mahatmaji,

Your letter of the 25th inst.

It is really surprising that in the midst of the overwhelming pressure of your work, you could make time to write to me, more than once about the Khulna famine.

Mahatma Gandhi

Bombay stands foremost by her eager and substantial contribution. In Bengal the response has been very generous, but chiefly from among the middle class people who, hard hit as they always are, sparing no pains in contributing their mite. I have been also receiving remarkable help from the local Marwaris and the Swetambar Jain communities. The Zamindars of Bengal, with one or two notable exceptions, have miserably failed in their duty to their famished brethren.

In my first letter (published in Newspapers) invoking the help of my countrymen in saving the lives of the afflicted people, I characterised the absentee Zamindars as a veritable curse of Bengal sucking like so many leeches the lifeblood of the peasantry. As you say, the stigma remains, and yet it is these men who will vie with one another in contributing to the Fund for the Royal visit!

Yes, I have a fragrant memory of the days in 1901 when we used to know each other at Gokhale's, and I often speak to my friends and even remind them that my humble self was instrumental in bringing you for the first time before the Calcutta public when I arranged meetings for you to speak on the disabilities of Indians in Natal.

I feel infinite compunctions that during your several visits to Calcutta, I could never make up my mind to call on you and discuss with you some of the burning questions of the day. This was more from a sense of my own physical inability to do any propaganda work, as I have been a victim of insomnia for the last 30 years and any mental exer-

tion distressingly upsets me. But I assure you I have been watching with the deepest interest the great movement of which you are the apostle. Yes, Mahatmaji, I look upon you as a veritable miracle worker—the saviour of modern and builder of future India. They tell me the year has rolled by and Swaraj is not yet within sight. But I feel that if I have been reading the signs of the time alright, Swaraj has already been achieved, for, the undying inspiration of your message has revolutionised the entire Indian mentality, be he the *Reis* or the *Rayat*. After all, thought is the precurser of action. It is not necessary to go the whole hog with you, as it is not always given us to look at things from the same view-point, but what does matter is the sincerity of purpose. There are occasions when silence is golden and speech is but silver. I think Rabindranath would have best consulted the interests of the country if he had followed this precept.

Looking forward to the pleasure of meeting you,

Yours very sincerely,
P. C. Roy

(No. S.N. 7634)

(2)

C.F. Andrews commonly known as *Deenabandhu* and C. R. Das had been specially asked by Gandhiji to look into the miseries of the thousands of tea labour in Assam described then as Coolies. There was a great unrest among the tea labour in Assam districts in 1921 and being economically crushed they left the tea-gardens shouting "Gandhiji Jai." At Chandpur they were waiting for repatriation when the Gurkha military men were let loose on them and dozens received injuries including fractures. They were forcibly removed from the rail way area to a football field with no protection. Cholera broke out virulently. Sri Har Dayal Nag and others took them to their houses, nursed them and gave to their miseries. Deenbandhu arrived there on the 21st May, 1921, a

P. C. Roy

Jawans on the move along a desert tract during patrolling.

IAF's AN-12s overfly snow-flecked peaks ferrying supplies to Ladakh.

spread hartal throughout East Bengal and strikes on the E. B. Railway and the Steamer service. Some extracts from the following letter of Andrews to Gandhi will help.

Allahabad
June 21, 1921.

My dear Mohan,

I have been so eager to write to you but it has been impossible. I have hardly been able to write more than a line each week to Gurudev who looks forward to my own letters as "cloud messengers" from India and lives upon them in his starvation.

I am enclosing some speeches and views, which will I am sure give you some comfort. If I have said anything too strong in my speech, rebuke me, but I have come to believe that no true reform can be accomplished until these very earnest and good people at Simla and Darjeeling realise that they are inevitably involved in a system which is terribly oppressing the poor and which on each vital issue (as it comes up) makes them almost against their will take the wrong side. In today's paper there is a little telegram scarcely intelligible to the ordinary reader but conveying a world of tragedy to me how Stokes has just hurried to Fau in the Simla Hills about a petty prosecution of one of his most ardent supporters against 'Begar'. I was deeply thankful for your leading article in Young India on Assam. You put the things so wonderfully and every word told.

C. R. Das

My real anxiety is this: There was no immediate need for your presence as far as the Assam refugee labours was concerned. (*Please* do not use that word "Coolies" now in English, it has got in English quite a contemptuous sound and I can never use it). But East Bengal is on the very borderline of violence, it has violence in its blood; it is highly emotional, quicktempered, hot, passionate and far more than half Mussalmans without much long and patient Hindu tradition. Don't mistake me: they are almost the most lovable people in India and their affection is as quick as their indignation. It was only by a miracle on that Gurkha outrage night that they did not go out and try to kill those Gurkhas. These strikes, in such inflammable material are like straw to a fire and I have quietly been anxious about an explosion. What I felt was that only *you* could really preach *ahimsa*. I have done my very best and they have given me such treasures of love. Time after time, passion has died down as I have spoken to them about you and your life's message and they *can* understand. They do really understand that in my presence no word even of violence must be uttered and they are hushed. But when I am not at the meetings or leave the meeting after speaking I have constantly heard that the old passion flares up.

Now the real danger is this. If these strikes are not settled (and the terms offered by both Steamship and Railway Companies are honourable terms), they are certain in their desperation to do their utmost to bring off a general railway strike, not only in Bengal but elsewhere. They have done their very utmost to get all the Steamship Companies to strike and also to get the East Bengal Railway to strike and the E.I.R. at Lillooah to come out on strike again. There is a strike mania and the young men are inflamed by it. At a meeting which I held about Chandpur the whole meeting was against me except three or four who were such Co-operators as Krishna Kumar Mitter and one or two Marwaris in Calcutta who have been as good as *gold* about the Assam refugees. (Oh how I have learnt to *love* the Marwaris. You see what I write and sent to the Press about Gowrisankar Mistri who laid down his life at Chandpur.)—they are now turning directly against the Non-co-operators just at this critical moment when they ought to be giving their wealth for the Tilak Swaraj Fund. They say, they will give any money I wish for the distressed labourers into my hands but they will not trust anyone else because it will go to the "Strikes". And alas! these two strikes between them are costing over 1200 rupees each day out of public money when every penny is so badly needed for the Swaraj.....

Your most loving
Charlie

(S.N. 7551)

(3)

In 1921 repression was let loose. A saintly man Bhagwan Das, father of Sri Sri Prakasa, a worthy son of a worthy father was arrested. The following wires were exchanged between Sri Sri Prakasa and Gandhiji :

Mahatma Gandhi Sabarmati.

Father arrested under Section 107 Criminal Code all well—Sri Prakasa.

The reply was :

Sri Prakasa Sevashram Benaras

Hearty congratulations. Was totally unprepared for such consummation—Gandhi.

(4)

Gandhiji's first struggle in India was in Champaran District in Bihar where he fought against the tyranny of the European Indigo Planters. He won. He had friends among the Europeans too as the following letter from a Missionary at Motihari in 1924 will show :—

Mission House,
Motihari,
Champaran,
9/2/1924.

Dear Mr. Gandhi,

We join the general thanksgiving and rejoice that God has given you back to your people. This is an answer to many prayers. We often recall the happy hours you spent with us in Motihari and I am writing now to offer you and Mrs. Gandhi a quiet resting place in our home.

Yours sincerely,
J. Z. Hodge.

(5)

(S.N. 8313)

After Gandhiji's release in 1924 he was very weak and needed constant care. *Gurudev* could not but send Andrews to him as the following letters shows :—

Shanti Niketan,
20.2.24

Dear Mahatmaji,

My heart gave a great leap when I heard this morning that Gurudev of his own accord said that Andrews' place was by your side when you are so worn and weak. It is difficult to think of you without deep emotion.....

Yours
S. K. Rudra,

* Courtesy for copies of the letter: — Gandhi Smarak Sangrahalaya Library,, Rajghat, New Delhi.

The Pathetic Tale of Bahadur Shah II

K. M. YUSUF

THERE is no denying that a careful and impartial study of Abu Zafar Sirajuddin Muhammad Bahadur Shah II (1837-1857) would lead any reasonable person to hold a high opinion about him because of his piety, kingly demeanour, patriotism, statesmanship and sincerity.

The last of the great Mughals was the torch-bearer of Hindu-Muslim unity in the 1857 Rising. On accepting the command of the Telinga and Purbiya sepoys, he issued a *Firman* (royal order) prohibiting cow-slaughter in Delhi and the adjoining areas, and the punishment for violating the royal command was death. Even on the day of the *Id-ul-Azha*, which fell on August 2, 1857, no relaxation in the order was made. This wise step on the part of Bahadur Shah proved a great factor in cementing Hindu-Muslim relations during the most critical and tense days of the Mutiny, which may well be called the First War of Indian Independence. Colonel Keith Young wrote to his wife the next day: "Our hopes of grand row in the city yesterday at the Eed Festival have not, apparently, been fulfilled. ..... The King had issued strict orders against killing cows, (or even goats,) in the city, and this, if acted upon, must have satisfied the Hindus; and instead of fighting amongst themselves they all joined together to make a vigorous attack to destroy us and utterly sweep us from the face of the earth."

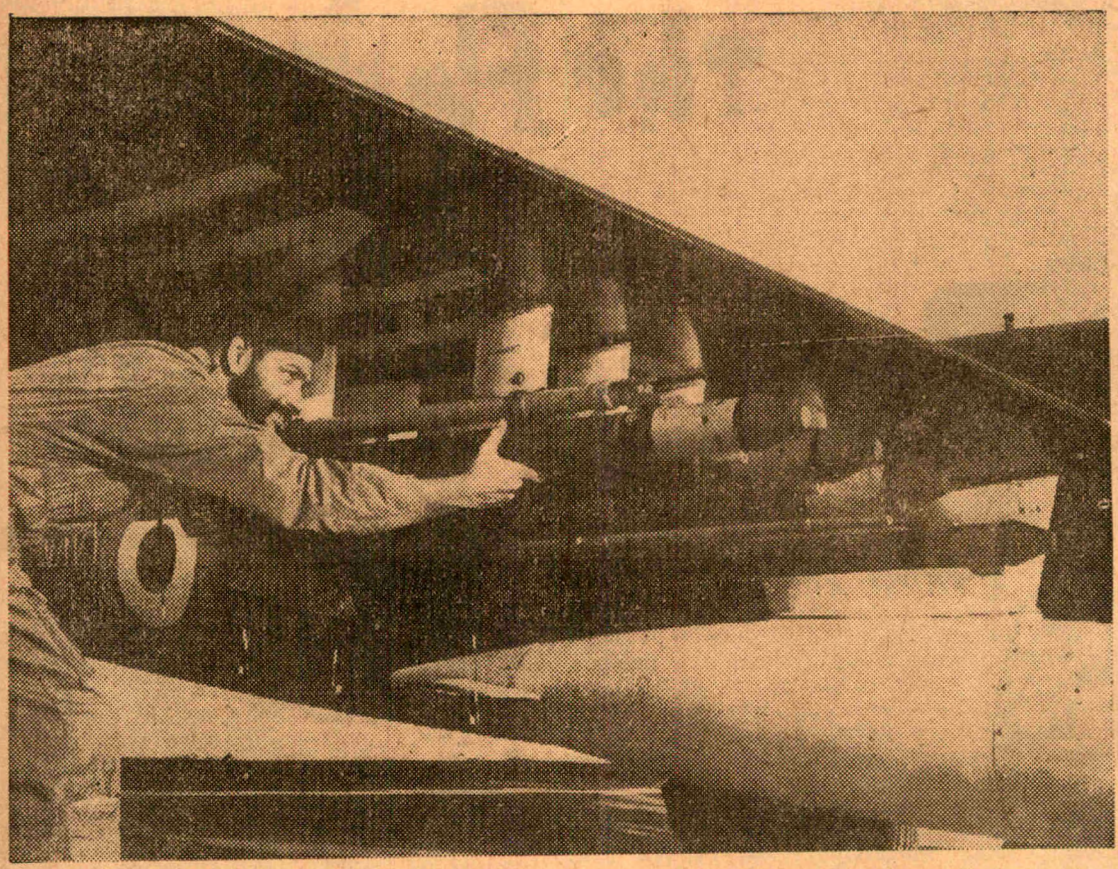
Bahadur Shah had high regards for Hindus—a legacy which he directly inherited from his forbears, notably the great Akbar and Prince Dara Shikoh. He entrusted to the care of Raja Bhola Nath the performance of religious ceremonies, such as, the *Dastarkhwan* of Hazrat Ali and the *Niyaz* of Ghaus-i-Azam Abdul Qadir Jeelany. "If you, Musalmans, are to me like one eye, verily, the Hindus are dear to me like another eye," said he repeatedly to the Muslims of Delhi (vide Zakaullah's *Tarikh-i-Uruj-i-Ahad-i-Sultanat-i - Inglishiya*, p. 738).

Philanthropic, generous and charitable, Bahadur Shah was also an erudite scholar and a poet of considerable repute. Historian Spear says: "Bahadur Shah was a man of cultured and upright character. In the palace diary of later years there are glimpses of him spending whole days reading and writing, studying and composing verses in the Roshan Ara Garden.....Delhi in his time was a Weimer with Ghalib for its Goethe.....He loved poetry and philosophy, garden and nature in all its guises.....Bahadur Shah was in fact the best, rather than the worst, of the late Mughul kings of Delhi" (vide *Twilight of the Mughals*, p. 226).

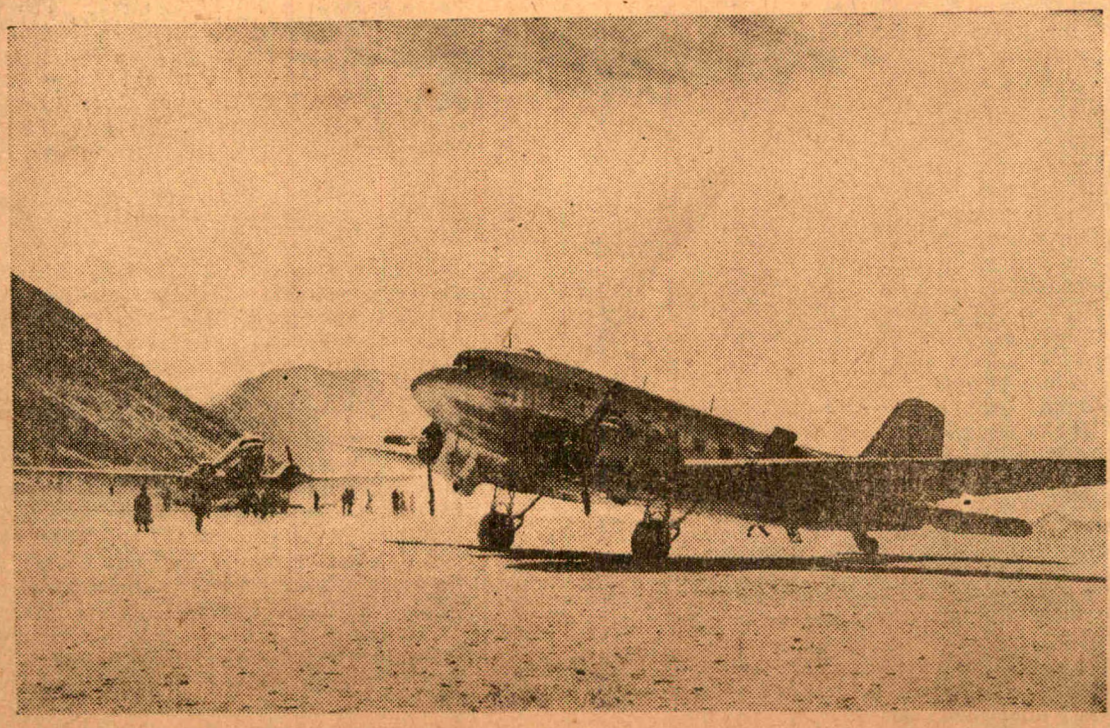
Bahadur Shah composed poems under the pen-name (*takhallus*) of *Zafar* and had to his credit five Diwans (one of which was destroyed during the Mutiny) and the famous commentary on the immortal Saadi's *Gulistan*—his *magnum opus*. In the commentary he expounded every verse of the great Iranian savant in *Ilm-i-tasawwuf*. His verses were sung by young and old alike in Delhi, and it had been rightly said by an English historian that a few plaintive *Ghazals* of the old king caused much damage to the British cause than all the combined forces of the mutineers. To quote Spear again: "Bahadur Shah must be judged on the evidence of his own life, and not by the words of superficial travellers or of soldiers unbalanced by strains of war, fatigue and racial passion."

It is a miracle that Bahadur Shah's life was spared after the fall of Delhi on September 20, 1857. Lieutenant Hodson and Major Lawrence were thirsty for his blood. It was Hodson who presented the helpless king, after his arrest from Humayun's mausoleum, with thirty-one severed heads of the Mughal princes when the poor royal scion down with hunger asked for a morsel of food. When the news of the king's arrest reached Lawrence, he went mad with anger and shouted: "It is a great pity that the old rascal was not shot directly as he was seen." General Archdale Wilson, Commander of the British Field Force in Delhi, was responsible for the personal safety of Bahadur Shah. He ordered Hodson to imprison him alive because he felt that the old man "was still the cynosure of all the sepoys, princes, chiefs and zamindars and that he was the hero of the long-drawn-out drama of the Mutiny."

Thereafter commenced the 42-day old trial of the ex-king in the Diwan-i-khas of the historic Red



A sailor arms a Naval fighter on the flight deck of INS VIKRANT, Indian Navy's aircraft carrier.



DC-3s of the Indian Air Force ferrying supplies and personnel to Himalayan heights.

Fort built by his distinguished predecessor Shahjahan. The king was found guilty, convicted and sentenced to life-imprisonment in exile. Escorted by the 9th Lancers the royal prisoner and his party left Delhi on October 7, 1858, and reached Rangoon on December 9, 1858, via Allahabad, Mirzapur Buxar, Monghyr, Raj Mahal, Rampur, Balliah, Womurkolly, Khulna, Diamond Harbour, Kedgeree and Sandheads. At Diamond Harbour the last loyal representative of the House of Timur was respectfully greeted by another ex-king Nawab Wajid Ali Shah of Oudh who was also interned by the Britishers at Matiaburj in Calcutta.

It is a sad story to recount the melancholy days the deposed king passed in exile in Rangoon and the utter poverty that he had to face. The house in which he and the members of his party were kept as State prisoners was situated within a few yards of the Main Guard. The cost of dieting the prisoners, sixteen in number, was eleven rupees a day and and an extra rupee was allowed every Sunday and two rupees per head each month for toilet necessities (vide F.C. No. 125, dated November 11, 1859).

Captain H. Nelson Davies, Officer-in-Charge of the State prisoners in Rangoon, for the first time in a half-yearly report dated July 1, 1862, submitted to the Foreign Department of the Government of India hinted that "Abu Zafar is generally getting weaker ; the Civil Surgeon is of the opinion that his tenure of life is very uncertain."

In the last week of October 1862 his condition deteriorated and he died on Friday, November 7, 1862 at 5 a.m. far from the country of his ancestors, unhonoured and unsung. The burial took place at 4 p.m. the same day in the rear of the Main Guard. A sizable crowd of Muslims had assembled near the enclosure, which had been erected by the authorities to keep the public off, but there was a general rush to touch the coffin when it was brought out. The crowd was successfully pushed back by the armed guards. Only a few of them were, however, admitted inside to make the internment "sufficiently public." The two sons of the deceased, Jawan Bakht and Shah Abbas, and a male attendant Ahmad Beg accompanied the coffin ; no females were allowed to be present, nor were any titles allowed to be rehearsed.

Captain Nelson Davies in a report dated November 10, 1862, submitted to the Foreign Department describes the grave thus: "A bamboo fence surrounds the grave for some considerable distance and by the time fence is worn out the grass will have again covered the spot and no vestige will remain to distinguish where the last of the Great Mughuls rests." So, in course of time the grave became completely effaced and indistinct, and remained unknown for over forty years. How prophetic was the old emperor's words when he said :

Pes-i-marg qabr peh ai Zafar koi fatiha bhi kahan parhae,
Woh jo tuti qabr ka tha nishan usae thokaroon parhae, se ura diya.

It means : After the death of Zafar where can one recite the prayer for at the grave ? For, even the symbol of the broken grave that had remained is obliterated through tramping and treading heavily up and down.

In 1903 some Indians went to Rangoon and also desired to visit the grave of Bahadur Shah for offering *Fatiha* (prayer) to his soul. After considerable efforts and with the aid of the local help they discovered the king's grave situated beneath a lotus-tree. Thereafter, an attempt was made by some prominent local Indians, mostly businessmen, to raise a mausoleum over the grave. A Trust under the name "Bahadur Shah [illegible] Trust" was created and a Board of Trustees with ten prominent Indians was constituted. The office of the Trust Board was located at premises No. 6, Theatre Road, Rangoon. The Trustees issued a passionate appeal to Indians and Burmese for generous financial assistance and the plan of the proposed mausoleum was also circulated along with the appeal. (A copy of the appeal along with the plan is preserved at the National Archives of India). But the British Government strongly disapproved the idea and the Trustees were compelled to dissociate themselves with such a move.

In or about 1934 the situation took a turn for the better. The "Bahadur Shah Dargah Trust" was revived with its office at 6, Zafar Shah Road, Rangoon, and with the approval of the Government a tomb was built on a very moderate scale which is now known as "Dargah Bahadur Shah." The last great visitor to Bahadur Shah's shrine was Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

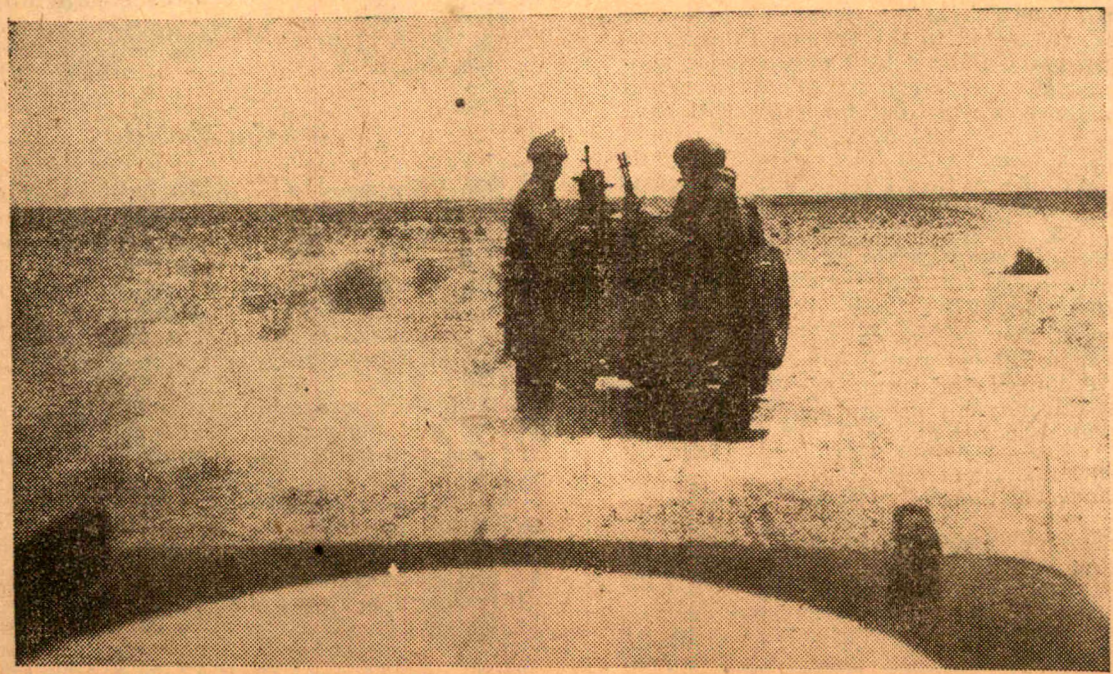
Bahadur Shah II

On February 17, 1957, Mr. Lalji Mehrotra, the Indian Ambassador to Burma, visited the royal shrine. The Managing Trustee of the Dargah, A. E. Madari (U. Htwe), while presenting an address of welcome to the envoy, referred to the "poorness of the structure" of the tomb and urged the construction of a "magnificent mausoleum befitting the dignity of a great hero and a saint-emperor."

A demand was made in the Indian Parliament in 1956 that the remains of Bahadur Shah should be brought to India as part of the Centenary Celebrations of the 1857 Rebellion, but Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru said that the question of bringing his remains to India was never considered at any stage or in any form by the Union Government, and that excavating the sacred remains of a Muslim involved many personal and religious problems which the Government did not propose to go into presently.

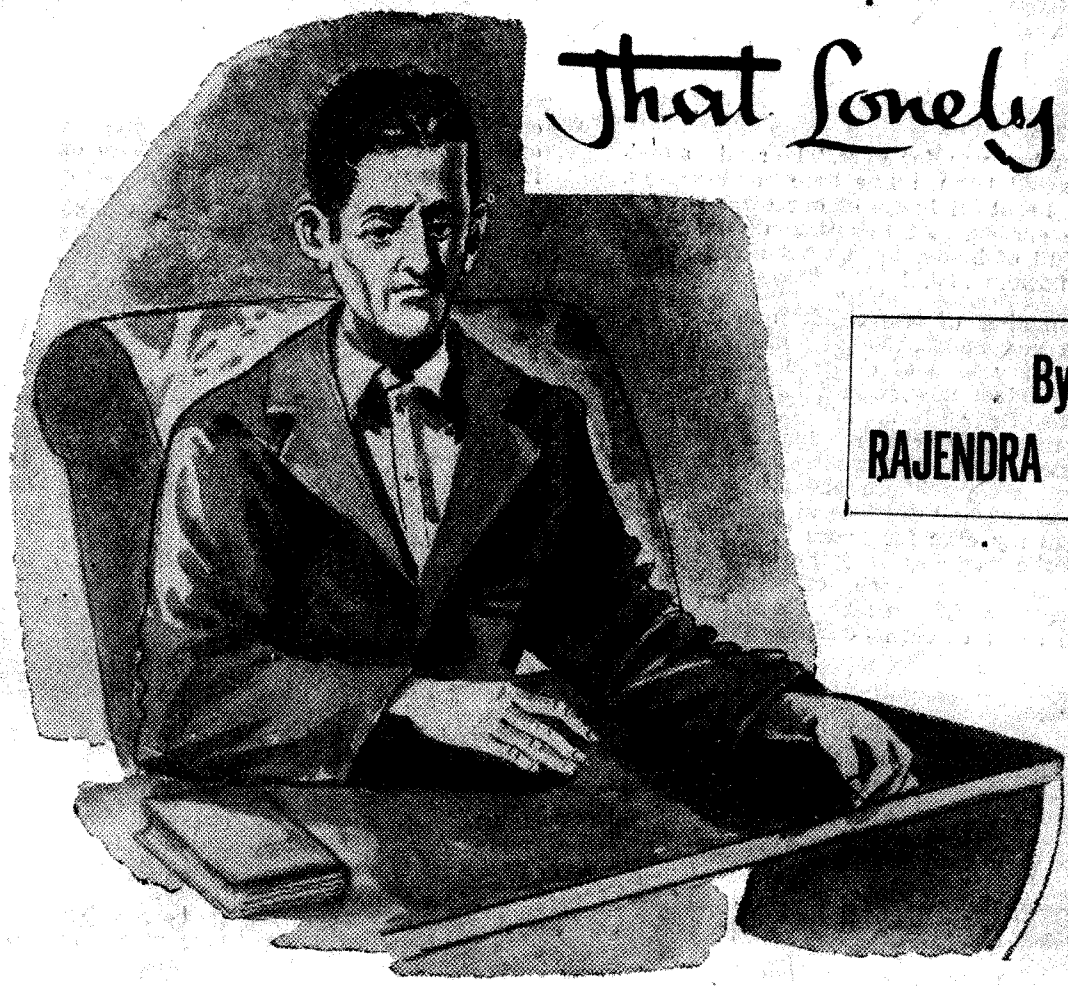
The time has come for giving the matter a second thought. At Mehrauli, near the famous

A freshly manufactured Ishapore rifle being tested at the Factory.



Jawans on a jeep patrolling the desert photographed from another patrol vehicle.

That Lonely One



By
RAJENDRA AWASTHY

HE was already there when I moved to that locality. I did not know much of him. Only I used to hear the ebb and flow of human voices, emerging from his flat, or sometimes a trail of loud faltering notes. It looked as though a person was scolding his servant.

The noise got on my nerves and I did not feel like working at all. on such occasions, I would come out in the corridor. My penetrating gaze would meet the rustling curtains drawn partly at the doors of his rooms, and, beyond them, the purple coloured sofa. I could smell perfumed air, made all the more fragrant by foreign scents and hair oils, blowing out of his room.

At times, I could see him looking in a mirror, that reflected strange grimaces of his, as if he were rehearsing some role in a play to be put on the stage. I have noticed him tilting his head at different angles, brushing his unruly hair with a view to seeing what he looked like.

That evening, I met him at a musical gathering. His wandering glances at once arrested my attention.

He asked me "You're a new-comer to our locality, I suppose?"

"Yes, I'm," I replied.

"But, though neighbours, how is it that we do not know one another?"

"No, it won't be like that, hereafter."

"Promise?"

"Yes, I promise."

The meanings of those disturbing noises became clear to my mind now. "He wouldn't do his work, this servant of mine," said my new friend. "He comes from the hills of Almora. He cannot speak Hindi properly .... suffixes every sentence of his with the word *kena*. One may tolerate this once or twice, but ...." He paused for a minute, and then asked me, "Would you like to have tea?"

"No, thanks."

"Why not! We'll have breakfast also. Aey, Ram Singh!" he called his servant. "Do you have eggs? Otherwise get some from the market. We'll have omellet with tea ....."

He smiled, then asked me: "Would you like to smoke American cigarettes?"

He produced a packet of 'Wills' and offered me a cigarette in such a manner that I had to receive it.

He was an Assistant Manager in a big firm. He lived in America for some years. He looked an American when he came back home.

His repatriation has been a sort of compul-

soin, and staying on in the land of his birth still a greater helplessness. It appears, that he developed a love for America, the American way of life and all that the sub-continent stands. The memories of the days spent on the American soil had a ray of plunging him into a mood of his own. At such a time he started opening a bunch of letters and reads them one after the other:

"My dear darling,....."

The words of the letter filled his eyes with tears. He passed the letter on to me. It was from Los Angeles:

"I'll remember you for ever," I read aloud. "Madrek is a small town. I live here now-a-days. We have got a beautiful house of our own, with a charming little garden. At this time of the year the garden is full of blooming flowers. How beautiful are these flowers.....!

"I'm the mother of two children now. Both are very sweet and handsome. My husband is an engineer. He is very fond of children. Not to have married him, I reflect now, would have been the greatest mistake of my life....."

He took the letter from my hand. The concluding sentence of the letter wrung his heart.

"Shameless creature!" he grumbled. "Times have been, when cupping my face in her hands she would stare into my eyes for hours together. From picnic-hour of the morning till the sun-set, we would have been enjoying each other's company, each other's nearness, arm in arm. We sweated and it gave us the scent of each other's intoxicating

"He embossed a volley of kisses over it".

odour. Her delicately inviting lips had always been close to mine. Promises had been innumerable."

"It was an extremely cold evening," he recalled after a short pause," when I left Los Angeles. Even at that time she had nothing on her body, except a frock. She had always appeared attractive to me when clad in that particular frock. She looked a picture of beauty and small wonder she fascinated me.

"The plane had already taken off, with her of course; but I felt as if she was still somewhere near me. Poor girl.....! We became very sentimental and desperate as we parted. Ah, me! how different the world would have been, had I married her!"

He folded the letters abruptly. With a heavy breath he replaced it into its cover as though it contained the odour of her body that he still wanted to preserve. He embossed a volley of kisses over it before depositing in the almirah.

Next, he opened another cover.... It was from a Bengali girl of Calcutta.....,then, the third one... .and fourth also.....! All the letters were packed with the same sentiments of his. He was much the same man in the folds of every letter.

But, now, it was all over. It broke down like a house of cards.

"Let's have a drink today, Shyam," he proposed, suddenly, as if making from a pleasant dream.

"Yes, I do not mind."

"But, I've taken a pledge not to spend on drinks."

"And what, if one offers you?" I say, breaking into a mischievous smile.

He suddenly looked serious and gave details of the long outstanding loan of his, a loan that he himself had raised, but he would like to write that off by indulging himself in drink purchased for him by his friends. Oblige he must his friends.

II

He had a great faith in himself.

He refused to believe that he fell a victim to a delusion. A major portion of his life had already been recorded in black and white; and every page of his life-story had a different tale to tell, a different account of lies, deceits and delusions. It was by and large a complete story.

He was a perfect gentleman. He had the knack of paying compliments to every one. He was sometimes lost in thought. He looked tired but wouldn't admit that the tiredness was due to its own exertion.

All of a sudden there were sounds of clappings and laughters from the other side of the wall. He inhaled a heavy breath. For him these were not the human voices, but flames. The proof is the door in between.

He sprang to his feet and started pacing up and down the room. He clenched both of his fists and knocked at the parting-door. The voices died out immediately.

"Foolish!.... stupid!!" he muttered, his voice loaded with groans.

Soon, he retrieved his normal mood.

He picked up the telephone. He dialled a number, and then sank into the sofa.

"How are you, madam?" he goes on pouring words after words into the mouth-piece of the telephone: "You are coming to lunch, of course?.....I say, you need have no worries about these things.....there is a new release at Sheila.....now, come, come.....it would be wonderful!.....I'll have the seats reserved in advance, if you like.....what?.....you want three seats.....for whom is the third one?..... phew! but it'll spoil the fun.....alright, alright .....such jokes are not good, I say.....it's all for your sake.....your girl friend is a friend of mine as well.....three seats then?.....O.K. .....ta-ta.....!"

He gives a passionate kiss to the receiver before hanging it on.

"O, my dear friend," he turned to me, with a sort of self-pride rising within him, "I'm very much t.red of these people. Pictures and pictures every day! Now, see? she has already reserved three seats, including mine. Can't help. Yes, shall have to oblige her."

This made me laugh up my sleeve. How forgetful are human beings sometimes, I wondered. I knew the background. He had talked into the telephone in my presence. But all this was not new to him. Only a few days later, he was to ask me:

"I'm selling away me sofa. Would you like to buy it?"

"How much shall I have to pay for that?" I asked.

"Only five hundred chips," said he," and mind you, the quotation is only for you."

Later, when I got a brand new sofa set at a comparatively much cheap price, he said, "You've seen my sofa? Have not you? I paid only one hundred for that. There was an auction at an Embassy, and I purchased that out."

(III)

Refreshed a little, he sat up in his chair and sent for his servant, "Ram Singh! bring tea."

He stood me some tea and sought a reward too.

"You don't know anything about this?" he posed a question. "About this door, I mean?"

"No." I became inquisitive.

"Oh, how could you! I may tell you, though a door, there was a time when it did not function as such.....Do you know Mrs. Sethi, by the way?"

"No, I don't. But, have read her name on the name-plate outside."

"Then, be good as to know her now," said he in the manner as though he was taking me into his confidence. "It has been she who has often knocked at this door—either to use the telephone or to borrow crockery at others. Ram Singh has been more of a servant to her than to me. But....." He broke abruptly, then called the servant: "Aey.....! you, good-for-nothing. Where have you disappeared?"

Ram Singh would appear and say "Sir, Mem Saheb had sent me to fetch a bottle of Coca Cola for her."

"What?" He shouted. "Are you the servant of this house or that of the adjacent one's?"

The servant wouldn't say anything. A thin smile appeared on his face. Those days are perhaps still alive in the boy's memory, when Mem Saheb's errands have had always taken precedent over his own master's. The servant had to run fast even at a slightest indication from her.

Ram Singh's difficulties were much less then. Mr. Sethi had often been coming late in the evenings. He continued to do so even now. He always found his wife heavily made-up and attired in shimmering *shalwars* made of silver-threaded cloth or bright gorgeous saris.

"Then," resumed my friend, "this telephone used to cross the threshold and find its place on the sofa in her room. Often the servant would be seen pouring lemon-juice and whisky or beer for her and her visitors. 'Cheers' had always concluded the dances and words such as 'ta-ta' accompanied the departure of visitors long before Mr. Sethi's came back home. 'The mistake is his own,' she used to assert, 'that he should be spending fixed hours of his leisure in pleasure seeking somewhere else or on the roads!' "

I was surprised to hear all this. Can so deep-rooted a relation such as between a man and his wife be also shattered like that?.....Then, Mrs. Sethi would dance alone in my friend's presence. He would caress her hand or shoulder.....and then would talk and talk such as:

'How long have you been married, Mrs. Sethi?"

'Ten years'.

'Now, now.....you must surely be telling a lie.'

'Why, no! I'm telling you the truth, the simple truth'.

'Ten y-e-a-r-s.....Oh! but, you look as if you were married only yesterday'. He became romantic. Hereupon Mrs. Sethi caressed her own youthfully alluring figure with a romantic glance of hers.

"'Even then, my dear Sir, you were so cruel as to have the door of your room closed upon her?" I asked him.

He was about to say something but was interrupted by a soft sound of jingling of bangles outside. While still sitting in his chair he raised his head and peered that way: "Pooh! the hag of a woman!"

My glance followed his and met Mrs. Sethi's.

She was wearing a low cut nightgown only. She was just coming back after seeing off her husband to his office. She closed the outer gate with such a haste as though she was afraid of someone chasing her.

"Strange woman she is!" said my friend. "Clad merely in a gown she does not mind coming out into the open road. Shameless creature!"

From the corridor, truly speaking, I almost daily saw Mrs. Sethi, with only a nightgown on. She would to the road to send off her husband. At times she would detain him by her coquetry, and often becoming romantic in the process pinches Mr. Sethi's nose in a girlish manner. My friend's grumbling was therefore but natural.

"But.....?" before I could pluck up courage to ask him, I was interrupted by a telephonic call.

His heart as if missed a beat. Be he in the bath or busy doing something else, he must rush to the telephone at the very first tinker of the instrument, although many a time he slipped badly on the floor.

A sudden change came over his facial expression he got in touch with people over the telephone, as though he saw the face of the speaker at the other end.

The moment he replaced the receiver a middle-aged woman enters his room. What of that? Woman was his greatest weakness.

The colour of his eyes changed as he looked at fair visitor. He became sad at heart. For on such occasions he did not like the presence of any other human being. But I also knew that such moments were few and far between. There has never been such a stream of women visitors, nor had the telephone calls been so frequent.

For him a telephone ring was a lilting tune of Sarangi and a girl a stray reflection of his otherwise ruined or bankrupt brains. To every girl he talked about his love-affairs that he had one time or the other with other girls. He distr buted his love freely as the wandering dandy youths do, but his protestation of love was seldom requited. No one loved him. Otherwise, I heard floods of guffaws emerging from out of his rooms till late in the night. Empty taxis pulled up at his door and left the place packed to capacity. Don't know how many times and in what different tones I heard him

greeting his guests with such words as "O, what a surprise!"

But he himself had never offered any surprise up to this day.

Occasionally I accompanied him on his evening walks, and listened to his untimely stories, stories of such of his romantic exploits which had been much talked about at one time, but had never been forgotten once for all, leaving behind no trail whatsoever.

At times he appeared so void within himself that his own conversation, full of affections, seem laughing and mocking at him. Yet, there were times when his face was lit up with a sort of innocence that gave out the truth; and one felt pouring out a sort of sympathy towards him. At such times you shared his troubles and felt as if these were your own.

He was not troubled at the breaking of such a close bond of neighbourhood. He said: "It's good that the door has been closed, rather she herself got it blocked. As a matter of fact she started telling strange things about me to her boy friends. One day I heard her saying: 'What a pig headed simpleton he is! Simply give him a casual smile and he is trapped. I take much advantage of this weakness of his. You see.....?' "

She treated me with a glance full of contempt and her brow was lined with furrows. "But I may tell you," he explained "no one has been able to befool me like that. The day I heard her talking like that, I had the door closed then and there; rather got it nailed securely so as not to permit any chance of its being re-opened.

(IV)

We were having a stroll in front of the Eros.

As we took a turn, we suddenly encountered a gentleman. I was surprised to learn that he was no one else but Mr. Bose, my friend's boss.

Both exchanged a few words of pleasantries but not for more than two minutes. But the moment Mr. Bose departed my friend started giving vent to his inborn hatred for his boss. He was full of complaints against him. This is how describes him:

"This is my boss, Mr. Bose!.....he never does any work in the office, except back-biting against me. But what the hell can he harm me!"

He regards his boss to be of no consequence at all.

His pace quickens and soon we both come on the road that runs at the back of the Girls School.

"As a matter of fact, it is he who fixed me up here," he resumed talking about his boss.

"What?" I'm rather amazed at the disclosure. Mr. Bose got him employed and here was my friend, all complaints against him.

"Then what?" It is I who work for him. And he steals the show."

I laughed at such an explanation. I wanted to say something but felt it was useless to do so. He had nothing but complaints against every one. No wonder if he should be nursing a complaint against me as well.

We came to an open space now. A new house was building at one corner. Stocks and heaps of building-material could be seen lying about.

Suddenly, a young girl was seen coming our way. She gave us an eager gaze. In return, I also treated her with a reassuring glance.

"She is.....," I ventured to tell my friend, but was cut short by him.

"Ah! she is the one!!" said he patting me on the shoulder. "The mystery is unravelled now. Why and whom you keep staring at from your corridor; and why you start humming 'Woh Dil Kahan Se Laaoon.....' at the mere sight of her."

It does not require any effort to follow his point.

"Yes, she is the same girl," says he, "who lives just opposite my house and could often be seen doing Bharat Natyam on the roof of her flat in exquisite dance forms, which could be enjoyed by me and by the only other neighbour of mine who keeps himself shut in his rooms on purpose. Floods of voices playing cards have often been heard from that very flat of hers."

The girl slipped past my friend, and it looked,

Continued on page 95

A middle-aged woman enters in his room.

A Dream Figure

SAILESH BHAR

IT was a wet cheerless night about the middle of August, 1942. A shadow figure was found to sneak into what looked like a blind alley and to approach an old, weather-beaten house. The bare walls were a bit too dirty. Something of a tree struggled out of a crevica and was rocking in the wind. A cast iron pipe ran along the wall from the ground to the roof. The figure carefully looked around and began to swarm up the pipe until he reached the first floor. A window facing the lane was open. The figure well knew that it was Purabi's room, and he quietly, and got into the room through the gaping window.

How terribly dark it was! He began to feel his way towards the switch. He was no stranger. Passing along the bed and across the cabinet, he eventually got to a wall but hesitated to put on the light lest he might be tracked out. The very thought brought a peculier smile upon his face. No, he is past all that trouble and nobody in this world would be able to touch him any more.

The switch was turned on and the room was flooded with light. The figure slunk behind the cabinet, for he ought not to show himself so soon. He peeped out and found Purabi, sleeping on a small, mean bed and resting her weary head on a worn out pillow. An infant was fast asleep by her side.

He anxiously gazed at it and asked himself. 'who is it?'

'It is your own dear child.' The answer come from within. The figure stood erect with fatherly pride and slowly stepped up to the bed.

In the mean time, Purabi's sleep was fading under the strong light, and she felt as if some one's eyes were upon her. She was not a little frightened and hastily sat up.

'Who . . . . who is that?' The very idea of a stranger grave her the creeps.

'Hush!' a strong hand gently gagged her. 'For God's sake don't make a noise, please'.

Good God! Whose voice was that? She could hardly believe her own ears. How could it be possible? Or was she dreaming? For heaven's sake, let it be so. She never had such a delightful dream for a long . . . . long time.

'What are you looking at that way for? A pathetic smile fit across his lips. 'Can't you recognise me, my own Ruby?'

'Ruby . . . . Ruby! Purabi mechanically repeated the name by which he fondly used to call her. She felt as if she going crazy. She rubbed her eyes and examined the room. The bed, the infant, and the other furniture were all there, and her husband stood before her large as life.

The familiar mark over his forehead and his hazel eyes could not be mistaken. He was the great leader of a terrorist party in British India, who was arrested by the police three years ago, since then she lost all trace of him. She however, was speechless with joy.

'Can't you recognise me?' He came closer and sat beside her.

'Of course, I do', She said as she instinctively drew her sari over her hair. 'But it all seems too good to be true'.

Arindam kept quiet. 'How poorly you look, dear'. She turned the conversation. 'I am sure, you were not well fed in the prison'.

'Why, how do you know?' Arindam stepped down the bed and regarded himself in the glass hung against the wall.

He shuddered at his own appearance. With tousled hair and unkept beard he hardly looked his own self. The skin of his body visibly grew darker for want of care. He was so reduced that his veins stood out and could easily be counted.

'When did you come?' Purabi broke the silence.

'Not very long ago'. Arindam looked at her over his shoulder.

'Take a rest'. She said as she rose from the bed, 'Let me get something for you'.

Arindam disagreed, 'you need not be in a hurry for that'.

'No, you must take something'.

Purabi left the room and soon came back with a plate of food in one hand and a glass of water in the other.

He turned to the sleeping baby and said, 'Surely, this is our beloved child.'

'Yes, and tell me who is it like?'

Arindam bent over the tiny face for sometime and said, 'why he does resemble me'.

Purabi quickly fare the letter to see its contents.

'Oh, no', she cracked a joke for the time being. 'Everybody says, he takes after me'.

They both smiled between themselves—the kind of cheery smile that often brightened their home in the old happy days.

'You must have been released to-day?' She ventured.

'No, I rather gave them the slip'.

'What do you mean? Have you escaped from the prison?' She asked anxiously.

'That is so', said Arindam. 'But I am beyond their reach'.

'Really?' She was beside herself with delight.

'But I have to leave you now'. Arindam asserted, 'I shall have to travel to that far country where there is no British Law against patriots or fear of punishment for loyalty to mother India'.

She did not readily see what he was driving at.

'Leave me?' Was all that she could speak out.

'Yes, my dear, I have come to say farewell'.

Purabi shed no tear. Nor was there any trace of anger. She said sorrowfully, 'you have spent the best part of your life in prison. Now you have escaped from it. If the police can once find you out, I am afraid, you will never be allowed to come home again'.

'I know, I have never been able to make you happy', Arindam resumed. "It was the same with my parents and whoever I have come in contact with. It is a curse upon me, my dear and I feel so helpless'.

'Where will you go? Enquired Purabi.

More than I know, but I am certainly not going back to prison'.

'When will you come again?'

'I shall come no more' was the clear definite answer, 'I shall never see you again, my darling'.

'Not see me again?' She felt rather confused. 'But why?'

There was no answer.

'Then take me with you', insisted Purabi.

'Don't be silly', he said reprovingly. 'Time hasn't come yet and here is enough work for you to do.'

Purabi was at a loss what to say.

'You will have to bring up our child', Arindam advised her, 'for there is nobody else to do that. You will have to hold up the ideal of liberty before him and educate him to achieve it. Tell him that we are deprived of the liberty which is our birthright and stir him into action to break the fetters.'

'Forgive me, please forgive me', she wept bitterly and went down on her knees, 'I can live no longer without you'.

'Don't lose your head, my dear', He raised her from the ground. 'Didn't you often say that it was the duty of the wife to help her husband in life's struggle? But now you are saying something different'.

She pressed her lips and began to sob. Arindam made no effort to console her for he himself was overwhelmed. It was far into the night. There was a clock some distance away. It was on the stroke of three.

Arindam got uneasy and said, 'I must make a move now'.

'Oh please stop for a while'. Purabi knelt down and touched his feet.

He lifted the sleeping infant and kissed too. Tears coursed down Purabi's cheeks. He, then, laid him down lovingly on the bed and switched off the light.

A figure was seen to come out through the window and resting on the coping for a while.

'Good-bye'. The figure murmured.

'Not good-bye, say an reveur', corrected Purabi

Continued on page 96

THAT LONELY ONE

Continued from page 92

as if she were instrumental in kicking up a row in his emotional universe.

"Come, let's have ice cream," he suggested.

I agreed to his proposal, though it was evening and it was jolly cold.

He smiled. A sort of gleam spread over his face. Old memories came crowding into his head and produced a sort of unrest in him. The neighbours residing down below had gone out. He was not bothered. But breaking away with the one residing at the upper flat opposite had, as though, a telling effect on the type of life being led by him.

"Najma is her name," he told me. "She is not so beautiful, of course, but her singing and dancing are very captivating. Hardly a day passes without her affording me the opportunity of catching a close glimpse of her exquisitively shaped limbs. And the moments of her visits are as if....."

We got to the ice cream bar. Hurriedly he brought two choc bars and took me to the road that turned to the left. It is the coldest corner of the locality, heavily shaded by shrubs and trees on either side. A sort of loneliness was always hanging over there.

"Poor girl! she was betrothed twice, but the engagement broke down every time. One of his two sisters is widowed and the other though middle-aged is still unmarried. Very simple she is.....this girl. So simple-minded she is that she is easily taken in by the tricks played on her by both of her sisters. They told her that it was I who was responsible for breaking her engagements both the times.....I can say with confidence and have told every one that the girl loves me. Yes, she still loves me fervently".

"He gives me a glance as may be seeking appreciation of his exploits. But, are these things such as to be declared openly?" I wondered.

He rubbed his shoulder with mine and says: "O, dear me! I've committed a grave mistake by not marrying her. I should have got married by now."

Suddenly he raised both his hands to his head and started rubbing it gently.

"But why didn't you marry her?" I asked him.

He wouldn't speak, as though lost in deep thing. Perhaps he was planning to give a considered reply to my query.

His silence urged me to ask him, "You've been drawn to that girl for a pretty long time. She has been visiting you every day on one pretext or the other. Even then.....?"

"Then, what?..... It did not matter at all. Simply she used to come and go away," he said this with such a stupid simplicity that I could not help breaking into peals of laughter.

He cut a sorry figure.

"What do you take me for?" He felt offended. "I can have a date fixed up, on phone, with any girl of my choice. And, I bet, she'll come running....." He stopped short, looked right into my eyes. Perhaps he wanted to watch the reaction of this new disclosure of his. Then, he went on to propose: "Let's have another choc bar, I say?"

I cannot tell why I cannot refuse, nor displease him.

"Really, you're a very lucky guy, my dear friend," he declared, after taking a bite at the choc bar.

"In what respect?" I asked.

"In every respect," said he. "That foolish woman got the connecting door blocked. As a result, I never get a glimpse of her now, nor she happens to drop in. And here you are.....you've been enjoying the romantic feats performed by both of the birds."

I burst into resounding laughter. But somehow or the other I pulled myself up and said: "What's there in mere watching such scenes from a distance?"

There was no comment from him. Instead, he pesters me with a volley of questions at a time: "Can you tell me why every girl leaves me in the manner I told you? Why I'm cursed by my people? Why I'm bullied by the boss in the office? Why do friends despite me, never offer me any drinks? Why is the world deaf to my needs? Why doubts? Why others can't see what I see? Why can't all think on the lines as I do? Why can't others adopt the same course of action as I do? Why....? Why....?"

He stopped. Then, as if of his own, he started talking about many things, simultaneously. He wanted to commit suicide, but had not the guts to do that.

Only one thing came back to his memory every now and then. He dreamt of the same thing every time—to go back to America somehow or the other. But at times even the very thought of America unnerved him—that girl got herself married, she was the mother of two children, her husband was an engineer.....Yet, at another time he thought of going to Paris and giving a final touch to his plans. The first thing that he wanted to do next morning was to arrange for a passport.

Darkness struggled to grapple with everything around. He wanted to have a tight hold on whatever he said, but it eluded his grasp every time, just like a lie cannot hold good for long.

He was very forgetful. He forgot what he said only a short while ago. "I'm sure, he does not remember what he said yesterday, while sipping a cup of steaming hot coffee at Laguna."

"I can forget everything, my dear friend," he told me, "but not that shamless woman, who married me ten years ago; and deserted me of her own after leading ten years of married life. I have not heard of her since then. But I say, if ever she wanted to desert me and elops with someone else, she ought not to have done such a manner as to leave me in the perpetual endeavour of saving my name from the blemish of ignominy."

(Translated from the original in Hindi by DESH CHITRAKAR)

Can you tell me why every girl leaves me in this manner ?

"I WAS YOUR CHHATRA SIR"

Continued from page 79

division and took up Honours in my subject. He was a promising student and we thought he would earn reputation for himself as also for the college. As a young Professor I was inspired with much idealism and thought that a Professor should keep all promising students under close observation and guidance. So I used to keep watchful eyes over quite a few students among whom Niranjan was one.

Unfortunately I found Niranjan gradually shifting his seat in the class from the front bench to the next, and so on until he chose his seat on the last bench. I found him completely inattentive to the lectures and once I caught him writing a poem on a note book meant for Aristotle. Then he began to absent himself frequently. Sometimes I caught a glimpse of him standing in front of the girls' common room or smoking behind the pillars of the front gate of the college.

Fortunately one day I found him in the class room again. After all, he would have to maintain a certain minimum attendance. I availed myself of the opportunity. I asked Niranjan to be regular in attendance, to always sit on the front bench, to be prepared to answer my questions and come to me whenever necessary without any hesitation : I would help him to the best of my ability. I thought this would do good to Niranjan.

Fact turned otherwise. From next day, he made himself completely scare in my class. He took particular care not to chance my presence within the precincts of the college. He dropped out from the Honours course altogether.

Then I forget all about him.

* * * * *

I asked the smiling gentleman "what is Niranjan doing now"?

"He is a big guy, Sir !" he replied "he is the deputy sales manager of a big manufacturing firm .....drawing more than two thousands."

"I am very glad to hear it, said I "but why then was he travelling in the third class compartment?"

"Just for my sake, Sir ! He actually held a first class ticket."

What thought did pass through my mind? Niranjan sacrificed his comfort for the sake of a classmate but rudely refused to recognise a teacher ! what was my fault?

"What was my fault?" I put it straight to his friend, as he was rising to alight at the next station into which the train was slowly entering.

"No fault, Sir !.....Perhaps he simply wanted to continue to smoking." So saying the gentleman alighted from the train and went away.

I felt much relieved at this explanation. After all, Niranjan wanted to do me honour. He refused to recognise his well-meaning teacher so that he would not be guilty of smoking in his presence. If you refused to recognise your teacher, you could safely assume that no teacher was present. And who likes the presence of a teacher in a railway compartment, which is the only public conveyance, next to taxis and rickshaws, in which one could freely smoke?

No, Niranjan meant no disrespect to me !

A DREAM FIGURE

Continued from page 94

and then added. 'By the way, do you need any funds?

'No, my dear', sighed the figure. 'Your love will be enough resource for me'.

He climbed down the pipe and was lost in the gathering gloom.

There was a knock at the door at day-break which awakened her. She ran up and found a policeman in uniform. She asked somewhat haughtily, 'what do you want here?'

'Nothing much ma 'am', said the man, 'I have only come to enquire about a lady of the name of Mrs. Purabi Roy'.

'That's my name'.

The policeman made over an urgent letter to her and left.

Purabi quickly tore open the envelope and found a letter from the jailor. It contained the following—he regrets to let her know that her husband Mr. Arindam Roy died suddenly in prison at 2 A.M. The dead body is here and she can, if she likes, come and see it.

BAHADUR SHAH II

Continued from page 87

Qutob Minar, the grave which Bahadur Shah Zafar had selected and built for himself (next to the graves of Akbar II and Shah Alam) is still lying empty. The Government of India will receive considerable appreciation if it perpetuates the memory of this standard bearer of Hindu-Muslim unity, whom destiny had chosen to preside over the liquidation of the Mughal Empire, by transferring his mortal remains from Burma to his chosen resting place in the land of his birth. To quote Bahadur Shah himself :

Kitna hai bad-nasib Zafar dafn ke liye,
Do gaz zamin bhi na mili koo-i-yar mein.

(How unfortunate is Zafar that he could not even get two yards of land for his burial in the place where his love sojourns).

HINDU SOCIETY TODAY

by Dr. SUDHAKAR CHATTOPADHAYA

ON August 15, 1947 India got her truncated independence by British diplomatic surgery. This fact of a free but truncated India is an event of capital significance in every way. For instance, Eastern Bengal, Western Punjab, Sind and N.W.F.P., with the adjoining tribal areas, became a separate State. Pakistan, meant for the Muslim primarily. The rest of India formed another State, India proper or the Bharat. This division has more than political implications. The chief rice, wheat and jute producing areas fell in Pakistan's share, while India got mainly natural resources like iron, coal etc.

The partition has changed, indirectly, the outlook or pattern of Hindu life, which had been agrarian in character. Towns and cities had no doubt developed in ancient India and they have surely played an important part in national life. But compared to the villages they were few, as we find at the present day also. When again we find that the ancient Indian *Dharmasastra* writers lay down that one who lives in the village goes to heaven and one who stays in city goes to hell, we can understand that our social life in the past thrived in a rural frame. It has often been said that real India lives in the villages. With the partition several forces began to operate to bring forth and accentuate vast changes. The Government of India led by the Congress party undertook the programme of industrialisation and of harnessing the natural resources. Foreign aid, both in the shape of money and mechanical skill, flows increasingly into the land and this happens at a time, when, especially after 1950, the world has become smaller, as it were, through the operation of high power steam vessels and air engines. All these facts are bringing tremendous unavoidable changes in Indian life:—

> New centres of industry are developing where people from different parts of the country with different customs and practices come and settle together. This runs against the various local customs prevalent in different parts of India.
>
> Foreign experts and technicians often in no small number, settle in the industrial areas and their habits and attitudes are bound to influence the life of the Indians amidst whom they live.
>
> In the post-war period, U.S.A. and U.S.S.R. have become the two greatest powers of the world and as both of them are helping our country we are bound to be influenced by them.

Thus both socialism *and* westernism or rather the American way of life are slowly penetrating into the land. The repeated declaration by the Congress that its avowed aim is socialism (and hence a society based on the creed) should particularly be noted in this connection. Again, as regards the new generation in big cities like Delhi we often find boys dressed in American fashion and even girls adopting Western costume, coiffure and cuisine. The influence of the West can also be traced in important social legislations passed by the Indian Parliament. We should note in this connection the Acts sanctioning divorce and bestowing upon women a limited right of inheritance to their paternal property. These are indeed revolutionary enactments.

It is apparent that, thanks to these factors and with the growth of a cosmopolitan outlook among the people, new values are evolving:

> That every person should have equal right in the society.
>
> That every individual should have the freedom to follow his own belief or creed without injuring the sentiments of others.
>
> That society should be governed by Parliamentary laws so that there may be uniformity in our ways of living, while customary laws should be relegated to the background.

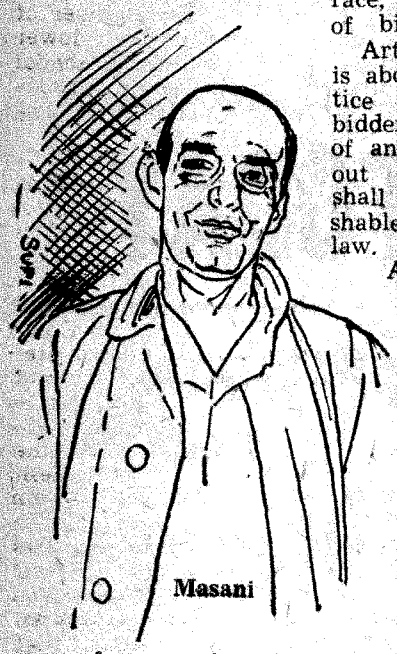
With the growth of industrialization, the village communities will break up more and more and give rise to larger regional groups no longer bound by the older social laws, because in such groups there will always be elements from different background and environments. The result will be, in fact there is, a cultural confusion. 'Hence there is an urgent need for a conscious integration between these developments and the traditional culture'. (a) Every thing will depend on how this is done.

The question that is now agitating the mind of the sociologists is: Will caste system exist in future Indian society? And if it goes what shape will

(a) Traditional Cultures in S.E. Asia, UNESCO, 1958, p. 51.

the Hindu society take? Before we turn to the question we may note that when the Indian Constitution was framed in 1950, the following provisions were incorporated in it:

Art. 15 (1) The state shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth or any of them.



Art. 17. 'Untouchability' is abolished and its practice in any form is forbidden. The enforcement of any disability arising out of 'untouchability' shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law.

Art. 38. The state shall strive to promote the welfare of the people by securing and protecting as effectively as it may a social order in which justice—social, economic and political—shall infuse all the institutions of the national life.

The makers of the Indian Constitution, great men of progressive views, thus could not think of the Indian society freed from the chain of the caste system. Let us now see what other savants think about it:

1. Masani says: 'Whether judged by results or regarded in the light of modern philosophical thought, the survival utility of the caste system is assured, if only caste fellows bear steadfastly in mind that it asks for free souls rather than free men, for moral rather than material strength: that the essential basis of the institution was the development of groups of individuals in consonance with their qualities and qualifications; that the key stone of the structure was not detachment, but union, that the element of exclusiveness and untouchability is repugnant to the social philosophy and tradition of the Aryan race; and that the main, if not the sole, object of caste system should be to secure social efficiency on the democratic and scientific principles of class collaboration and the rule of law.' (*b*)

Masani thus thinks that if caste system can shake off the evils that have grown round it, and turn to the stage in which it originated as an ideal institution in the ancient period, then its survival is assured and justified. But it is doubtful if it can be transformed into its former ideal stage from its present condition.

2. V. R. Narla, a reputed Andhra journalist, observes, 'Even now in India, where technological revolution is in its initial stages, it is following a new outlook, a new philosophy, a new approach to life. It is transforming the caste-structure, it is cutting at the root of age long superstitions ..... This new culture when it emerges makes us feel ashamed of the present caste distinctions .... a new dawn is ahead of us.' (*c*)

3. Though seriously advocating that the old Hindu social laws should be properly changed by the Indian Parliament, K. M. Panikkar, an intelligent critic, nowhere expressedly says that the caste system will entirely disappear from the Indian life. He only points out that such an urge is there and that a new society will ultimately evolve which will change the face of India. (*d*)

4. Irawati Karve holds that 'life in India was lived between two cells—(1) the caste and (2) the village. Everyone feels it necessary to break one cell. The author thinks that the other cell need to be broken too—is in fact on the way to a break. It is futile to try to restore it ....The social aim must not be isolation, but building up of larger communities where people can mingle in free uncompulsive intercourse.' (*e*)

5. A. R. Desai maintains that 'the tendency .... had been towards the progressive dissolution of caste.....with the disappearance of endogamy, its last formidable pillar, the edifice of caste would collapse' (*f*) (*l.c.* p. 241).

6. According to Nirmal Kumar Bose, 'the process of social disorganization in India has not however reached its logical end. The old social rules about inter-dining and inter-marriages, and the notions of purity or otherwise of occupations is yet a living factor in towns and more so in villages .....the mental attitude still remains conservative. Upper castes do not wish to surrender their position of social superiority even when it has become no more than a fiction. The case is worse among uneducated castes.' (*g*)

7. A most unambiguous conclusion is furnished by M. N. Srinivas who observes, 'It must be clear to every one that in this country only a small minority which is numerically insignificant but which may be—and probably is—powerful, really desires that the caste system ought to go. The vast majority of the population, especially Hindus, not only do not want caste to disappear. but they would probably find it impossible to envisage a social system without caste. To the bulk of population living in the rural areas, caste is nothing more than a collection of kin groups—agnates and affines—living in a few neighbouring villages. Joint family and caste provide for an individual in our society some of the benefits which a welfare State provides for him in the industrially advanced countries of the west. A man's earliest friends are frequently drawn from his caste, his kin belong to his caste, and his kin are often an important part of his kith. A caste also stands for a certain amount of cultural homogenity if not autonomy.' (*h*)

It is needless to add examples. The following facts emerge:

A section of the intellectuals hold that with the growth of industrialisation the caste system, a curse to the modern Indian society, will completely disappear.

Others believe that the system ought to go, but they are not definite about how and when.

Sociologists point out that it is only a few persons living mainly in the urban area who desire for the abolition of the system, while the rural folk still cling to it, want to preserve and are benefitted by the system.

The remarks of Swiss Psychoanalyst are to the point. A close, sympathetic and first-hand

---

(*b*) Caste and Structure of Society, (The Legacy of India ed. G.T. Garratt. Oxford, 1937) p. 161.
(*c*) Traditional Cultures in S.E. Asia, UNESCO, 1958, p. 67.
(*d*) Hindu Society at Cross Roads, Bombay, pp. 54.
(*e*) Hindu Society—An Interpretation, Poona, 1961, pp. 162-3.
(*f*) A R. Desai, Social Background of Indian Nationalism, Bombay, 1959, p. 241.
(*g*) Cultural Anthropology, Calcutta, 1953, p. 190.
(*h*) Caste in Modern India, Bombay, 1962, p. 70.

acquaintance with the system led him to say that his eyes were opened 'for the first time to a positive psycho-hygienic significance of this ancient social structure, and of the doctrine of Karma underlying it. Up to that time, I had known only that the present Government would like to see the castes abolished just as two and half millennia ago the Buddha had enjoined their repudiation. I had mostly heard this institution condemned as an outrageous social injustice and a hindrance to every kind of progress. Even so, in everyday Indian life I found at every step that considerable power resides in this tradition. I also discovered that this social system, open to severe criticism though it may be in many respects, is providing millions of Indians with a priceless spiritual support. It gives a far deeper sense of social security than that offered in earlier centuries in the West by the social hierarchy of the feudal system and now-a-days by social insurance schemes.' (*i*)

So it is difficult to predict dogmatically about the future of the Hindu Society, though we can make a critical study of the present tendencies as pointers to the future. We have to consider at the same time another question: Even if the caste system remains, will other facets of the Hindu society, e.g., joint family system, survive? Here instead of thinking only in terms of present needs and pressures we have to take a larger view, involving, as pointed out by Lewis Mumford, in his essay 'Culture of the Family', loyalty to generations behind us and those yet to come.

It is a fact that in big cities and towns the social life is undergoing changes which had begun already in the last few decades of the British rule. At the close of the nineteenth and in the early years of the twentieth centuries, a person undertaking a sea-voyage was considered to be an outcaste. This attitude, however, gradually changed and large number of students now regularly go to foreign lands for education and when they return no social stigma is attached to them. In fact, they are regarded as darlings of the society. Similarly, a liberal attitude has developed with regard to the taking of food. The increasing number of hotels and restaurants in cities and towns illustrate how people are taking food from the hands of the different castes, though according to the old customs one should not partake of food from the hands of a man belonging to an inferior caste. In industrial towns workers and members of the staff are coming from different parts of the country and they now avail of a common canteen. In parties and social ceremonies now-a-days we often find a member of the higher caste takes food in the house of a lower caste without any hesitation or prejudice. In school and college hostels students of different communities take food from a common kitchen or dining hall. The food taboo is gone or going.

K. M. Panikkar

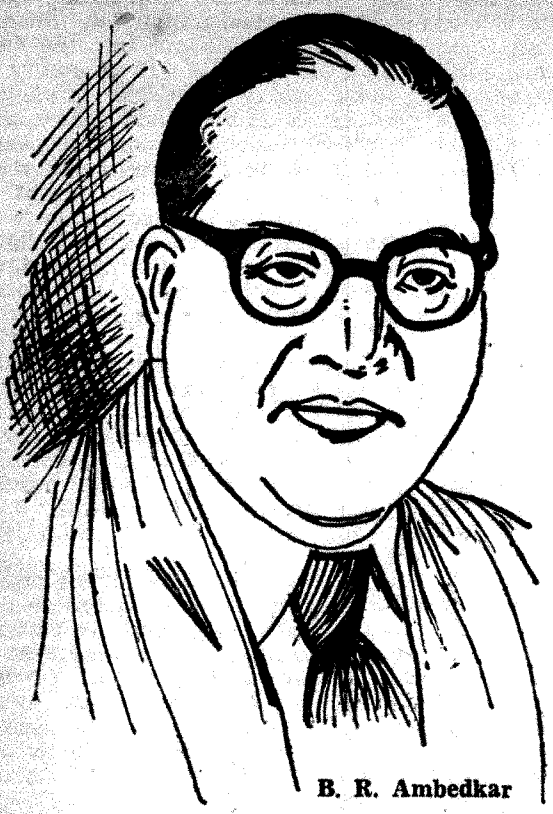
While thus one factor of the caste institution is showing signs of disintegration in the urban area, we may note the interesting fact that Indian politics is still dominated to a great extent by caste prejudices. C. Von Turer-Haimendorf has shown how casteism determines the politics of southern states and how 'caste divisions make it possible for Communists to follow traditional Marxist class preconceptions. Where there are two rival castes of approximately equal economic status the Communists or any other political party must choose between them as it may be impracticable to combine both in the same organisation. Thus in Uttar Pradesh the Communist led Kisan Sabha is supported by the Jats, and this means that the Chauhans had to be forfeited to the Congress, while the untouchables remain uncommitted in order to be able to sell their support to the highest bidder.' (*j*) This shows how inspite of the modern impacts caste remains an important factor. Asoka Mehta has observed that 'democracy in India has so far been a clever balancing of different caste interests.' (*k*)

Indian caste system stands on two hinges: marriage and food. In case of food we find that the old taboos are gradually disappearing at least in cities and towns. This is evidently due to present economic conditions and modern impacts. But we may note that however educated, enlightened and up-to-date a Hindu may be, he will, with very rare exception, shudder to take beef in a hotel or restaurant. Strangely in the ancient period, in the Vedic age beef was not forbidden. In his Rock Edict, vi., Asoka forbides taking of the flesh of bull showing indirectly that it was part of the food habit in his time. The practice is also referred to in the *Uttararamacarita* of Bhavabhuti who flourished in the 9th century A.D. In the ancient legal texts (Dharmasastras) we find long list of foods tabooed, but they are often contradictory in nature showing that different customs prevailed in different ages. Also food habits vary from district to district and State to State. In Maharashtra and U.P. non-Brahmins eat meat, eggs and fish, while Brahmins are supposed to be vegetarians. In Bengal, on the other hand, the Brahmins, generally take fish. Again, the Saraswata Brahmins of Maharashtra take fish. Among the Maharashtri and Bengali Brahmin community, the widows are not allowed to take onions and garlic though they are prescribed vegetarian diet. Again, members of any caste in Bengal belonging to the Vaisnava sect are strictly vegetarian, while those of the Tantric order are just the opposite. All these examples clearly show that India is indeed a land of diversity and while a particular food is tabooed in a particular region it is consi-

(*i*) Medard Boss, A. Psychiatrist Discovers India, Rupa and Co., 1966, p. 63.

(*j*) Politics and Society in India, ed. C. H. Philips, London, 1963, p. 65.

(*k*) As quoted in ib., p. 69.



B. R. Ambedkar

dered to be not unholy in other. The *Baudhayana Dharmasutra* written in the fourth century B.C. refers to the habit of eating horse flesh among the northerners but such a custom was repugnant in other parts of India.

The modern values that are now evolving in Hindu Society regarding the taking of food appear to be as follows:

> The system of 'untouchability' centering round taking of food should be discarded as far as possible.
>
> The taboos regarding different items of food operating so long should be liberalised.
>
> Food customs of different parts of the vast country should be tolerated and no one should be criticised or prevented from following his or her regional habits or customs.
>
> People should be taught the hygienic values of different kinds of food and proper steps should be taken to educate persons, especially of the rural areas, in the matter. Intense efforts are to be made to make the country self-sufficient in food productions and proper help and subsidies are to be given by the Government for the purpose.

Orthodoxy still persists to a great extent *in matters of marriage.* Free marriage between members of the different castes is still looked upon rather unfavourably even if in the sophisticated groups, and the upper echelons, it must be admitted that a few such marriages are taking place. Leaving aside cases of love marriages,—for love obeys no law,—we find that it is only a factional few living in the urban areas who dare break the laws of caste in case of marriage. Even in such cases one can trace often or sometime the operation of an ulterior motive. Often it is found that a member of the higher caste would enter into matrimonial relationship with a person of the lower caste when the latter has a very influential position in the society or is rich. An opposite instance can hardly be cited. In other words, it shows that among a few a tendency is gradually arising to adhere to caste laws based on wealth and position instead of birth.

Thus the following values are gradually evolving in the present day Hindu Society:

> Caste laws should be observed in cases of marriages. Society should tolerate marriage contracted outside the caste frame and should not attach unnecessary stigma to such unions. Marriage should be regarded both as a sacrament and a contract and the two viewpoints should be mutually adjusted.

While the Hindu life in cities and industrial towns is thus heading towards a change in caste pattern, the general life in the villages, where live more than 90% of the Hindus, follows the old caste laws with all their vices and virtues. Thus from the point of view of social life, the Hindus appear to be divided into two groups. This is, however, nothing new and cannot be solely ascribed to modern impacts. Life in the cities and the villages has been of different character in the ancient period also. While the *Dharmasastras* depict the rural ideal, the *Kamasastra* of Vatsayana written about 400 A.D. depicts the life of the cities and one can easily realise the difference. Thus if we make a comparative study of the ancient and modern Indian social practices we may conclude that they are following the same trends though with different details. But there are indications that the Indian village life may also undergo radical changes in future. Even the villages lying into the interior parts of the country are now connected by a net-work of bus or rail routes. Electricity is becoming available more and more. The Government has taken up the scheme of spreading compulsory education. These measures will certainly affect the general outlook of the rural folk and more and more they will get modern technological and scientific bias. It is no doubt difficult to determine whether ultimately the rural Hindu life will be on par with the urban life. We may note, however, the prognosis of some of the contemporary Indian thinkers:

> Mulk Raj Anand observes: 'It is my contention that there is already evident in India the trend towards synthesis, from which is possible agri-industrial contemporary Indian civilisation based on respect for individual may emerge, that the clash of cymbals, the sparks of illumination, and the thunder of loud words, may yield to some balance, which may contribute a corrective to its own inherent contradictions and frustrations, that arise from many surviving bad mental and social habits as well as from the blind acceptance of some of the worst things from the west, and which may help to resolve conflicts elsewhere.' (*l*)

Indian civilisation is no doubt synthesis. It is a synthesis of the culture of the different ethnic groups which constitute and comprise the Hindu population as well as a synthesis of the cultural impacts that it has imbibed throughout the course of her history. Indian culture and civilisation have an age-long agricultural basis and if India now absorbs the modern western impacts, mainly of technological character, the future civilisation, it may be expected, will be agri-industrial in character. But here arises a fundamental problem. Throughout her history Hindu culture and society have absorbed foreign impacts, but kept intact its Hindu character. Hindu Society has not lost its distinctiveness and has not bowed down itself to foreign culture. If India now loses her uniqueness

(*l*) Is there a contemporary Indian Civilisation, Bombay, 1963, p. 8.

in absorbing modern impacts, then her civilisation would be lost. No one can say anything definite about the nature of events lying in the womb of future. But if there is any value in historical inferences, then it may be asserted that sooner or later the modern impacts will take an Indian form.

K. M. Panikkar looks at the problem from a different angle. His views are as follows:

'The challenge that Hindu Society faces today is something which it never had to face in history. It is the authority of a national State armed with plenary legislative powers and motivated by a desire to bring Hindu institutions in step with new ideas. Once this movement starts it cannot stop. There may be periods of greater or lesser activity, but the change has to be continuous as social values will change and will clamour for enforcement through legislation. A legislating state and a static society cannot exist side by side. Besides the tremendous economic revolution which is taking place in India, the consequences of which no one can foresee, will generate new social forces which will be reflected in the social legislation of the future, and in the ordering of our new society. That this renovation of the social energies would only lead to a better ordered life should be obvious. It should be equally clear that it would help to re-establish Hinduism in its position of honour among the religions of the world." (*m*)

The Indian Parliament is no doubt a sovereign body and if it wishes it can bring revolutionary social changes of an all-Indian character. But it must be admitted that it has some limitation too. The late B. R. Ambedkar tried to pass through the Parliament a uniform Hindu Code, but he failed and resigned. Again, let us look at Art. 26 of the Constitution which, 'subject to public order, morality and health', confers upon every religious denomination or any section thereof the freedom to manage religious affairs. Does it not curtail to some extent the power of the Parliament in the sphere of social legislation, for many of the social rites in India are inseparably connected with religion? In the famous case Quareshi vs. State of Bihar, A. 1958, Sc. 731 it was decided that the question of deciding facts like where a person would stand, who are entitled to enter into a place of worship etc., are all matters of religion. It shows at once that this Article restricts the scope of Art. 17 which abolishes untouchability. Thus even when social laws are passed by the Parliament, there will remain the possibility that their validity may be challenged in the courts of law.

Again, the mere passing of law is one thing and its proper acceptance in the society is another. For instance, the Constitution has abolished 'untouchability.' But the difficulty is how to determine who is an untouchable. It has been decided by the Hon'ble Mysore High Court that the term untouchable refers to the Harijans primarily. Let us now note, in this context, a recent incident reported in a leading Calcutta daily. A Bengali gentleman having a European wife and a son went to visit the temple of Lord Jagannath at Puri, Orissa. The lady was refused permission by the *pandas* (keepers) of the temple on the ground that she was a foreigner and the boy was also denied the privilege as he was the son of a foreign mother. The gentleman felt mortified and published a letter in the newspaper narrating the incident. It is needless here to enter into the legal aspect of the matter, whether a foreigner, presumably with more Aryan blood in her veins than the Bengalees or the pandas themselves, can be considered an untouchable or whether Art. 17 of the Constitution should not be invoked to give her necessary protection. A controversy arose over the issue and numerous letters appeared supporting or condemning the incident. Those who supported it pointed out that the whole thing had nothing to do with the untouchability but centred round the question whether foreigners should be allowed in Hindu temples. Hindu practice is certainly against it and it is also a part of Hindu religious custom, possibly coming under Art. 26 of the Constitution. Even if this argument be advanced in support of such segregation there remains nevertheless the stigma that Hindu religious practices favour the growth of narrow sectarian outlook that denies the ordinary man his natural right. This seems to be in sharp contrast with the catholicity of the earlier period in the first century B.C. when a Greek Heliodoros could adopt Vaishnavism and was allowed to erect a pillar in honour of the God. In any case, when we find that a large number of the present day elites are supporting the action of the temple authority (see below) we can presume that such a practice is going to persist in the Hindu society for sometime to come.

FIRST LETTER

'Sir, It is not the first time that you have published (March, 14-15) the complaints of visitors (in this case a Hindu and his European wife and son) who have not been allowed to enter some Orissa temples. The way the Pandas of Puri and certain other places treated these visitors is disgraceful and every sensible Hindu views it with the utmost exasperation. We want Panda rule to be stopped by the Government without delay.

I am sure Mr. Rudra and his wife understood that most of the Pandas have little education and their main effort is to perpetuate their hold on the administration of temples. It is a fact that Hindu society is fast changing, yet there are elements among us who resent non-Hindu's entry into temples and intercaste marriage.

No one can deny that there are narrow-minded people in every society. We saw a report on March 14-15 that non-whites were not allowed to see a football match at Johannesburg.

Yours etc.,

SECOND LETTER

Sir, How could Mr. Rudra expect that his European wife and their son would be exempted from the ban on non-Hindus entry into Hindu temples? What was wrong in describing their son as a 'memsaheber baccha'? To a sensible man this statement can never appear derogatory.

The Jagannath temple at Puri is not guarded by 'violent and noisy holy men.' Some pandas wait at the gates to receive their clients and a chowkidar is on duty to prevent non-Hindus and people with shoes and other prohibited articles from entering the temple. . . . .

Yours etc.

The above two letters represent strictly opposed view points.

Again, as we have hinted, legislation cannot wholly change the social outlook of a nation. We may note that monogamy is the rule in the Christian countries but cases of bigamy are not uncommon in law courts. Again, after divorce a man can take a new partner, which, though justified from the legal point of view, is certainly un-ethical from the point of view of the tenets of Christianity.

(*m*) Hindu Society at Cross Roads, Bombay, pp. 113-4.

The question thus naturally arises—what impact has Christianity produced on the life of the western people during the course of the last two thousand years? Thus impacts are not effected in a very easy manner. It will take long time for the modern impacts to be fully operative on Indian life.

Nevertheless, several recent acts of the Parliament are calculated to change the face of the Hindu Society. They are as follows:

Monogamy has been enforced by law and any Hindu practising polygamy is liable to punishment.

Each Hindu marriage should be registered though it is not obligatory.

Divorce or separation under certain conditions has been allowed.

The wife and daughters can now legally claim equal shares along with son in the property of a person dying intestate.

Excepting in South India where kin marriages are in vogue certain degrees of blood relations are not allowed to marry". (*n*)

All the laws enforcing the above injunctions are not cognizable, i.e. the state will take no notice of their breach unless some-one formally files a complaint. The result of this can easily be imagined specially among the so-called lower classes of the society. The present writer knows the case of an educationist who, well over forty, fell in love with one of his female colleagues. The gentleman was married and his first wife lived in a distant village. In the end he married his colleague and the rumour goes that he formally divorced his first wife *after his second marriage*, which was *inter-caste,. has* been registered. The divorce was facilitated by the fact that the innocent and illiterate first wife did not contest the suit. If it is true that he married for the second time without formally divorcing his first wife, it is clear that the law has been defeated. Again, the tribals and persons in the lower level of the society usually without any formal education, know nothing about the laws; they are guided by their own customs and obey the laws of their own *panchayet*, or assembly.

The laws may ultimately change Indian womanhood. The ground has already been prepared for it. Under the influence of the west and Mahatma Gandhi's civil disobedience movement the purdah system virtually disappeared from India. Simultaneously, there was a sudden rise in the percentage of female education and respectable Hindu ladies came forward to serve as teachers in schools and colleges. This was a significant change and, though for sometime the orthodox class looked down upon it with contempt, the society began to take a new turn. During the Second World War, specially after the Independence, Hindu ladies began to serve in the offices and take to various other professions. It may be doubted if, except under financial pressure, girls wish to or should work outside their home. For as society is still by and large orthodox we have to pause and think of the position of such a lady working in the office from ten-to-five or even having night duties to perform, as in case of the telephone operators in some of the big cities. What would be her position if the elderly members of her husband's family be of the orthodox type? It may be argued that when such old 'fools' would be gone or liquidated, the Hindu society would assume a new upto date character. There are other aspects to be considered. Most of the families cannot afford to appoint cooks and servants and if the housewives go out of their hearth and home how would the family thrive? This is a practical problem and one does not know how it will be solved.

There is another problem centering round these office-going modern girls. In most cases young men are afraid to have such a mate in life as she might be proud and independent. According to the age-long Hindu ideal, the wife should be subservient to her husband, therein lies peace of the family. It is not unoften that such old-world girls really prove to be subservient to their husbands and true partner in their husband's weal and woe. But the difficulty is bound to arise when such a modern girl marry a person belonging to a Hindu joint family of which the majority of the members, specially the ladies, entertain old and time honoured-values and may be without formal or modern education.

I am reminded here of a poignant conversation in Somerset Maugham's *The Razor's Edge*:

"You only lack one thing to make you completely enchanting".

She smiled and waited.

'Tenderness'.

The smile died on her lips.

The question is whether the death of tenderness through economic emancipation is not too heavy a price and whether a healthier adjustment is not possible.

Fortunately for such girls, the modern impacts are slowly but steadily disrupting the joint family system. With the development of communications and transport and the opening up of new avocations, enterprising members of the family are leaving their homes in search of fortunes elsewhere. The decline of the old family occupations, the spirit of individuality fostered by western education and above all the struggle for existence are eating at the vitals of this institution. The system is no doubt on the decline. Though the Indians have in general a great, even exaggerated, respect for their family traditions and always cherish a happy memory of their golden home, the system will ultimately disappear if the present economic trends continue, though, due to the innate conservatism of the Indian mind, the system may continue for some years to come, for the tradition is so strong that it cannot die at once.

Out of India's sentimental respect for tradition and under the pressure of the present impact at the same time the following values are gradually taking shape:

That the evils that have crept into the caste-structure should be eradicated with a view that the system may disappear altogether ultimately.

That the government should not distribute its patronage or favour on the basis of caste hierarchy.

That in view of the fact that the joint family system is fast giving way steps should be taken to reorganise the family on a new structure without violently breaking away from the traditional life.

That the women should be given proper place in society and they should be true partners without greatly disturbing the traditional pattern of Indian womanhood. That though untouchability has been abolished by law, steps should be taken to make the people conscious of the evil inherent in the system.

That more attention should be paid to the spread of education in the rural areas so that age-long superstitions may vanish gradually.

The above discussions may show that outwardly we are on the threshold of a great transition. The question now arises—shall we sacrifice our own characteristics and adopt westernism or other modes of life alien to our land? If such a state of affairs come in, it will certainly mean the death of real

(*n*) Irawati Karve, Hindu Society—An Interpretation, (Poona, 1961), p. 145.

India. So in order to mould our modern life, we have to think of the modern ideals or values, make a close scrutiny and then come to a final and sober decision. The issues are primarily two;

> Shall we accept science and technology at the cost of our traditional culture and then face the consequences that have overtaken the West?
>
> Shall we shut our eyes to the modern development and live in a dreamland and remain an ever backward nation to be dominated economically and politically by other more advanced one?

While the latter course is impossible and unacceptable today, the first one also is hardly desirable in its entirety. We know that the Indian civilisation has developed by absorbing impacts throughout its course of history. But India has always maintained one basic ideal before her — the ideal of religion or *dharma* — and this has given a uniqueness to her culture inspite of the absorption of different impacts. In this sense Indian culture may be described as the same in spirit today as it had been thousand years before. It is like a big tree sustaining and sustained by the same roots though the leaves and branches wither away and new ones are coming to light.

If, then, the trends of history are to be taken into account there is reason to think that the spirit of Indian culture will absorb the new impacts, give them Indian forms and make them part and parcel of Indian life. Outwardly many old leaves of the tree of culture will fall out and new ones will appear. But let us be cautious that the root be not dead. Science and technology should be integrated into our pattern of life, new social developments should be allowed; all these, however, should be integrated and co-ordinated with our traditional culture which, we know, is always dynamic and always flexible. Let us take the case of Japan. She has taken so much of western culture, but maintains nevertheless her uniqueness which has made her one of the greatest nations of the east. It should not be overlooked that too much reliance on science has reduced life in the modern world into a machine, has increased enormously the cases of nerve and heart disease and the world is now gradually marching towards a dead lock. Let us be guided by the wise counsels of Mahatma Gandhi:—

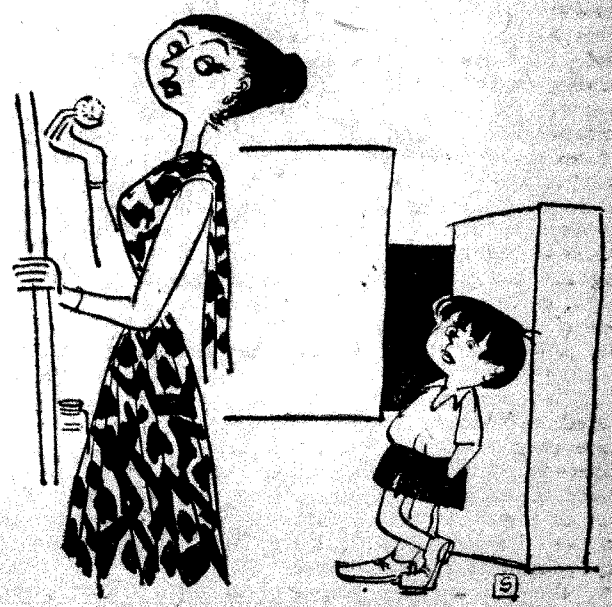
> While I have freely acknowledged my debt to Western culture, I can say that whatever service I have been able to render to the nation has been due to the retention by me of Eastern culture to the extent it has been possible. I should have been thoroughly useless to the masses as an Anglicised, denationalised being, knowing little or, caring less and perhaps even despising their ways, habits, thoughts and aspirations. It is difficult to estimate the loss of energy caused to the nation by her children being obliged to resist the encroachments of a culture which, however good in itself, was unsuited for them whilst they had not imbibed and become rooted in their own.(*o*)

Mahatmaji's viewpoint will be shared generally by the (really) educated class which adopts that while we should imbibe the present impacts we should not move away from our mooring in our own culture and tradition. Thus even inspite of all that is happening today in this smaller world the Indians cling to the old ideal that culture should develop by harmonising the old with new, the viewpoint maintained by the great poet Kalidasa who lived in the 4th century. This mixture of opposites inherent in the Hindu mind is often misunderstood by the progressive or westerners. Thus an American authoress while giving an excellent account of the present India observes:

> Many Indians seem to live simultaneously in two worlds: the traditional, static, religion-oriented, caste-bound, family-centred world; and the new, westernised, rationalistic world of dynamic individualism and social progress. In daily life, they may repeatedly move back and forth from the one world to the other. A man may wear a western business suit to his office, but change to an Indian *dhoti* at home in the evening. At one moment, he may seem as rationalistic and western-minded as any westerner; at the next, he may argue earnestly that the men who composed the Vedas 3,500 years ago knew about the airplane and the atom bomb, or he may cancel an important engagement because his astrologer has warned him that the time is not auspicious. Although his job may be a part of the national effort to raise the standard of living, he may speak of economic progress as mere materialism'. (*p*)

The apparent dichotomies in Hindu life do not necessarily cause any 'inner conflict', as it may appear to an outsider. The co-existence of 'contradictions' is part and parcel of Hindu outlook. Indeed, it is this inclusive and tolerant character that has made India what it is today. The critic,, however, has rightly noted that the frequent students' strike, political democracy, economic development, etc., are a pointer to a new era. We have to see whether 'with its genius for synthesis, can Hinduism again incorporate the new ideas and still retain something of its own. Will it exercise a stabilising effect? Or will a social revolution occur which even Hinduism cannot keep in bounds? The answer is far from clear'. (*q*) One can only hope for the best. We have a date with destiny.

(*o*) Young India, July, 5, 1928.
(*p*) Beatrice Pitney Lamb, India—a world in transition, (Orient Longmans), 1963, pp. 159-60.
(*q*) ibid., p. 161.



On this Sacred occasion...

We pay our homage to Mother Durga,
the goddess of strength and righteousness.
We also pledge to work harder
and harder to make our motherland
strong and prosperous.
Dedicated to the service
of the nation since 1895.

PUNJAB NATIONAL BANK

PUNB/6627-1

BANKIM CHANDRA AND THE HINDU REVIVAL MOVEMENT OF NINETEENTH CENTURY BENGAL

By Dr. K. K. GHOSH

WHEN the Revolt took place in 1857 the influence of the British domination was deeply entrenched in this country. The destruction of the Indian polity was almost complete. The transformation of the country's economy was well underway. But the most consequential impact was yet to be felt. This came in the form of a powerful onslaught on the social system and culture of the people—which might have gone far beyond the political subservience of the country and reduced it to a cultural colony of England.

The challenge of the West to the basic ideas and institutions of the country was unprecedented. It appeared in the triumph of rationalism which followed the spread of English education in the country, particularly in Bengal. More obvert attacks came through the proselytizing adventures of the christian missionaries. As the political domination of England appeared unshakable and the efforts to dislodge it proved futile, the reactions against cultural onslaught were sharp and varied. The history of the Hindu society during the greater part of the nineteenth century was the story of the various sets of reactions produced by this challenge. In Bengal, there were the rationalistic Brahmoism of Ram Mohan Roy, the variation of Keshab Chandra Sen, radicalism of the Young Bengal, and assertive Hinduism.

The challenge of the Western Christianity had aroused Hindus to set their house in order. They realised that age had dimmed the brightness of their original promise, defiled the pristine purity of their faith, and burdened religion with blind tradition, irrational rites and cruel superstitions. They desired that the stream of their spiritual life should flow fresh and clear. The spiritual reawakening had in itself the yearning for purification which directed men's mind towards the yore when their faith had just sprung from its sources, undefiled. Spiritual reawakening in such a case signified essentially a return to the origins. So the main efforts of the reformers took the form of revival. But revival of the past was an impossibility. It was reconstruction of the mind that thought of it. It was natural, therefore, that the reformers put forth different pictures of the original faith and prescribed different methods of making it live again.

Reform or revival necessitated rejection of elements which were considered incompatiable with the original faith. In this process some reformers applied the pruning shears more freely than others. They also differed in their interpretations and adaptations of the old doctrines and practices to the present conditions. Thus arose a number of schools of thought among the Hindu religious reformers. Notwithstanding their differences, they showed a similar trend, namely, a vivid consciousness of the need for religious reconstruction and moral reform. The most outstanding religious reformers among the Hindus included Ram Mohan Roy, Debendranath Tagore, Keshab Chandra Sen, Ramkrishna Paramahansa, Vivekananda, Bankim Chandra Chatterji, M. G. Ranada and Dayananda Saraswati. Apart from the last two all of them were from Bengal.

Ram Mohan Roy was the first fruit of the plant which grew as a result of the dissemination of Western culture in the Indian soil. His approach in religious matters was largely intellectual and the society (Brahma Samaj) which he organized was based upon his severely rational attitude. The radicalism of the Young Bengal movement which was a distinct type of reaction to the challenge thrown by the West was also fed by a rational outlook. As a result, rationalism continued to reverbe-

rate in the country for the greater part of the nineteenth century.

In the decades following the Revolt of 1857 a change occured in the political atmosphere of the country. The play of new factors began to modify the social attitudes. A new note of assertive Hinduism began to sound over the voice of rationalism. Many factors combined to promote this tendency. In Bengal orthodox section of the Hindu middle class under the lead of the learned Radha Kanta Dev of Sova Bazar had formed the Dharma Sabha in 1830, in apposition to Ram Mohan Roy's liberal Brahmo Samaj. But the movement was unable to make much progress because of the stir made by the radicals of the Young Bengal and the reformers like Debendranath Tagore ond other leaders of Brahma Samaj dominated the scene. But the two forces which swayed the mind of Bengal more and more after 1858 were those of nationalism and romanticism. Both were the products of common urges— the feeling of individual self-assertion and of pride in the past of the race.

Akshoya K. Sarkar

The feeling of pride in the past was closely associated with the religious movements and was fed by historical studies, discoveries of the archaeologists and Indologists. Ancient literature, philosophy, science, law, arts and monuments which had been buried in oblivion were raised to life and they enormously enhanced the reputation of the country and the self-respect of the people in their own estimation. The result was a revulsion of feeling against the Western culture and the eagerness to repudiate Western superiority. This has a great deal to do with the new movement of assertive Hinduism. But the latter was also an inward look to the efficiency of the constitution of the faith which was faced with the powerful challenge from the West. Several attempts were made to re-evaluate the religious customs and practices which had come to be accepted as the part and parcel of Hindu faith, and hold on to those articles of that faith which were believed to be pure and eternal. This movement, popularly known as neo-Hinduism, found expression through a number of men in Bengal. Two most distinctly prominent schools of this movement were headed by Pandit Sasadhar Tarka Churamani and Bankim Chandra Chatterji. But there was also such men as Akshay Chandra Sarkar, Krishna Prasanna Sen and Bhudev Mukherji whose views fell in line with those of Bankim or Pandit Sasadhar.

The excesses of the Young Bengal towards religion and the basic rationalistic approach of the Brahmoism frightened the Hindu orthodoxy which now made an attempt to revive its prestige with the help of science. Pandit Sasadhar Tarka Churamani was an exponent of this movement. He did not follow the old exegeses and apologetics of Hinduism or the ancient *Mimansas* which worked upon the postulate of the authority of the *Vedas*, believed to be divine (*apaurusheya*) and eternal. He was concerned with the defence of the current *Pauranic* rituals and ceremonialism. On the social plane, Pandit Sasadhar defended the popular Hindu rituals with distorted scientific explanations. He taught that Hindu superstitions and customs were subtle expression of the profundest scientific knowledge. Thus, *Tiki* or tuft hair worn by orthodox Hindus had a purpose. The ancestors of the Hindus were claimed to have known that hair was highly charged with electricity. Tagore wrote in his *Reminiscences:* "Pandit Sasadhar school . . . carried to absurd lengths their attempts to justify even current superstitions by pseudo-scientific explanations". (1)

Among the leaders of neo-Hinduism who were nearer in their views to Sasadhar Churamani were Krishna Prasanno Sen, Nabin Chandra Sen and Hemchandra Bandopadhyaya. Krishna Prasanna Sen did not function on an intellectual plane and his approach to religious discussion was a crude one. Nabin Chandra Sen, essentially a poet, had his own views regarding the existing social institutions. He believed in monism but found nothing wrong in idolatry. He argued that the age old social customs such as the caste system, child marriage and marriage within the respective caste need not be without their good points. He vehemently criticised the secular Western education system as it was being gradually introduced in Bengal and the forcefully pleaded that the purpose of education should be the development and preservation of religious values.

Like Nabin Chandra, Hem Chandra Bandhopadhya was a conservative Hindu. In 1857 he wrote a long biographical essay on Sri Krishna which was later published in a book form. In his *"Brahmo Theism in India,* Hem Chandra explained why the educated Hindu should not embrace Brahmoism.

Bankim Chandra Chatterji was the outstanding figure of this era of religious reawakening who through his own interpretation of the essentials of Hindu religion added a new dimension to the religious movements of Bengal in the nineteenth century.

The intelligentsia of Bengal had been attracted by the Western Philosophy from the beginning of the nineteenth century. Bankim was no exception to this. He studied the philosophical systems of Dentham Mill, Darwin, Spencer, Kant and Fichte No other philosophical system of the West had such a considerable influence on him as Auguste Comte's Positivism, although he was repelled by the godlessness of that philosophy.

Inspite of his deep study in Western philosophical systems, Bankim's inspiration did not come from there. On the contrary, it enhanced his admiration for the religion of his forefathers ond gave him new light to reconstruct and re-examine the rich legacies of the past. Most importantly, the study of Western philosophy and its methodology shaped his approach towards religious explanation and helped him to develop a scientific attitude, distinctly critical and rational. It is here that Bankim's attitude was modern in the real sense. It

Rammohan Roy

1. Rabindranath Tagore, **Reminiscences,** London, 1961, P. 251.

is here that his attitude differed from that of others who, like him, sought to defend Hinduism.

It will be a mistake to claim Bankim as a religious preacher. He himself had declined on one occasion to assume such a role. (2) Bankim developed his religious views to meet certain challenges which the society was facing at his time. Hinduism in its popular form had fallen from its high positions and come to be associated with a mass of superstitions. The Young Bengal had started their work of destruction of the Old Order and completed their task so ruthlessly that they left behind them a vast vacuum in the field of social and religious values. Formerly, there was something in the name of religion. It might have lost the vitality to ensure the social progress but it kept the fabric of the society intact. Now that stabilizing force was gone, and it was possible that chaos would grip the society resulting into its dissolution. Brahmo Samaj had been in the field and had saved some educated men from the crisis. But it was neither for Brahmo Samaj nor for the Hindu revivalists of the orthodox school to bridge the scheism in the society. The influence of Brahmoism was restricted to the intellectual class who formed a comparatively small section of the society. A vast section of the society, mostly uneducated and orthodox and also a small section of the educated men, remained outside the progressive influence of Brahmo Samaj. For Pandit Sasadhar and his associates too, it was too big a task. They were obscurantists and their pseudo-scientific explanations only strengthened the age old superstitions. It was left to Bankim to search for this large section of the Hindu society, some theoretical remedies of their social wounds. The remedy, to Bankim, could be religious only. This he explained in one of the initial issues of *Prachar*, the journal which he started to propagate his religious views.

The basic assumption in Bankim's argument was that the society should not stay without religion. A society without religion could not progress and it was bound to perish ultimately. (3) Religion supplies a stabilizing force to the society. (4) Although Bankim believed in the necessity of religion, he ran down the popular superstitions which go in the name of Hinduism. Referring to the lifeless rituals defended by some orthodox Hindus he wrote: "if these were Hinduism, I say openly and emphatically that I do not want the revival of Hinduism." (5) It was in this connection that he condemned all that was propagated by Pandit Sasadhar as Hindu faith. He was certain at the same time that Hinduism into purest form, no matter if it was ever achieved in the ancient society, could no longer satisfy the requirements of the present society. This left Bankim with two possible alternatives. Either the Hindu religion should totally be abjured and replaced by any other, or those parts of the faith should be revitalised which would ensure the stability and progress of the society. Neither of Islam, Buddhism and christianity appeared to him to be a good substitute for Hinduism, as none of these faiths had vitality to uproot Hinduism from India in the past. This led him to search out what was substantial and dynamic in his faith.

Maharshi Debendranath Tagore

Thus, his philosophical interests led Bankim to become a defender of Hinduism. He was provoked into religious polemics by the attacks of the Christian missionaries. He found neither the obscurantists like Sasadhar nor the radicals like the Brahmos could adequately meet the challenge of modernism. The controversy brought from his pen. 'Letters on Hinduism' addressed to Yogesh Chandra Ghosh. Hinduism revived in its purity was the answer to the problems which postered Hindu society. Sasadhar's pesudo-scientific justifications were as out of place as Keshab's extravagant eclecticism. As Bankim Chandra grew older the sense of his exalted mission gripped him. He incorporated his views in the two volumes: *Dharmatatva* and *Krishnacharitra*.

Hemchandra Banerjee

He believed that the remedy was contained in the revival of the purer aspects of the religion. The criterion of selection of those aspects was social good. "All that is for the good and welfare of the people is truth, and that which is not, is untruth." (6) It was possible for him to set up such a criterion because in his definition of religion, Bankim completely identified it with the good and welfare of the people. He was aware that the criterion was essentially a utilitarian one. But he was convinced that religion could not be divorced from the welfare of the people. "That which preserves the living beings is religion . . . . religion can not be separated from *Utilitarianism*." (7)

Bankim succeeded in completely identifying religion with the human welfare because he visualized and worked for a total regeneration of the society—religious and moral. Religious discussions, as such, hardly interested him. In *Krishnacharitra*, Bankim showed as much interest in discussing the essence of Krishna's religious sermons as in drawing such lessons from those sermons which would be useful for the advancement of his own society.

---

2. From Bankim Chandra Chatterji to Kumar Benoy Krishna Deb, in Bankim Chandra Chatterji, **Bibidha**, ed. by Brajendranath Bandhopadhya and Sajani Kanta Das, Calcutta, 1950, pp. 380-1.
(3) Bankim Chandra Chatterji, "Hindudharma". The article was first published in Prachar and later reprinted in **Bankim Chandra Sahitya Granthabali** Part II, published by Basumati Sahitya Mandir, Calcutta, no date, p. 338.
(4) Bankim Chandra Chatterji, "Deshya Nabya Samajer Sthiti O Gati" first published in **Prachar**, Reprinted, **Ibid.**, p. 353.
(5) Bankim Chandra Chatterji, "Hindudharma", op. cit., pp. 336-7.
(6) Bankim Chandra Chatterji, **Krishnacharitra**, P. 286. ed. by Brajendranath Bandhopadhya and Sajani Kanta Das, Calcutta, 1940.
(7) **Ibid.**, p. 283.

He wrote: "He (Krishna) never sought to be a social reformer. His objective was to bring about the moral and political regeneration of the society, spread religion and establish a kingdom based on religion. If this can be achieved, society will be reformed on its own, social reformation is impossible without this. The ideal man (Krishna) knew it. . . we create trouble by approaching the problems of the society independently, because we are not conscious of the fact. Religious advancement is also the root of political advancement. Then, everyone must endeavour for the advancement of religion. If that is done, no independent effort will be required for the reformation of the society." (8) That in writing *Krishnacharitra*, the problems of his own society were uppermost in Bankim's mind is evident from the fact that he took pains to reiterate frequently the measures for the improvement of his contemporary society.

Sasadhar Tarkachuramoni

It was here that Bankim differed from other progressive social reformers of the period. It is also here that he is often misunderstood. He had no faith in acts of reform which touched only the fringe of the society. Without being an orthodox, he slighted the piecemeal acts of reforms of Vidyasagar, such as antipolygamy movement (9) He kept away from the circle of the progressive Brahmos although he disapproved the revival of Hindu orthodoxy no less categorically than them. Appeal to the old Scriptures—an weapon which Vidyasagar used so often to modify the current social practices—appeared to be hardly fruitful to Bankim. The influence of the social customs and superstitions was most decisive on the popular mind. It was more powerful than the old Scriptures and only a total religious and moral regeneration of the society could liberate it from this mediaevalism. That was Bankim's real vision and it was not lost to him in the closing years of his life. In 1892, two years before his death, he was asked by Benoy Krishna Dev if sea voyage, so far condemned as an un-Hindu practice, was in conformity with Hindu religion. The issues was controversial and it had agitated the Hindu opinion of the country. Bankim knew that the orthodox section of Hindu believed in the superstition. It was for this reason that the verdict of their Scriptures was sought even by those who attached hardly any importance to the superstition. To Bankim it served no useful purpose to refer to the Scriptures. No social custom can be "abolished by an appeal to the *Shastras* unless there is a moral and religious regeneration of the society." He did not falter in giving forth him own opinion. "Sea-voyage is for the good of the people. So it is endorsed by religion. Whatsoever is said in the *Sastras*, sea-voyage is permitted by the religion of the Hindus." (10)

Every religious monograph of Bankim contained a strong plea for the social and moral regeneration. To ensure it, he made a powerful appeal in *Dharmatatva* for the fullest development for the individual personality. A harmonious development of all the faculties of man (*Britte*) physical and mental through personal and social life, was described as *Anuseelandharma*. This, to him was the essence of the religion of man. Devotion to God results from the perfection in *Anuseelandharma*. (11) He aligned four stages in human affection: love for self (*Atmapriti*), and love for family (*Swajanpriti*) love for country (*Swadeshpriti*) and love for the world (*Jagatpriti*). These four were not in conflict with one another. They were in an ascending scale of importance within the four stages of the evolution of the human society, namely, world of matter, (*Jarjagat*) animal world (Jibjagat) world of intellectual being, (*manas jagat* i.e. man) and world of society (*Samajjagat*). Bankim was not an atheist and he admitted that man's highest duty was devotion to God. Then he argued that since the devotion to God and love for the whole world were one and the same, it might be said that apart from the devotion to God, love for the country was the highest form of human duty and a part of his religion. To make sure that his philosophy would not weaken the doctrine of patriotism, he accepted Herbert Spencer's dictum that "life of the social organism must, as an end, rank above the lives of its units."

By purposeful efforts he reassessed and restored the character of the Hindu diety, Sri Krishna, and set it up as an ideal to illustrate the human personality in its perfection. In *Krishnacharitra* and *Srimadbhagavadgita* he proclaimed Krishna as the embodiment of all moral, social and spiritual ideals, and the "wisest and greatest of the Hindus." (12) He rejected Vedantaism as unreal because, he said, "I cannot understand what a quality-less (*nirgun*) God is." In its fullness, religion could not be found in the *nirgun* God of Vedanta, because he who is without qualities cannot be an example to the people. There cannot be complete religion in the worship of a philosophical or scientific diety. The basis of religion is a God with qualities, such as is mentioned in our Puranas and in the Christian Bible, because He and He alone can be our model. The worship of an impersonal God is futile, only the worship of a personal God is fruitful.

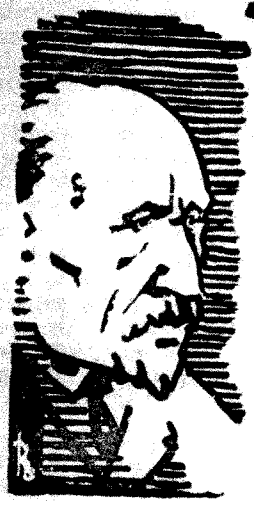
Bankim Chandra made the selection of the characteristic of Krishna according to what he called "historical principles" (described in chapter ten of part one of 'Krishnacharitra'). Krishna's many trails and actions described in the 'Visnupuran', 'Harivamas', 'Bhagavatgita' and 'Gitagobinda' were frequently dismissed by him all allegories. The human virtues claimed by him to be present in Bankim described Krishna in these words :—

Nobin Sen

"He who by the strength of His arm subdued

(Continued on page 112)

(8) **Ibid.**, pp. 179-80.
(9) See **Ibid.**, pp. 286-7.
(10) From Bankim Chandra Chatterji to Benoy Krishna Dev, 27th July 1892, in **Bankim Chandra Chatterji Bibidha**, ed. by Brajendra Nath Bandhopadhya and Sajani Kanto Das, Calcutta, 1950, pp. 280-3
(11) Bankim Chandra Chatterji **Dharmatatva**, p. 150, ed. by Brajendra Nath Bandhopadhya and Sajani Kanto Das, Calcutta, 1940.
(12) **Krishnacharitra**, op. cit., p. 317



ROMAIN ROLLAND AND HIS CONTACT WITH INDIAN MIND

By SUDHANSU MOHAN BANERJEE

GREETING to the feet of the Jnanin. Greeting to the feet of the Bhakta. Greeting to the devout who believes in the formless God. Greeting to those who believe in God with form. Greeting to the men of old who knew Brahman. Greeting to the modern knowers of Truth.....

These are the prophetic words with which Rolland began his work on Shri Ramkrishna, a quotation from the Great Master himself whom he regarded as the legend and symbol (to borrow the expression of another master mind Sri Aurobindo), of the Man Gods meaning thereby, as the translator points out that he conceived Shri Ramkrishna as a meeting point, a rapport of all essences, divine and human.Rolland himself was a believer in that unity. His life was not merely the story of a conscience as Aronson puts it—it was something more than that. It was also the story of a vision of a splendid harmony where the past, the present and the future mingled and blended in a grand aspiration of all races, all creeds and all ages. He strove to bring it between Germany and France, between the East and the West, proving that the twain does meet and in a bigger way also between Faith and Reason whose divorce is like an absurd separation between two halves of the soul. His is also the story of an unceasing effort at creation regardless of all the obstacles that prejudice and inertia might put in its way in the midst of a frustrated multitude lost in the drifting storm of conflicting passions and ideologies. The first world war showed this nationalistic hysteria in a lurid light. Bertrand Russell Rolland, Nicholai, Maxim Gorky were ostracized. Zore was killed, the poet who, like Heraclitus, found his deep affections with Mother Earth. When Rolland issued his 'Declaration of the Independence of the Mind', the two signatories from India were Rabindranath Tagore and Ananda Coomaraswamy the latter technically of Ceylon.

Here was a universal man who took considerable interest in interpreting India and its modern masterminds and the four whom we can immediately name are Ramkrishna and Vivekananda, Gandhi and Rabindranath. He also talked of the builders of the Unity—Rammohon and Debendranath,-Keshabchandra and Dayananda—the great shepherds. Sri Aurobindo's philosophy of life, Jawharlal's aristocratic internationalism, Dilip's music also attracted him. Kalidas Nag, Sunity Chatterjee, Bashi Sen, Dhana Gopal Mukherjee, Subhas Bose were a few among his dear acquaintances. His intellectual endeavour was trying to find out through European humanism a satisfying point of harmony not only between Greco-Roman ideal and the Judiac-Christian trend but also to assimilate a spiritual situation demanding an integration of values through the nineteenth century renascent India. In his prelude to the life of Ramkrishna he was almost in raptures "If there is one place on the face of the earth where all the dreams of living men have found a home from the very earliest days when man began the dream of existence, it is India, ... For more than thirty centuries the tree of Vision with all its thousand branches and their millions of twigs has sprung from that torrid land, the burning womb of the gods. It reviews itself tirelessly, showing no signs of decay ; all kinds of fruit ripen upon its boughs at the same time ; side by side are found all kinds of gods from the most savage to the highest, the formless God, the Unnameable the Boundless one.....Always the same tree. In the words of Taittariya Upanishad—

I am more ancient than the radiant Gods. I am the first born of the Being. I am the artery of Immortality."

When men like Anatole France , Maurice Maeterlinck, Thomas Mann, Yone, Noguchi, Hauptmann became intense nationalists, Rolland wrote to Hauptmann—kill men if you like but respect masterpieces. They are the patrimony of the human race. I am expecting an answer from you Hauptmann, an answer that may be an act. The opinion of Europe awaits it and do think about it. At such a time silence itself is an act." He wrote to America,—"Heir of George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, take up the cause not of a party, not of a single people but of all. Summon the representatives of the peoples to the Congress of Mankind,

Speak, speak to all. The world hungers for a voice which will overleap the frontiers of nations and classes. Be the arbiter of free peoples." This grand faith that man was made for love and not hate or that there is neither East nor West for the naked soul and the whole world belongs to all of us is a faith the recovery of which is essential today.

Born four years before the catastrophic France-Prussian War, Romain Rolland, the scion of a middle class gentry in France was brought up in a climate of mental frustration defeatism and longing for national revenge. Though French, he was not a Frenchman in that way. He was schooled in the best tradition of European thought. Shakespeare and Goethe were his idols. Beethoven and Mozart were his musical Gods. Tolstoy completely hypnotized him so much so that he wrote a passionate letter to him which brought tears to Tolstoy's eyes and though he did not immediately reply and had to be reminded, he made ample amends by writing to an youth calling him Dear Brother, a 38 page reply which summed up the great Russian's views on Art—that love of mankind comes before love of Art—Art is good which unites mankind. It was a message well worth remembering and in fact remembered by Romain Rolland though he thought later that Tolstoy's philosophy was of doubtful nature not in line with his beatiuful credo and the fact that between the man of instinct and the man of reason there was bound to be conflict. Tolstoy was about this time another great man's great god —that of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi's. It was at this time Romain Rolland came under the influence of Malavida, Baroness Von Meysenbug, an old lady, intimate friend of Kossuth, Mazzini, List, Garibaldi, Ibsen, Wagner and Neitzsche. It was also about the same time that he began a mental summing up of his masterpiece *'Jean Christophe"*. The early instalments did not catch the public eye. Till 1910 he was almost unnoticed, unhonoured, unsung. People said "it was a tragic period for Rolland. Living in obscurity, at odds with his age, the work of many years unnoticed his marriage on the rocks, he still had faith in his ultimate success. By 1912 this was all changed and by 1914 shortly before the outbreak of the first world war he was world famous and by 1915 he received Nobel Prize for the neglected *Jean Christophe* itself, the prize money for which he donated to charity".

The story of *Jean Christophe* is the story of a musical genius the very name Jean indicating, like John, a commonplace name. 'Christophe' means the bringer of light. The book is a tragedy but it is the tragedy of a noble life who wanted to know life and love it. It had a moral grandeur, and ethical flavour, and an universal appeal.

I refer to this because behind Rolland, the philosopher lies a creative artist of the first order 'to whom a long meditative life was a great adventure'. When we catch the main theme we can best understand and appreciate how and why did he react to the impact of India and her great sons. It is the same evolutionary process of systhesis, of an enchanted soul, that leads him from Tolstoy to Gandhi, from Beethoven to Vivekananda, from Christopher to Clerambault and Annettee, because they all live and die for all men. Aronson tells us that some of Rolland's earliest references to India occur in *Jean Christophe* especially in the second part. That is not surprising. Christophe by treatment and cultural heritage, was a European through and through. As a musician he represents the whole of the musical traditions of the West. We can assume that, had he been acquainted with Eastern, and especially Indian music, he would have found it as intolerable as those exotic and un-European musical experiments of contemporary Paris.

"The West is burning away", says Oliver, "Soon .....Very soon..... I see other stars arising in the furthest depths of the East". And Christophe exclaims "Bother the East ! The West has not said its last word yet. Do you think I am going to abdicate ? I have enough to say to keep you going for centuries." But Oliver is not content with vague feelings of impending doom. "He studies Eastern philosophies and religion. They open his eyes to the futility of all action not rooted in detachment and divine indifference to earthly gains. Indeed Oliver seems, in some respect, to reach certain conclusions about the ultimate significance of all action, not dissimilar from the conclusions reached in recent times by Aldous Huxley".

Even before he became acquainted with Rabindranath Tagore's famous lecture in Japan, in 1916, (The Message of India to Japan), Rolland looked in Asia for new elements of thought which might revitalize Europe. He himself (with the help of his sister, a fellow traveller, as he calls her, in the pilgrimage of soul) translated extracts from Tagore's lecture and published them in form of an appendix to one of his anti war pamphlets. We learn from Aronson that Tagore himself was quite unaware at that time of the interest Rolland took in him. Only in 1919 Rolland wrote his first letter to Tagore, enclosing the "Declaration of the Independence of the Mind' which he requested Tagore to sign. It was the beginning of a friendship which lasted till Tagore's death in 1941. But there is no doubt that Tagore's lectures in Japan further stimulated Rolland's interest in Eastern thought.

"Out of this battle of the nations two colossal powers will emerge one facing the other : America and Asia.....Europe will be engulfed by either of them.....I am not prophet and nobody can say which of the two currents will engulf Europe. But I believe that the devaluation of humanity, the hope of its future unity, resides in the latter."* (p. 155).

*(Open letter to the Italian newspaper 'Avanti,' publ. October 1918 quoted by Aronson).

Very shortly after, the publisher Ganesan of Madras, sent Rolland the proofs of a collection of English articles by Gandhiji in Young India, and requested him to write an introduction for them. Rolland's letter of refusal to Ganesan throws an interesting light on his divided mind at that time. Much later he tried to justify this refusal in the following words : "Not finding myself sufficiently

in agreement with the political thought of Gandhi, I refused, on the 20th August, 1922. As I wrote to Ganesan, I saw in Gandhi (what he really was, at that time) an 'idealist-nationalist'—'the highest and purest type, almost unique to-day, of spiritual nationalism". But I meant to maintain, as against him, my position as an internationalist. I added that it was not my habit to pass a hasty justment on such a massive system of thought and action. I

would wait until I had studied it maturely and in absolutely freedom"* (I will not rest, p. 68-9).

".....and Gandhi who had just then been released from prison, writes to him (Romain Rolland), from Andheri, on March 22, 1924 as follows : "I thank you for your kind letter. What does it matter if you have, here and there, made a few mistakes in your essay ? To me the wonder is that you have made so few and that you have succeeded, though living in a distant and different atmosphere, in interpreting my ideas so correctly. It shows once again the essential unity of human nature although it may be flowering under different skies.....".

The reply he (Mahatma Gandhi) wrote to the editor of Romain Rolland's birthday book in 1926 is in that respect, most illuminating. He indeed hesitated for a long time before reply at all. "My difficulty," he confesses, "was my unfitness to find myself among those men of letters whose contributions you have invited. This is no modesty, but my inmost feeling." But the other reason why he hesitated, has probably astonished many a reader. "I am unfit also," Gandhi continues, "because I confess I know practically nothing about our good friend before he imposed upon himself the task of becoming my self-chosen advertiser. And you will be perhaps amazed to know that now too, my acquaintance with him is confined to a very cursory glance at that booklet regarding myself. The work before me leaves me no time to read the things I would like to. I have therefore even now not been able to read any of his great works." (P. 159-160).

Ramakrishna Paramahansa.

*Romain Rolland Birthday book, published by Rotapfel-Verlag, Zurich, 1926, p. 155.

It is one of the miracles of human history that one century should have produced two giants of faith and action in one and the same country, two men who were friends although they, according to Rolland, represent two opposing poles of humanity. For while Mahatma Gandhi was the universal stream of faith incarnate, Rolland discovered in Tagore the free soul, the individual conscience. These two personalities were like the thesis and anti-thesis of life both contradicting and supplementing each other. The fact that, in his book on Mahatma Gandhi, Rolland takes sides and chooses the "free soul" as opposed to the stream of faith, was the result of his sufferings during the war years, his conviction that the faith of the masses was blind and unconscious and could easily be led to destruction and even self-annihilation. And when Tagore in 1921 "felt suffocated by the blind belief and obedience of the followers of the faith of the Master", Rolland saw in Tagore's doubts and fears the individual conscience at work : "We know this anguish and this protest. They belong to all times."

Rolland hailed Tagore as one of the beacon-lights of a new changing world. In subsequent years when Tagore came into contact with Mussolini and others, the free individualist as Rolland was, he had to correct many of Tagore's impressions about the fascist countries. In an unpublished letter of Rolland to Rabindranath dated 11.11.26 from Villenewe which Aronson quotes, and in which this incident is referred to, Rolland's words are worth repeating.....'I had no interest in my mind but your glory, which I value more than your rest. I did not want devils misusing your sacred name in the annals of history. Forgive me if my intervention has caused you some restless hours. The future will show that I have acted as your faithful and vigilant guide. Critics claim that even Rolland became indifferent to Tagore in later years. His diary speaks little of him though the two letters of 1937 and 1940 are revealing.

Fruitful and important as Rolland's contact with Tagore and Gandhi was, it was at least contact with mind which has received the western impact on the substructure of Indian thought. A bigger contact with an undiluted universal mind resplendent in its basic purity and pristine glory was yet to come. It was contact with pure gold and not merely carat or even guinea gold. In Ramkrishna, Rolland met not merely the brain of a Sankara with the expansiveness of heart of a Chaitanya but the preacher of a new Gospel of Truth and Love against the background of a Universal Mind which could intuitively grasp the essential unity of any approach to Divinity and all religious systems. But in making his own estimate of Sri Ramkishna, Rolland never abdicated his free judgment. Though Sri Ramkrishna was very near to his heart he saw him as a man and not an incarnation. I quote his own words —"In accordance with the Vedantists I do not need to enclose God wihin the bounds of a privileged man in order to admit that the Divine dwells within the soul and that the soul dwells in everything, that Atman is Brahman for that although it knows it not, it is a form of nationalism of spirit and I cannot accept it. I see God in all that exists. I see him as completely in the least fragment as in the whole cosmos. There is no difference of essence—And neither more nor less than I isolate Christ or Buddha, do I isolate Ramakrishna and Vivekananda from the great army of the spirit marching on in their own time.....

Rolland's acceptance of Sri Ramkrishna was not on a plane we are accustomed to in India and he did not want to surrender or abdicate his judgment which is the first *sine qua non* of an Indian Bhakta. He wanted to test every conclusion of his in the light of a so-called empirical rationalism. This spirit of scientific enquiry was again manifest when he wrote his treatise on Vivekananda particularly with reference to the elucidation of the Universal Gospel and the great paths—Raja Yoga particularly.

Naturally a question arises at this stage what was the total effect of impact of Indian thought on Rolland. It is necessary to define a little closely what we mean by Indian thought. Is it the aphorism of the Vedas, Vedantic monism or the teachings of the Upanishads or the folklore or the epic of the reinterpretation of these values in the light of a western summation. Is it Indian thought as it emerges out of a conflict with western ideas and ideals? If that be the criterion, the solitary exception is that of Sri Ramakrishna who was a colossus by

himself? But how did Rolland react? He was a great humanist, a man of faith and a man who appreciated beauty, ,beauty in nature, beauty in man, beauty in good things, good deeds, a defender of the individual faith with a pathetic belief in individual fulfilment. There was another string attached to it. He no doubt went into raptures over Ramkrishna and Vivekananda, over Tagore and Gandhi but subconsciously it was a transfer of the ego and the homage. He was trying to find Europe and its justification as he conceived it, in India, in Indian sayings and in Indian sages and saints. To give an example when he talks of Kali, the Mother, it is not the Mother who had inspired Sri Ramkrishna or Vivekananda as in Kali's dance or who had even inspired Bankim in Bande Mataram or Aurobindo in every image made divine or in the conception of Bhabani Mandir, but as Rabindranath accepts this concept in a symbolic sense more as an artist than a devotee. This mother concept has always been a potent source of inspiration to many in India. How did Rolland react to this supreme concept which was, so to say, different from Virgin Mary concept, mother of Jesus of immaculate conception. Immediately the image of St. Theresa rose to him. For Rolland it was a journey within to rediscover his Europe. In spite of his being universal he was first and foremost an European. He was meeting a Christ in Ramakrishna, a St. Paul in Vivekananda, his own image in Rabindranath, a St. Francis of Assisi in Gandhi.

Rolland the Man stands revealed in his book *Journey Within*. The title itself is significant. His publishers — The Philosophical Library of New York—say that this autobiography can be compared with the confessions of Rousseau, Augustine and Goethe. Romain Rolland himself states 'I wrote without knowing where the impulse would lead me or when it would stop. Life came back, troubling awakened dreamer, rather than desecrate the dream that he was telling to himself, he interrupted it in its course and passed the pen to the man of reason, to the historian. It has been rightly claimed that this is not a mere book, it is the spiritual will and testament of one of the great humanists of our time who believed in the humanity of the divinity and the divinity of humanity. And in this estimate he was a close associate of Rabindranath in spiritual kinship. The book is dedicated not to a man or to a society but to his old walnut tree at Villenuve, companion of his dreams. This very dedication shows his affinity with Nature beyond. The three revelations referred to confirm this. He is in search of the Archer. Life's bow is there. Beyond, is the cosmic harmony which is a Sadhak's privilege to confirm and establish but which a Wordsworth, a Rolland, a Rabindranath an Aldous Huxley or an Isherwood might have. I name them because they are not the declared mystics or saints. As an intensely pathetic human document I quote one of six hundred letters which passed between Rolland and an old German lady with whom he struck in his youthful days a romantic friendship Baroness Malvida. Each week every Sunday from January, 3|1890 to 27th February, 1903 they corresponded with each other: "Did you ever doubt my strength. I have been strong all my life and I hope that I shall be so until the end. I wish I could tell you all that goes in my heart in the silent hours of the night when I am alone in my bed face to face with the inevitable hour that is approaching. I have not the consolation of the believer who looks forward to Heaven but I shall say like Jesus 'It is finished'. My heart is overflowing with its long life of joys and sorrows, its mistakes and sublime, aspiration and infinite gratitude towards the sun, the flowers, the great music, the great thinkers, who have lighted my way, the friends who have loved me. If I am immortal it will be to go higher, if not my rest will be sweet, Good bye." And Rolland adds "On June 7th 1902, the day I said farewell to her and after I had embraced her for the last time I recited the old Troubadors ballad to her—I am not leaving you. In Paris or in Rome I shall be near you. Wherever you are, ,wherever I may be, you will always be with me—a part of me, the best part. And so she has remained with me all my life. At this very moment when I write (almost 40 years after her death) she is seated at the foot of my bed and following me with my eyes—Amore Pace. Love and Peace.

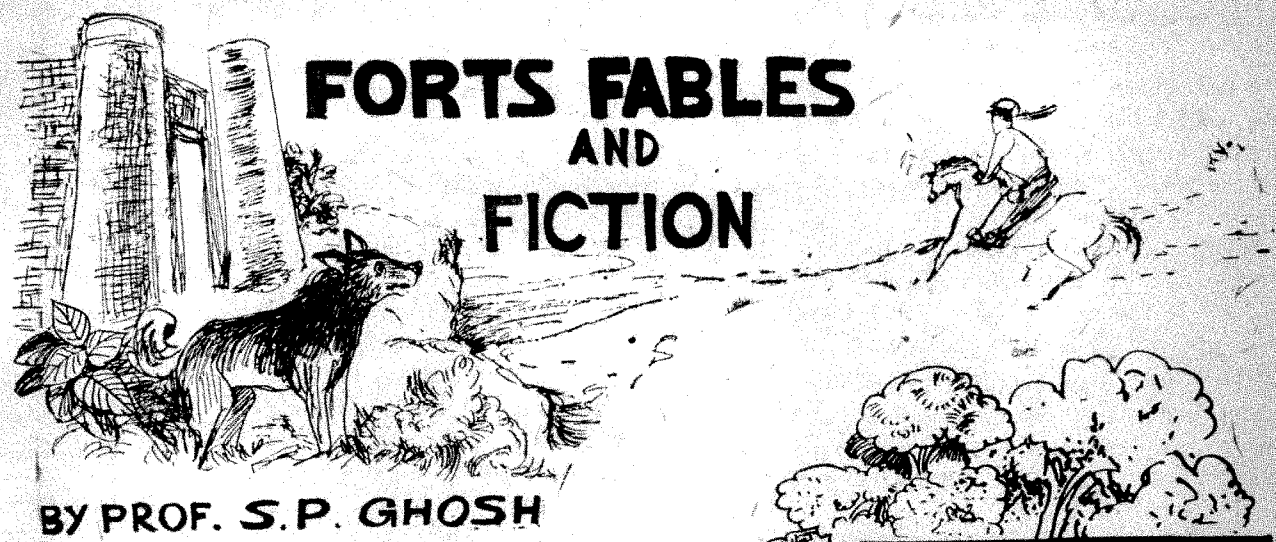
BANKIM CHANDRA

(Continued from page 108)

the wicked by the power of His wisdom united India, by the power of His knowledge proclaimed a unique self-less religion, Him, I salute. He, who being full of love and self-less, performed all those acts which mankind finds difficult ; who, though by the strength of His arm he won an empire for another refused to mount the throne Himself ..... Who in the land whose strength was the *Vedas*, at a time when the *Vedas* were strong, said, Dharma is not in the *Vedas*—Dharma is what conduces to the well-being of man," whether He be God or man, I salute Him. He, who contains within Himself alone Buddha, Christ, Mahommedan and Ramchandra; who is the source of all strength, of all virtue of all religious truth, of all love, whether He be God or not, I salute Him." (13)

Bhudev Chandra Mukhopadhya, like Bankim Chandra, was a defender of neo-Hinduism. Among the champions of the movement of neo-Hinduism Bhudev occupied a position much closer to Bankim in his ideas about religion in general and Hinduism in particular. But the Hinduism which Bankim taught embraced the whole of man's life. It was a synthesis of enjoyment and renunciation, a principle of action without the expectation of rewards. It provided the moral foundations upon which Hindu society was to be built. It is true that in his all absorbing interest in Hinduism, Bankim possibly tended to lose sight of the multiple nature of the Indian society and what concerned him directly were the problems which pestered his own society. But in his plea for a social and moral regeneration there are elements which are universally applicable and true for any society. Bankim was not without company in his belief that political advancement of the people was not possible without moral and religious regeneration of the society. Gandhi shared such views. While Gandhi's ideas drew wide support, it is a pity that Bankim's ideas are often misunderstood and little known beyond Bengal.

(13) **Dharmatattva**, op. cit., pp. 20-1



FORTS FABLES AND FICTION

BY PROF. S.P. GHOSH

IF ever a map of India is prepared showing the locations of forts and fortresses, it will be studded with numberless indications of many forts large and small ancient and modern. Naturally, even the modern ones may be over a century old, for, nobody after a certain time in history thought forts to be of any use for defence or protection.

Almost every fort was built as a Raven for its inmates, and dwellings are said to have grown up around it, so that those living outside could shelter inside in times of need or when threatened by marauding hostile hordes. But this is not what is intended to be discussed in these paras. What is intended is this; almost every fort, old or new, has attached to it some sort of a story—sometimes more than one—which it seems to have acquired at some stage of its existence. Many are such incidents, either written or passed from generation to generation by word of mouth. These stories tell a variety of tales—tales of intrigue of human bondage and suffering, of dire consequences of autocratic idiosyncracies, of tearful sentimental incidents (like the partly historic narrative of Anarkali) and sometimes of incidents which defy the comprehension of logical analytic mind of the modern man. These last-mentioned are usually termed supernatural incidents, perhaps because man's materialistic brain today fails to find natural reasons for the phenomena described by them.

Somewhere in Central India, now Madhya Pradesh, is a small old fortress standing on a lone hill, not more than 300 ft high. It is not marked on any map and is now almost in ruins. It is so broken down and in such a crumbling state that a visitor has no hesitation in predicting that its days are numbered. It is one of the innumerable forts of India, unknown, unheard of and uncared for, merely because they failed to find a place in history, or because no cities grew up near or around them. That of course would not mean that limitless toil, hopes and efforts were not heaped on it when it was first built up. Thereafter care and attention waned and waned, till date, when its very existence is known only to such persons as live in the

icinity or visit its ruins for some reason or other, aybe sometimes from sheer idle curiosity. Small floor-area, it yet must have been massive and uite impregnable in its own prime, when the lasting materials of the moderns were not known.

The last owner of this fort (so the local say-g goes), had a big black Alsatian, a dog known iles around for its ferocity. True to the characte-istics of the breed, it was also a one-man dog, and as unmanageable except by its master, the umar Saheb. For some reasons, the owner in his fe-time when he had this dog, had had to leave his rtress daily in the early hours for the nearest ty about 20 miles away, on horseback. He return-d from the city at dusk everyday, invariably just fter sunset, and every evening Sambhar (that was ow the dog was named due to its abnormally big ze) would stand at the only entrance to the fort, aiting till its master got off his horse. It would en slouch along after him to his rooms. Sambhar as as docile to every member of the Kumar aheb's family as he was a terror to everybody else.

Quite a few decades ago, the last owners of is fortress, the Kumar Saheb and his family ulled out and went over 400 miles away to settle Bombay. They left on bullock carts in the early ours one winter morning. Sambhar was nowhere be found in the fort. Departure could not be de-yed and the family had to leave with many ments and instructions to the only caretaker left ehind, to feed and look after Sambhar till he was nt for by the owner a few days later. Before this uld be done, disaster befell the family. Kumar aheb died in the distant city of Bombay within a w days of the family's arrival there.

Those who have seen those days and still live the vicinity of the fortress, narrate a very sad le and tell how, for over 10 years till his death, ambhar, wherever he was, came every evening nd sat at the fort's entrance awaiting his master's turn. No sunset ever cast its fading light on the rt, which did not find the watchful sentinel Sam-har sitting all tensed up at the entrance, ears icked up gazing intently with expectant eyes ra'ght along the approach-road for a master who ever came, who would never come again.

Then one evening it is said, after about ten ears of this daily patient vigil by Sambhar, just fter sunset, the peaceful silence of the dusk was attered by a long long piercing wail almost like a espairing human cry, emanating from the gate here the dog sat keeping his sunset watch. The y had an eerie note about it. Everybody in the illage at the foot of the hill heard it in silence, but body went to inquire, not even the caretaker, ho also lived in the village. In those areas men's inds are still not free from superstitions. In the morning they found the lifeless form of Sambhar prostrated at the gate of the fort at the very spot where he used to sit and await his master's return every evening. Of the local hearsay about this particular fortress, this is the end.

There is a small epilogue though.

It is a matter of regret to me that I could not stay in the village or near the fort that night; I left early in the afternoon, and so to this day I have not been able to verify the truth of a small daily occurrence that the local inhabitants told me about. And they were very emphatic about it too, that every evening to this day, as the deep dark tropical shadows creep up after sunset, in the darker spot at the gate of the fort's entrance, now almost fully covered with wild creepers, can be seen very clearly discernible, a huge dark form sitting very still. And, as the lights in the village down below start twinkling in the inky darkness, a helpless despairing inhuman and yet almost human cry floats down to the residents from that shadow. Thereafter all is still.

* * * * *

There is another small fortress which I visited, somewhere in South Rajasthan, just outside the boundary of what at one time was known as the Sirohi State of Rajputana. Like most fortresses, this is also sited on a small hill and is known in the vicinity as Jairaj-ki-Garhee. Its turrets overlook a panoramic view of a fairly thick jungle growth alround, interspersed with dried up and semidry water-channels. It was not so much a fort as a hunting-box, a shikargah of some Maharaja. For some generations a Brahmin family was the caretaker of this shikargah. If we go back about 200 years in history from today, we find that at that time this family had already been in charge for three generations. The head of the family at that time was one Roshan Lall Sharma, a widower. He had built himself a few stone houses in the lowland adjoining the fortress and was fairly established there with his five sons, their wives, and several grandchildren. Of his daughters-in-law the locals say, everyone was a beauty, and the youngest one with a queenly mien was the most beautiful of all. The village as it stands did not then exist. The life of the isolated family with the nearest town 50 miles away was one of tedius routine, spent looking after their few possessions a small herd of cattle and the cleaning of the few rooms of the Shikargah, and the furniture. This monotonous life was punctuated at rare intervals by the arrival of hunting parties which occupied the fortress for a few days at a time. These parties were usually from some ruling families and came because either

they had the owner's permission, or were related to him some way or other.

Sometime during this period Roshan Lall died, leaving behind his five sons and their families. His wife had predeceased him. And within a year after Roshan Lall's death, his youngest son also died leaving behind his childless widow, then only seventeen years old. Round the life of this unfortunate girl is centred a tragic tale. Her name was Janki. Like any other Hindu widow of her days, Janki slaved out her days in the house of her in-laws without an inkling of hope or happiness in her future. Thus she passed little over a year, after which period a prince of some State, very young and very handsome came to the Shikargah with his hunting party. Janki and the prince met for the first time under a peepul tree in the forest on the bank of a stream, about a mile from the fortress one afternoon. This tree stands huge and formidable even today. The romance and friendship of Janki and the prince progressed. The prince used to come for hunting very regularly twice every year, and thus passed a period of six or seven years. These clandestine meetings of the two were not unknown to the in-laws of the girl, but either there was nothing they could do about it, or maybe, their hands were full and tongues effectively controlled by the prince. In the course of these six or seven years some outsiders from neighbouring villages had come and settled down in the lands adjoining the fortress and a small village had sprung up where formerly only one family, that of the late caretaker Roshan Lall had lived.

By a quirk of fate, the assassins dragged the hapless girl.....

In the seventh year of this fairyland romance when the last visit of the prince was about 4 months gone, Janki's brothers-in-law came to know from their wives of the disaster facing them, threatening a complete destruction of their social position in the village and perhaps loss of all they valued. They came to know that Janki was going to be a mother.

There is no knowing what a man will do when driven by fear. The four brothers fearing loss of social position in howsoever small the society was, and apprehending perhaps also the loss of their property (for, if they became outcaste, they would have to leave the locality), after some deliberations, conspired to kill Janki. A day was fixed. The next new-moon night's darkness suited their purpose admirably and it was only 5 nights away. Somehow this resolve of the brothers became known to Janki. She knew she could not possibly escape alone, unaided and in her condition through the miles and miles of forest inhabited by beasts of prey. She looked for help amongst her neighbours. None was forthcoming. Nobody dared. However, one young boy Jairaj Singh about 18 years old, offered to go to Janki's prince for help. It is said that unknown to anybody else, this boy ran all the way with her message. The prince rushed with his men making straight for the Shikargah and arrived too late,—the evening after the fateful new-moon night.

On that new-moon night, Janki was killed by her four brothers-in-law. Details are very vividly narrated even now by the locals. On that night Janki was ordered by the eldest of her late husband's brothers to accompany them into the jungle. She refused, but was physically dragged screaming, weeping and entreating for mercy into the deep tangled forest by the four brothers, accompanied by their servants, one of whom carried a flaming torch. Not one of the villagers raised a finger or uttered a word in protest. The four brothers were their landlords and were notoriously unscrupulous.

By a quirk of fate, the assassins dragged the hapless crying girl on, and ultimately brought her to be killed under same tree, at the same spot where her first meeting with the prince had taken place seven years ago. But they did not know this. All the way she had struggled, cried and prayed to the brothers for her life; she had cajoled them, cursed them, even promised them her prince's bounties, if only they would spare her life and leave her in the jungle. It availed her nothing. They forced her and dragged her to very near the peepul tree. She looked up at the tree, whispered

some words as if stairing at a void, and suddenly ceased struggling. Very calmly she requested that after her death her body be left fully dressed in a reclining position against the tree. It is likely that she was thinking of herself in the same posture waiting for her prince as she used to do. She seemed completely resigned to her fate. The assassins readily agreed to this. Made no difference to them, and they expected that left under the tree, very little could be left of it by dawn. The forest was full of carnivora.

The eldest brother then unsheathed his knife to put an end to the girl. She was still very calm and appeared to be totally unafraid. She stopped the eldest brother for a moment and seems to have made a last effort by telling him to think well, and that if she died by their hands, none else in their whole family would live much longer. This had no effect; the large knife gleaming in the flickering light of the torch came straight and pierced her throat. She fell. Several further stabs from the knives of the other brothers followed, raining on the prostrated body of the fatally wounded girl. Not a sound was heard.

They set the profusely bleeding body of Janki reclining against the trunk of the Peepul tree as she had desired, and set off towards the fort in a compact group. They knew that the smell of blood would attract the denizens of the jungle to the girl's body in no time. On their way home they decided that when next the prince came looking for Janki, they would tell him that she had been eaten by a tiger, as she undoubtedly would be. They had no knowledge that the prince had already been informed and was on his way to them.

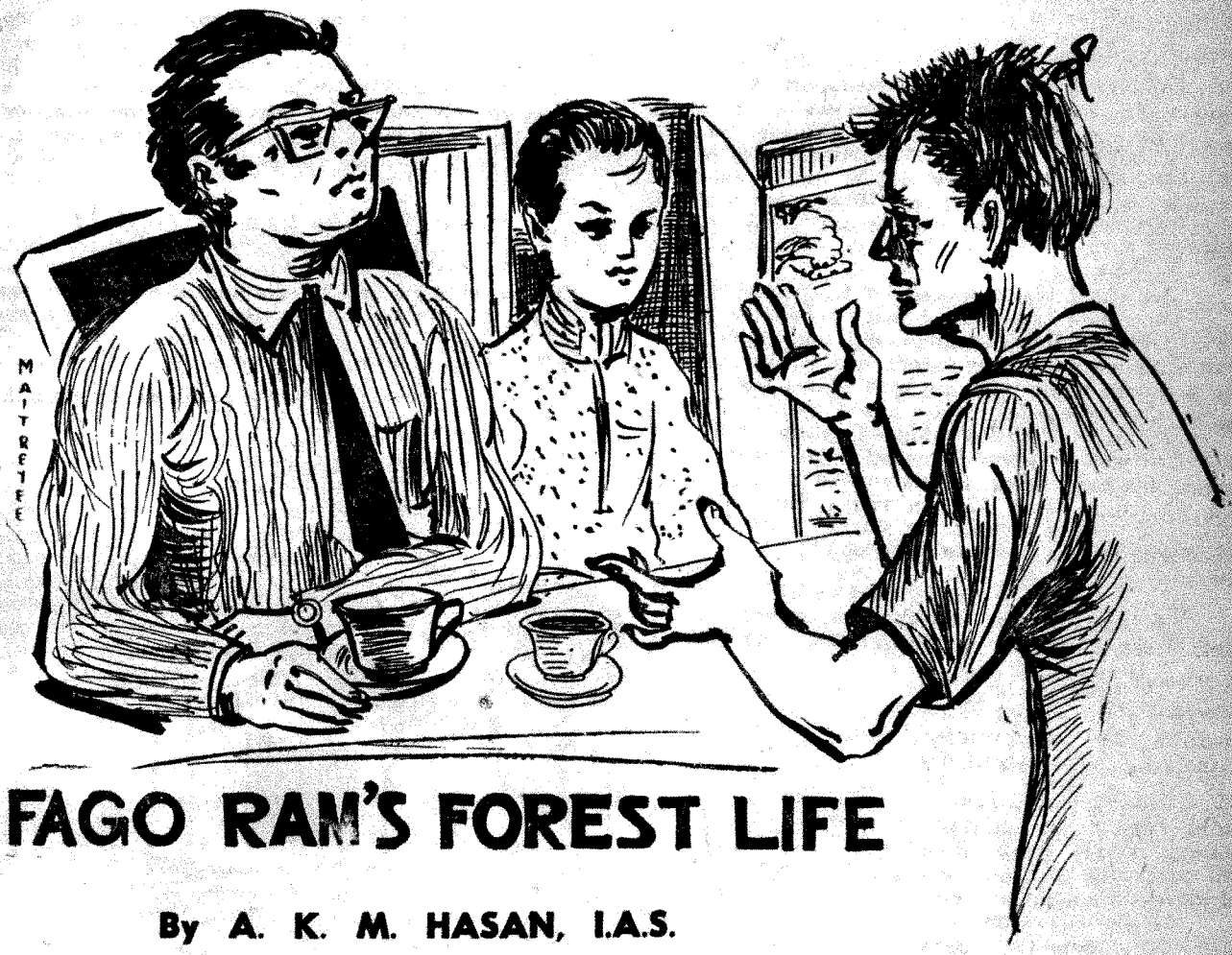
All this happened in the dead of a dark new-moon night. The prince arrived with his men the next evening, rushing for the fortress, leading his men on a big black charger. While the evening was not very dark, he approached the tree of his trysts and saw Janki's body, sitting reclined against its trunk. She seemed to him to be asleep, as if, after a long wait for him. No savage beast had touched her body. The prince dismounted, and very gently lifted her on to his own horse, letting the body rest reclined against his own, with infinite care. His horsemen had not dismounted in absence of his order. They sat their mounts, surrounding their leader. All was deathly still. No words were spoken. Not a leaf stirred, not a horse neighed or stamped. With red-rimmed, burning, bloodshot eyes the prince looked at his followers. They understood. He turned his horse's head, and the band galloped off in his wake like fury towards the Shikargah.

There is not much more to tell. The upright skeletons of the four brothers-in-law of Janki can be recovered if ever the massive walls of a certain room of the fort Jairaj-ki-Garhee are pulled down. All this seems to be just a popular belief, just a tale of an ordinary tragic romance, the likes of which perhaps have happened in many other countries in many ages. But the touch of the supernatural in the present story lies in the fact that the dynasty is now really extinct and has been extinct for quite sometime. The locals say that the last member of the family of Roshan Lall died within 20 years of the death of the unfortunate widow Janki. Her curse seems to have been very effective indeed, for not a man woman or child remained alive within less than a quarter-century. That is the end of the story of the popular sayings about this fort prevalent in the locality.

Only one small point remains, and I may as well record it too. According to all the local residents, every death in the family of Roshan Lal Sharma occurred on one or other new-moon night.

(All names are fictitious)

"The prince dismounted, and very gently lifted her body."



FAGO RAM'S FOREST LIFE

By A. K. M. HASAN, I.A.S.

FAGO RAM'S calendar is based on the system in Japan where a calendar begins and ends with the reign of a Mikado. Fago Ram dates an important event in his life by relating it to the assumption of office by his Divisional Forest Officer. He is chaukidar of the Forest rest house at Meghatari just above the village of Dibaur on the border of Gaya and Hazaribagh districts in the Kodarma Range. The rest house nestles inconspicuously on a small flat piece of land carved out just off National Highway 31 as it climbs a steep slope in the Dibaur Ghat. Motorists climbing this Ghat miss it because of their worry with the gear and fear of confrontation with a particular species of truck drivers in that critical stretch of the road. Others driving downhill flash past it with no time to slow up and stare.

The rest house provides a convenient halfway halt for touring officers who have the freedom of the State and shuttle between Patna and Ranchi on business of State. But few are aware of its existence and fewer are interested in a halt at a desolate forest bungalow with no hope of a small darbar in the evening.

On a trip from Ranchi to Patna, I decided to avail myself of the hospitality of this bungalow for a short break and breakfast. Reservation was no problem for me as I belong to the Department of which Forest forms a section. When I entered the rest house compound, there was no sign of the chaukidar. His residential quarters wore a deserted look. Shouts of my orderly peon in all directions and hooting of my car failed to elicit any response. Knowing the ways of chaukidars from 7 years' experience in touring, I asked my orderly to go down the hill to the small bustee below within shouting distance on the bank of a rivulet, wells on whose sandy bed are the only source of water in the area where a few mica mines are also worked. He had hardly reached the huts by a jungle path when I noticed a lean figure in dhoti and khakhi coat, which had not seen the dhobi lately, climbing towards the bungalow along the National Highway from the tiny market place of Dibaur. He was scanning me steadily as he walked the slope with a stoop. I went to the edge of the flat and called back my orderly. He reached back the bungalow before the chaukidar whom he greeted near the outer gate. They parleyed for a short 30 seconds after which the chaukidar quickened his pace and opened one of the two rooms, obviously satisfied about my rank and status for the hospitality.

When the chaukidar had brought from the market place a pot of heavily sugared tea on which floated specks of buffalo cream, I settled down with

my son to breakfast on the eastern end of the verandah of the north-facing bungalow. It was early January. The sun had just cleared the neem near the garage, bamboo clumps, sesams and other assorted trees standing below and outside the fence. As he placed the tea cups on the teapoy, I could not resist asking him why he did not live in his quarters south-east of the bungalow which appeared to be deserted. He drew a deep breath and let it off with a quiver of his walrus moustache, but said nothing. The old man, who looked well over sixty but whose age is covered by the Official Secrets Act, was suffering a spasm of emotions released by memories. He looked at me and at the garage and his deserted quarters in turn. When he calmed down sufficiently, I ventured to ask him again, "Why?"

"Because I was menaced by tigers and came away from their jaws four times," he finally broke his silence. At this statement, my son, who had been with me on shikar barely two weeks earlier and had seen while plucking wild plums fresh pugmarks of a male tiger, whose size I estimated from his spoors to be 9' to 9'6" stopped eating. For his benefit as well as mine, I goaded Fago Ram to narrate his experience. He demanded an assurance that we would take him seriously. But without waiting for our assurance, he started narrating his experience with a "believe it or not."

In the year after Shri so and so had joined as D.F.O. at Kodarma, he had the narrowest of escapes. I set the period in late thirtees. The present National Highway 31 was a cart road from Rajauli to Kodarma. Cars were rare on the road. The only visitors to the rest house which did not have a fence at the time were the Range Officer, Circle Officer and occasionally the D.F.O. Fago Ram was living in his quarters within the bungalow premises with his wife, two sons and a daughter, aged approximately 10, 8 and 6 respectively. (He only indicated their height by a show of hand. The age has been computed by me relying on my experience in the 1961 Census).

It was a summer afternoon. He had gone to the Beat Officer's house as usual in the morning and was returning for the midday meals. He could hear the excited voice of his children. His sons hailed him from the courtyard of the bungalow and invited him to see a new "ghora" which was sitting by the side of the stable which is the present day garage. They were greatly excited because it had beautiful stripes. Fago Ram asked them where their mother was. He was told she had gone to the well to fetch water. He then inquired of their sister and was informed that she was watching the striped "ghora". She had heard her father and excitedly called him to see the "ghora" which was sitting on his haunches under the neem.

Fago Ram hurried and joined her. He was within 10 feet of a huge tiger the like of whom he had not seen before or after. "Saab, mera heart fail ho geya", he explained. He quietly gathered his children under his arms and moved them slowly towards their hut. Once on the verandah, he shoved them into the bedroom, collected a garasa (a long handle axe with a blade like the half-moon) and chained the door from outside. He then confronted the tiger and meaning no harm ordered the trespasser out of the compound in the following words:

"Tum Jangle ka Raja ho; Jangle me chale jao. Ghumo, maro, khao, piyo. Ye Sarkari bangla hai. Hum Chaukidar hain—dipti (duty) par hain. Yenha se chale jao." Fago Ram also tried to wave him out. Obviously, the tiger did not think much of Sec. 447 I.P.C. (criminal trespass) and Sec. 353 I.P.C. (use of criminal force to deter a public ser-

(Continued on page 128)

Being young and agile, Fago by his reflex made . . .

Towards Emotional Integration

• BY VIVEK BHATTACHARYA •

IN the cultural integration of the land the role of Delhi has been unique. As a centre of various religions, literature, philosophies, dress, languages and festivals, Delhi had a rare role to play in the emotional integration of India.

The liberal Mughal rulers, who made Delhi the centre of attraction for all, certainly contributed much in this new move. Shahjehan had already patronised the happy blending of Hindu-Muslim architecture in many parts of the country. He patronised with equal zeal some of the topmost Hindu poets of Delhi, the most noted among them being Pandit Jagannath.

His equally illustrious son Dara Shuko had actually laid the foundation of emotional integration by introducing serious research work in comparative religion. Dara Shuko's commendable service to the treasure of Persian and Arabic literature is recorded by the rich translations of the Vedic literature by the prince. It is recorded in history how the prince got the services of more than a hundred scholars from Baranasi requisitioned for the translation of the entire Upanishadic literature in six months' time. Equally important were the services of Begum Jahanara, Shahjehan's eldest daughter. Her philanthropic activities are universally acclaimed in Delhi and in these works she could see like her brother, Dara Shuko, beyond the boundaries of narrow sectarian outlook. There are instances when the Princess rendered financial assistance to the Hindu monks. She even built temples for the Hindus.

This personal gestures apart, the Mughal rulers participated actively in the religious ceremonies and festivals of the Hindu wives and members of the royal court. There are instances recorded in history of the celebration of Diwali inside the royal palace of the Mughals. Dushera festival at the Ramlila ground is equally enjoyed by a Hindu, Muslim, Sikh or a Christian.

With the transfer of the capital to Delhi, the modern city has been commanding significant importance. The Christians started holding regular annual fairs at Qudsia gardens on the bank of the river Yamuna. Christmas is celebrated in Delhi with equal enthusiasm and zeal by all and sundry. It is one of the biggest festivals of Delhi. Similarly, Buddha Purnima is observed not necessarily by the Buddhists in Delhi alone. The Id festival has been a national festival of Delhi for centuries. Delhi has attracted not only the Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists and Jains. There are quite a large number of worshippers of the holy Zorastrian with their headquarters near the Delhi Gate. Besides the Parsees, Delhi has welcomed quite a number of Jews too. Perhaps it will not be too wrong to say, that there is hardly any religion in the world which is not represented in Delhi. They have all been living here for centuries, in peace and prosperity sharing the joy and suffering of the metropolitan city. A Delhiwala is lucky to participate in fairs and festivals organised by his fellow citizens. For decades the Delhiwalla is attending on the river Yamuna a fair known popularly as *Majnuka Tilla*. Although organised by the Sikhs, all are welcomed there.

The Flower Festival at Mehrauli near Delhi has been attracting a huge crowd since the days of Bahadur Shah Zafar. The festival is popularly known as *Phool-Walon-Ki-Sair*. The place of festival — Mehrauli, a small village near Delhi, was once a city of great importance. It is recorded in history that this little neighbouring village of the twentieth century "was the Capital of the Indian empire for two centuries and during that time it was one of the largest cities in the world".

"Camels and mules brought merchandise, soldiers on horseback pushed through the crowd, noblemen on elephants and their ladies in palanquins went by in stately procession. Their servants cleared the way with loud cries. Great was the shouting, the bustle, the excitement and the confusion."

This tiny city attracted people from long distances even two centuries ago. The '*Sair*' was a royal sponsored festival. Delhi citiznes — Hindus and Muslims waited most eagerly for it throughout the year. "The 'Sair' was once a royal festival but the citizens of Delhi and neighbouring villages, irrespective of their caste or creed, participated. It was an occasion when dancers, singers, poets, puppeteers and folk artistes made their contributions to the success of the festival."

The festival brought the Hindus and Muslims nearer. It "begins with prayers and offerings in a mosque, as also in the Jog Maya temple." The great message of the festival has been communal harmony and universal brotherhood of men.

According to recorded history Akbar Shah II (1809-1837) did not like the heir apparent Sirajuddin, the eldest prince. So he wanted Mirza Jahangir, another son to be accepted as the heir apparent. The British Resident did not accept this proposal. This infuriated the young prince Mirza Jahangir who made an attempt on the life of Mr. Seton, the British resident. The prince had his punishment. He was imprisoned and sent to Allahabad. The heart-broken mother, queen Mumtaz Mahal, took a pledge that "if her son was released she would present a "cheddar" (sheet) and a 'masehri' (a bed curtain) of flowers on the tomb of Khwaja Bakhtiar Kaki, a few hundred yards from the Kutub Minar."

After some time the prince was released and the queen fulfilled her pledge. The queen celebrated in a befitting way. All the citizens were invited to

participate in it irrespective of their castes and creeds.

Phool-Walon-Ki-Sair is held just before Delhi greets the smiling autumn.

The Jog Maya's temple, built by Yudhisthira of Pandava dynasty is also covered by the procession. Indeed the Festival of Flowers was a unique example of Hindu Muslim cultural amity in Delhi. The festival was observed for some decades and it became part of Delhi's cultural life. Then, along with many other ideal celebrations it was stopped. The late Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru revived it two years before his death. And ever since it has become part of cultural celebrations of Delhi. Not only that, the biggest road of Delhi linking Delhi with Mathura has been named after the great Mughal poet ruler Bahadur Shah Zafar who lamented in prison,

"Phool Ka Takhta Hindi bana
that Kesar Ki Si Kyari
Kaise phoote bhag hamare
lut gayi bagh bahari
Golan Ke gulal banae
topan ki Pichkari
Aai rohi sagri mukh
par aisi taktak mari".

Together with festivals and religions, quite a number of languages too flourished in Delhi. Although the official language here was Urdu for a long time, Punjabi, Hindi and English too flourished. Of late, and happily, Delhi had never to face any problem of linguistic wrangle whatsoever.

One of the main ties that have bound all Delhiwallas nearer is perhaps the economic interdependence to each other. Long before the authorities introduced the new schemes of emotional integration, Delhi had set up an ideal example of peaceful coexistence politically, philosophically and literally.

With the advent of British rule, when Delhi became the headquarters of New India, for the first time, the rich literary heritage of South India came in touch with that of the North. Today they have certainly come closer and that day is not far off when an average Indian will be able to know about the rich literary heritage of all the languages of which India can justifiably claim to be proud of.

After independence, Delhi has attracted litterateurs from different corners of India. Some of them came here as Members of Parliament, some as recipient of different prizes but what is more important is the starting of a number of literary organisations which have given an opportunity to the people of Delhi to come in closer touch with the rich literary heritage of different States of India. Today, anybody can go and join a cultural evening to listen to songs composed by the famous poets of South India — Thyagaraja, Subramaniam Bharati or Vallathol. The saintly poets from South India have certainly contributed a lot to the cultural heritage of India. Their spiritual songs have not only elevated the thoughts of the musicians and the listeners of the South but they have left a deep impression in the history of music literature, and above all the cultural tastes of the *elite* in the whole country.

Thyagaraja occupies the same place as Ramprasad in Bengal or Mira Bai or Kabir or Surdas in North India. He was born in Tanjore in South India. Tanjore is famous for its happy blending of the Tamil culture with that of Telugu. Thyagaraja was born in a Telugu family. In future years he was fascinated by the saint Narad. He accepted 'him as the ideal of his life. With this ideal Thyagaraja sang to the glory of Ramachandra throughout his life. In this respect he occupies the same place as Kabir does in North India and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in the East. It is yet not known exactly how many songs he had composed in his life time. But it is a fact that in every hamlet in the South Thyagaraja is a very popular name. Thanks to the integration of the State and the intercourse of culture among the different corners of India, of late, Thyagaraja has become very popular in Delhi also.

Vallathol's literary career is indeed very fascinating. Before he was thirty, Vallathol popularised Valmiki's Ramayana, throughout Kerala in Malayalam. He occupies the same place in Kerala as Krittibas does in Bengal. The life which started with a promise as the modern Valmiki of Kerala was accorded the highest honour by the whole of India before his death. His love for the country is the main theme throughout and in his rigorous songs in bold tunes he has given a clarion call to the people from the Himalayas to the Cape Comorin. Like Rabindranath Tagore he did not have any English education. He was born in the year 1879 when Tagore was just composing the Vaishnava Padavalis.

To Subramaniam Bharati the queen of adoration was Mother India. Like Swami Vivekananda he lived just for 39 years, and like Vivekananda he had great affectionate regard for Sister Nivedita. Nivedita was a disciple of Vivekananda and she was the guru of Subramaniam Bharati. When there was a great call from the Indian National Congress in its Calcutta session, Subramaniam Bharati came as a journalist to cover that session. But, he was so much fascinated by the speeches of the national leaders that he preferred to arouse the slumbering

SHAHJAHAN

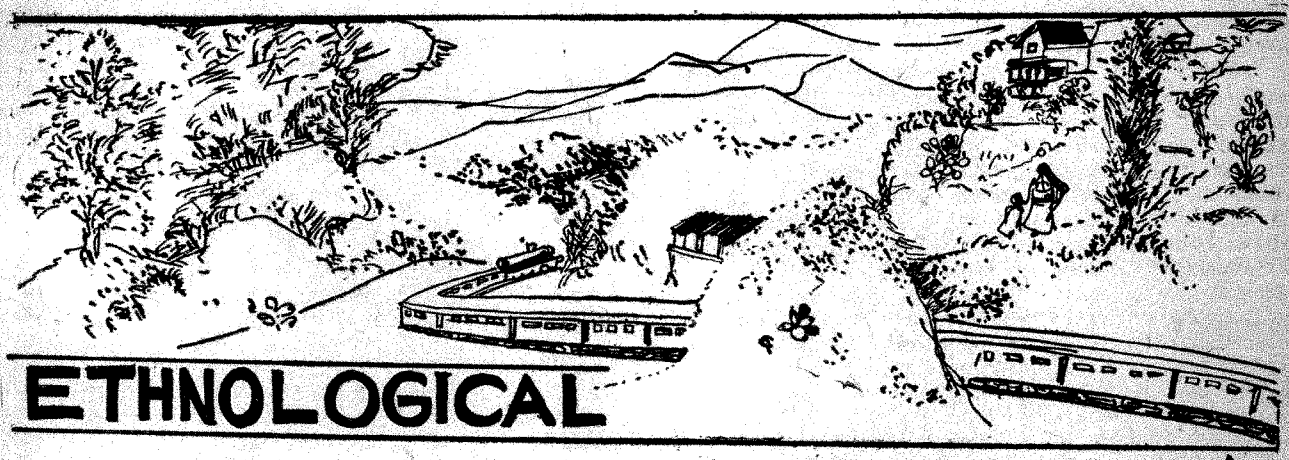
nation by composing songs in glory of his motherland.

"Long Live the Indian Nation", was his famous clarion call. The call came throughout the Tamil Nad. It was a new excitement.

The foreign rulers did not leave the poet unpunished. It was a crime to be a patriot poet in a dependant country, and Bharati had to pay for it. But it could not defeat the undaunted spirit. Like Sri Aurobindo he lived in Pondicherry.

On one side was the oppression from the foreign

(Continued on page 124)



ETHNOLOGICAL MUSEUM

By BIJON GUPTA

"Not in vain the distance beckons; forward,
forward let us range;
Let the great world spin for ever down the
ring'ng grooves of change".

IT may be averred perhaps without any fear of an iota of contradiction that it is never the monopoly of anthropologists to be inquisitive about the neighbours, their habitants, habits and custom. In fact, it is the categorical imperative of anybody, if however he can afford, to be perspicuously acquainted with all that is around him. Naturally in this context, human species comes to the fore. The people of India, especially those living on the plains have yet to learn much about the tribal people who constitute no mean 'chunk' of the total population of the country.

This sub-continent has received immigrants both from the West and from the East. But some practical difficulties pose a great problem for the study of the history of these people. It is largely due to the tropical cilmate of the country which prevents preservation of organic matter, and this is one of the most important causes accounting for the dearth of human skeletal materials. The craniological skeletal types that have hitherto been unearthed are also not of great antiquity. Hence, conjecture still remains the most fruitful source of evidence with regard to the origin of races.

According to Mr. Nesfield, everywhere has the age of metallurgy as well as arts and industries been preceded by a ruder age, when only those arts were known or practised which sufficed for the hunting, fishing and nomad states. Everywhere has the class of ritualistic priests and lettered theosophists been preceded by a class of less cultivated worshippers, who paid simple offerings of flesh and wine to the personified powers of the visible universe without the aid of a hereditary professional priest. He further enjoins that the internal discipline by which the conditions of membership in regard to connubial or convivial rights are defined and enforced has been borrowed from the tribal period, which preceded the period of castes by many centuries. Consequently, the history of the tribal people constitutes an interesting study.

The little exordium given above is necessary lest the reader should be misled. For, my discourse is more of the nature of a travelogue than of a

learned anthropologist's case study. A peregrinator by nature, once I chanced to be among the Mizos whose secessionist National Front has today set the country at an unrest, giving rise to polemics galore which I am not inclined to touch upon in this context. The hill-tract of North-East Frontier Agency, its people and its flora and fauna had always an irresistable lure for me. The terrains of this "terra incognito" beckoned to me and once I really set out to see this land of "blue stars" right from snow covered mountains of Kashmir.

I traversed on foot the Garo Hills, Khasi, Jantia and Naga Hills and in the winter covered Lokhra, Rupa, Dirang-Dzong, Sela, and Nyukmadong, and in course of this peregrination made friends with so many people among the Sherdukpian Bhutia, Momba Bhutia, Khawas and Misis tribes. Again, during monsoon I was in the jungle of Cherapunji abounding with snakes, leeches and wild animals of various types and nothing on earth could damp my spirit of adventure at all. But it is for more than three months that I moved on foot from one place to another particularly in the Mizo Hills, covering an extense of about 300 miles whereby I could gain a firsthand information of the Mizos in respect of some of their characteristic traits.

To begin with, through Jowai a direct route runs to the Mizo Hills from Shillong, and so, the journey upto Jowai is not beset with any danger or difficulty. But the actual hardships start from Khelarihar a few miles from Jowai. The road henceforward is unmetalled and dangerously slippery. Although one can trek forward by a jeep, the bamboo-built bridges present some hurdles, which have to be surmounted by cautious driving at a speed as dictated on the sign-boards. Aijal comes after Silchar. The entire Aijal road passes through the coppice of green forests. Aijal is situated at such a remote corner that except under compelling circumstances and on business people do not generally visit it, which I realised when I crossed the Rubicon. The tedium of journey is further accentuated by the absence of transport facilities. Till the construction of the Silchar-Aijal road Aijal was completely segregated from Assam and it was more expedient for the people to communicate with those on other side of the border.

Anyway from Aijal again I started my hiking and in course of three months covered the following areas :—

1. AIJAL
2. KAIHLETKLIAWN
3. TEAK
4. TEHAK
5. SIALSUK
6. THENZAWL
7. BANGPUI
8. SEKHUM
9. HAULAWANG (IB)
10. SAZAUB
11. LUNGLEH (IB)
12. RIDGEDAMP (IB)
13. LUNGSEN (IB)
14. TUICHUNG (IB)
15. DEMAGIR (IB)
16. HRUIZAM
17. BUNGHMUN
18. LAISAWRA
19. PUKZING
20. PHUIDUNGSEI
21. SPITHANY
22. LALLEN
23. CHHUPITALANG
24. PHAILENG
25. CHUNGTLANG
26. REIEK
27. SAILAWNG
28. MAUBAWA
29. AIJAL (Return)

The name 'Mizo' means "hill-dwellers" and this is possibly the only genetic name that can be attributed to the tribe known as Mizos who bring within their pale various other tribes viz. Huniar, Paite, Ratte, Mara Pawl and Reang belonging to the kuki-chin ethnic family. From Major Shakespear's books entitled 'Mizo' Leh Vai Thon Thou (1898) and Mizo Zir Tir Bu (1899) we find that the Mizos have a dialect of their own, written in Roman scripts, still it may be safely said that these people bear ethnological symbiosis with the Lushais. It is the biggest district in Assam with an area of 8,134 square miles with a 44% of literacy, third in India. While the total population is more than 3,50,000 women outnumber men.

Hemmed in on the east and south by Burma and on the west by Pakistan, the Mizo Hills district has today drawn the anxious attention of the country and to some extent of the world, specially because of the Mizo National Front under the Presidentship of Laldenga. However, this issue will not fit in with my topic which is absolutely disinterested and free from any bias. Great travails were in store for me and my companions. The area suffers from acute paucity of water; in fact, Aijal town itself depends on rain-water. Water sources are far away from villages, and the people use bamboo-pipes to fetch water. Of course, we had to drink this unfiltered water which resulted in serious stomach-troubles. The little medicine we carried with us, were administered and we somehow came round.

The people seemed to be very hospitable. Our victuals having run short, we had recourse to their hospitality and they in turn entertained us with their coarse rice, eggs, fowls and a curry made of local green grass and arum. We were also offered rice-beer and vailo (local cigar). They are generally very gay in temperament but if insulted in any way they turn implacabble enemies. They are very liberal in their religious faiths and have a tolerance for other religions also. That is why it became easier for the Christian Missionaries to convert most of them. In respect of religion they are ambivalent, because though Christian (Protestant), they do not discard their original cults either. And therefore some totems and taboos still persist in spite of their higher percentage of education. Most of the women have their hairs cut in European fashion while some braid their hair also. The women attire themselves in home-spun skirts and jackets and the men wear bush-shirts and loin-clothes.

Churches and Chapels have gradually replaced their original altars of worship. Church going is almost compulsory and none will miss the Sunday Service. Contrary to the Christian faith some of them believe in transmigration of soul. In the Mizo Hills if bamboos start flowering, it portends misery and famine according to the indigenous cult. In matters of courtship and marriage, the boys and girls are allowed considerable amount of freedom. They can freely mix and choose their partners, but no intimate relation in the pre-marital stage is allowed. If per chance a girl becomes pregnant before marriage, her father can according to the law of the land, claim a suitable damage. If the boy agrees to marry her, he has only to pay the bride-price. Endogamy is the popular institution in respect of marriage.

Short of stature, they are typically Mongolian in features with snubnose and chubby cheeks. But some of them possess long stature and Grecian nose also.

Every village consisting of 30 to 40 cottages is situated on a hillock and to reach a village one has to cross a stream and then climb up and down. Such locations are selected specially with an eye to

strategy. As soon as strangers set foot on their territory the news is transmitted from a vantage position by means of heliography and various other signs. Among them there are many Ex. Assam Rifle Members and local Scouts with a good background of Military Training. The institution of community-dance is still prevalent among them. The bamboo-dance is the most difficult and typical in nature. Supported on two parallel poles on either side, there are some poles arranged at intervals in the shape of a raft. One will wonder to see how the girls manage to hop in and out of gaps between the bamboos banged to the rhythm of music by a few boys. This is a free-style dance supposed to keep the girls light in weight. The Western tune has infiltrated in their music, and the guitar has occupied an important position among the instruments, while drums and mithum horns are not altogether at a discount. Drinking is a taboo among them though rice beer is not wholly prohibited. They are no more looked upon as head-hunters.

'Jhum' is their method of cultivation. The jungles growing on the slopes of hills are cut down, left for six weeks or so and burned between January and March. The boughs of larger trees and rubbish not consumed in the first conflagration are then collected and burnt, and the ground hoed up. The seeds of hill-rice, millet and jobstears are scattered among the ashes or dibbled in, and the fields carefully raked over till they are quite smooth. While the crop is growing, it is weeded once or twice-Chillies, pumpkins and till are also grown in the 'Jhums.'

This system suffers from some drawbacks since it is entirely dependent upon the caprice of rain-fall, and also because after two successive years the land is allowed to fallow for seven or eight years for regrowth of the jungle and its subsequent conversion into a bed of ash-manure.

Wood-carving and making of mats with split bamboos contribute substantially to their economy. They are very neat and spruce in habits, and the chiefs have a fad for decorating their cottage-gates with skulls, rough figures of men and mithun—heads. With an unabated desire for seeing more of them, I had to cut short my travel among these people as high temperature got the better of my physical fitness. Without a grain of medicine I had to retrace my steps of Aijal with my men and from there to Shillong where I was sadly reminded of General Bikram Singh at whose instance I undertook this uphill task. (He subsequently died by air-crash at Kashmir)

The time for departure from Shillong drew nigh. Accompanied by my wife and the little son I left Upper Shillong amidst an inclement weather, dampened by torrential rain. We drove in a car lent by a friend of mine but unfortunately on the run, it collided with another car coming from the opposite direction. Providentially enough, none of us sustained grievous injury. A friend from the neighbouring area came to my succour and in his car we rushed to the bus stand since we were to cross the gateway to Pandu in no time. My belongings and other personal effects were sent earlier by a cargo to Patna via Pakistan, which, to my utter astonishment, were later received completely damaged. Now I realise that a wise man's counsel should never be brushed aside. The kind Transport Superintendent requested us not to leave that day as it was 'Tryahasparsha' (inauspicious day for a journey). But the vanity of a seasoned soldier made me accept the gauntlet and I made up my mind to fly in the face of this superstition. Kind that he was, he rang up his doctor friend at Pandu who administered first aid and medicine to me before we boarded the train at Amingaon. At dead of night we were stratled by repeated bangs upon the door as though some invaders were trying to break into the compartment. Though much alarmed, we were to some extent re-assured when we realised that it was no enemy but a familiar attendant who came to announce that the train would not move farther. The rail track was submerged under flood-water. We stirred out to discover that the train was in an insular position surrounded on all sides by almost breast-high waters. The train would not recede either as the railway bridge towards Amingaon was badly damaged. In the small hours news came that the

The bamboo dance is most difficult and typical in nature.

track to Dhubri also was under water. Thus we had been practically stranded for four days.

• A greater surprise awaited me. On the fifth day some Jawans managed to fetch me two bucketfuls of water.

I was beside myself with joy, I dashed into the bath-room to have a clean bath after so many days. Oh! what a terror! While I was bathing, to my utter dismay I found a snake projecting its hood from within the commode, close by me. Casting its glistening eyes at me, it was watching me as though I was an intruder in its private apartment. Its long forked tongue was flicking in and out. Forestalling its attack on me, I grabbed the bucket full of water and hit it on the head. I hit the mark; the bucket laden with water crushed the snake and broke the commode all at once. The noise attracted my wife and host of men around me. I made a hasty retreat from the bath-room little thinking that I was bereft of any clothes.

We reached the circuit house of Dhubri and relaxed after a bath followed by dainty food.

For six days we remained beleaguered undergoing much travails in this uncongenial strand without anything to eat. The seventh day dawned with the hope of deliverance. Somehow we reached the Circuit House of Dhubri and relaxed after a bath followed by a dainty food. Of course any edibles would taste dainty then since hunger is the best sauce. Next day at an exhorbitant price we managed to secure air-tickets and reached the Dhubri Aerodrome. But alas, the plane was nowhere in sight. Under duress we had to bide our time with bated breath. My little son was thirsty but where was water to be found in that Godforsaken place to quench his thirst. I was really in a great predicament. My son's condition upset the balance of my mind since nothing but water would slake his thirst. I was, however, providentially relieved of my agonising solicitude. Happily, a by-strander had a car of his own. He understood my son's piteous appeal. Immediately he rushed to Gouribari at a distance of about 13 miles from there and drove back with three earthen pitchers full of drinking water. I heaved a sigh of great relief and the water seemed to me to be heavenly nectar in that woe-begone terra firma. The appeasement of the son's thirst brought a resipiscence for the father who lavishly expressed his gratitude to the benign benefactor.

At noon standing under the canopy of the sky in the gruelling heat we sighted a plane which accentuated our nostalgia. But who under the sun can undo what is already ordained for him? The plane took off with us but could not land at Dum Dum. The Pilot was asked to go to Asansol but running short of gasoline he force-landed at Barrackpore and was almost on the verge of colliding with another I.A.F. Plane. We were again saved by the skin of our teeth. We boarded a bus of the freighter's Company but that too gave way in three places. Our condition at that time beggars description. With utmost difficulty we managed somehow to Indian Airlines Company's Office at Chittaranjan Avenue of Calcutta.

TOWARDS EMOTIONAL INTEGRATION

(Continued from page 120)

rulers and on the other he had to fight against grim poverty. But, certainly, Bharati won the battle. Today, the whole country worships him as a national poet. He has certainly a high place in the history of Indian literature. His poems have certainly left their influence on other Indian languages equally well. He composed a number of poems in praise of Swami Vivekananda who was the ideal of his life, a number of poems also on Swamiji's brother Bhupendra Dutta and another great disciple of Sri Ramakrishna Paramhamsa, Swami Avedananda. He described the great Indian scientist from Calcutta Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose as a 'flame of fire'. It is perhaps the melodious voice of Subbulakshmi that has popularised the beautiful lyrics and the great national songs composed by the great poet of Tamilnad. Besides Subbulakshmi, there is another sweet voice from the South Damal Pattamal who has recorded a number of songs of Subramaniam Bharati.

Sister Nivedita once asked him whether he was married. When she was told that he also had a daughter, Nivedita asked him why he did not bring his wife to attend the Indian National Congress. These were the days when womenfolk did not participate in any political activities. But, Nivedita reminded Subramaniam Bharati that it was actually unfair to leave out the womenfolk in our national struggle for independence. "A bird can never fly on one wing. Similarly, a nation never progresses if it neglects the womenfolk of their society," observed Sister Nivedita.

Bharati met Gandhiji for the first time at the residence of Chakravarty Rajagopalachari and he composed a poem in his glory. Subramaniam Bharati was never happy due to economic difficulties. But, certainly, he was more than happy in his domestic life. His wife was not only a comrade in his fight for independence but she equally shared his grief and misery.

The caravan is marching. The South is giving to the north what they have accumulated for generations. The north is receiving them. The cultural integration is the greatest gift of Delhi during the last two decades of post independence era.

LITERARY QUARRELS

by C.R. BANERJI

THERE are innumerable instances of unreasonable attacks on authors by the critics. This is understandable. Critics are not creative writers. They therefore often fail to appreciate the author's point of view. Disraeli has reminded us that those who fail to succeed as authors and artists assume the role of critics. One of the classic examples of critic's cruel invective against authors is the review of Keats' poems. It was generally believed that such reviews hastened the death of Keats. Byron squarely attacked the reviewer for the untimely death of Keats. He wrote in Don Juan:

> *John Keats, who was kill'd off by one critique,*
> *Just as he really promised something great,*

The following lines are quoted as a sample of biting criticism of Keats' poems:

> *"We venture to make one small prophecy, that his bookseller will not a second time venture £50 upon anything he can write. It is a better and a wiser thing to be a starved apothecary than a starved poet; so back to the shop Mr. John, back to plasters, pills and ointment boxes, etc. But, for Heaven's sake, young Sangrado, be a little more sparing of extenuatives and soporifics in your practice than you have been in your poetry.'*

But why authors fight among themselves? Such fights often become bitter and serious. It was Aristotle who said that poets, like potters, hate one another. By poets he evidently meant authors in general. But when a potter fights his comrade and bruises him the wound heals with time without publicity. In case of authors, both the parties being themselves writers, the incidents become part of literature and provide interesting reading for the generations that follow. The reasons for quarrels among authors are usual—rivalry, jealousy and incompatibility in nature. There are also instances where the intimate knowledge of a brother in profession has been utilised as a theme for novels or dramas.

The quarrel among authors was as frequent in ancient times as it is in the present days. The earliest example of quarrels among authors is available in the literature of Greece. Aristophanes in his satiric comedy, *The Frogs,* caricatured the Greek tragic dramatists, particularly Euripides and his writings. The wordy duels between Kalidasa and Dignaga are well-known to us.

Even Shakespeare is not spared by other authors. His contemporary dramatist, Robert Greene, called him an upstart crow who wanted to beautify himself with borrowed plumes. The hint behind this invective is that Shakespeare used to borrow plots from other sources. In fact, his *Winter's Tale* is based on Greene's *Pandosto.*

According to Voltaire, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* was a crude and barbarous play. Civilized countries like France and Italy could not therefore accept such a drama and there was no wonder that the quality of *Hamlet* would be so low because Shakespeare himself was a barbarous fellow steeped in drink.

Dryden was a relentless critic of Shakespeare. He pointed out many defects in his language and weakness of his plots. Like Ben Jonson, Dryden believed that the major part of Shakespeare's works could be discarded without any loss to the English dramatic literature. Perhaps Dryden wrote a drama based on the story of *Antony and Cleopatra* to prove his superiority over Shakespeare. The Scottish philosopher, David Hume, was doubtful about the educational and cultural value of the works of Shakespeare. Because, according to him, the author was not properly educated. Samuel Pepys regarded *Romeo and Juliet* as one of the worst plays he had seen. According to Tolstoy this play and *King Lear* were not of very high order. Seventeenth century English poet Edmund Waller opined that Milton's *Paradise Lost* had no merit except its length. Dr. Johnson also thought that *Paradise Lost* was more admired than read. Lack of human qualities was a great defect of the poem. Thomas Carlyle once refused to see Swinburne because, according to him, Swinburne was "sitting in a sewer and edding to

Do you know ANACIN is a combination of medicines- like a doctor's safe prescription?

Check for yourself.

The formula is on every strip. Discover relief with ANACIN.

Indications: headache, colds and flu, toothache, bodyache, muscular pain.

Dosage: 2 tablets for adults, 1 tablet for children. So easy to remember.

ANACIN

is better because

it acts 4 ways

ASP/GM/AN 7

Registered user: GEOFFREY MANNERS & COMPANY LIMITED

it". Carlyle did not even spare the famous philosopher Herbert Spencer. Spencer, he said, was "the most unending ass in Christendom". Carlyle did not like the writings of Charles Lamb, because, according to him, his writings lacked depth, knowledge and were shadowed by 'diluted insanity'.

Even the literary dictator of the 18th century, Dr. Johnson, was attacked by a minor poet called Charles Churchill. He wrote a poem entitled *The Ghost* to caricature his appearance and behaviour. Churchill wrote:

.....insolent and loud,
Vain idol of a scribling crowd,
Who, cursing flattery, is the tool
Of every fawning, flattering fool;

It seems that Voltaire did not appreciate the acknowledged classics of world literature. He criticized *Hamlet* as barbarous. Similarly, he despised Dante's *Divina Commedia* as crude and bombastic. Likewise, Goethe's *Faust* was attacked by Coleridge. Though himself a poet, he could not find in it any great artistic qualities. Coleridge failed to find great merit in the novels of Scott. *Ivanhoe*, according to his opinion, was an example of tragic failure.

Tolstoy judged literature from the point of view of human welfare. He complained against *Odyssey and Illiad* because of absence of any moral ideal in them. He naturally regarded *Uncle Tom's Cabin* as a great work of art. But he failed to find out even a single poem in Baudlaire's *Les Fleurs du Mal* which could be understood and appreciated without great effort.

It took twenty long years for Samuel Butler to write *The Way of All Flesh*. After completing the manuscript he offered it to M|s. Chapman & Hall for publication. The Reader of this firm at the time was the well-known novelist George Meredith. After going through the manuscript Meredith advised the publishers that it was unfit for publication. Though its publication was delayed till after the death of Butler, *The Way of All Flesh* is now regarded as one of the classics of English literature.

Somerset Maugham

Shakespeare

Bernard Shaw received considerable assistance during the first years of his literary apprenticeship from playwright Henry Arthur Jones. But afterwards they were alienated. The unconventional and advanced views of Bernard Shaw exasperated Jones. He wrote about Shaw: "The Nag Sedition was your mother, and Perversity begot you; Mischief was your midwife, and Misrule your nurse, and Unreason brought you up at her feet—no other ancestry and rearing had you". He further said about Shaw that he was "a freakish, homunculus germinated outside lawful procreation".

It is said about Wordsworth that he was a votary of Beauty and felt little attraction for earthly riches. But Walter Savage Landor did not agree. He used to say that Wordsworth's one eye was on the daffodil and the other on the price of Suez Canal shares. In the third canto of *Don Juan* Byron lashes out at the Lake poets sneering particularly at Southey and Wordsworth. About Wordsworth he writes:

A drowsy frowzy poem called 'The Excursion'
Writ in a manner which is my aversion.

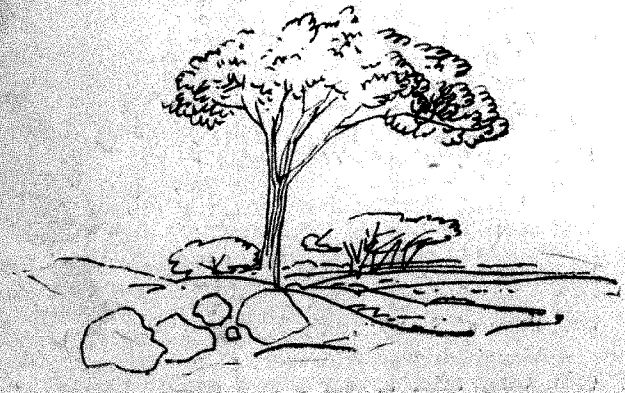
In recent years, the most powerful caricature of a contemporary author was made by Somerset Maugham in his novel Cakes and Ale. The two characters of this novel Alroy Kear and Driffield are caricatures respectively of Hugh Walpole and Thomas Hardy. Hardy was dead two years before the novel was published. But Walpole, author of about thirty novels, could unmistakably recognise himself behind the character of Kear. Walpole was greatly mortified because Maugham was one of his closest friends and he admired his writings sincerely. To him it appeared nothing but treachery to bring out and caricature the weaker side of the character of a faithful friend like himself. Maugham, however, denied that Kear was a caricature of Walpole. But few accepted this denial seriously and Walpole had his doubts in spite of repeated assurances. Maugham, however, admitted ten years after Walpole's death that Walpole was in his mind when he created the character of Alroy Kear.

Maugham was, however, paid back in his own coin. Only after a year a new novel entitled *Gin*

and Bitters came from America. The book was published under the pseudonym, A. Riposte (quick return thrust in fencing). It appeared that the author of the novel had visited Tahiti and the neighbouring islands to find out the details of the private life and conduct of Maugham during his sojourn there. Maugham is represented in Hurle, the hero of the novel. Maugham and his friends were greatly perturbed by the exposure of his life in the Tahiti islands. The attack was so pungent that they made every effort to stop its circulation in England. Through their persuasion the British edition of the novel entitled *Full Circle* was quickly withdrawn from the market. Everybody at first suspected Walpole as the author of the novel though he took great pains to prove his innocence. Afterwards it came to light that the author was a lady called Elinor Mordaunt.

These attacks and quarrels were made through pen. But there are examples of physical attack by one author on another. The quarrel between Tolstoy and Turgenev is well-known to the students of literature. Tolstoy was so exasperated that he challenged Turgenev to a duel. Fortunately, the timidity of Turgenev saved the situation. Otherwise, Tolstoy was determined to fight a real duel, to fight to the death.

No other author in our century had displayed a fighting spirit like Hemingway. Max Eastman was a friend of Hemingway. After the publication of some of his well-known novels, Eastman reviewed them in a journal. He pointed out that in the writings of Hemingway there was an unnatural boasting about manly power. This was, perhaps, Eastman concluded, used as a ruse to cover some weakness in himself. Hemingway flew into a rage after reading this criticism. The friends did not meet for four years since the review was published. One day Hemingway visited the office of M|s. Charles Scribners & Sons, the publishers. He came face to face with Eastman who was sitting opposite Maxwell Perkins, the literary adviser of the Scribners. As soon as he came near, Hemingway cried out at Eastman, "Here you are, the son of a bitch!" After some wordy duels Hemingway jumped on Eastman with clenched fists. Both of them struggled with each other for some time on the spacious table of Mr. Perkins. Eastman was flabbergasted; Hemingway was determined to prove his powers. With great difficulty Mr. Perkins was able to separate them to the great relief of Eastman who was undoubtedly the weaker of the two, both in physical strength and in the might of the pen.



FAGO RAM'S FOREST LIFE

(Continued from page 118)

vant from discharge of his duties) with which the chaukidar wanted to impress him. With a roar of disapproval, the tiger jumped to the right of Fago Ram and placed himself between Fago and his hut cutting his retreat. Being young and agile, Fago by his reflex made a sharp right turn and faced the trespasser with a garasa over his head with both hands on the handle for the blow.

(Fago Ram jumped from the varandah where we were breakfasting, sprinted to the spot and stood in a tableau to illustrate the position. It appeared that the tiger seeing him armed, tried to outflank him with that jump to his right and take him from behind to escape the garasa).

Fago Ram froze in that position and was unable to lower his hands. Failing to outflank him, the tiger started to growl a few feet from him. The foul breath of the tiger almost achieved what his roar had failed. Fago Ram nearly fainted.

Suddenly, he heard his wife behind him. She caught him by the waist and he was unable to move. (Fago explained that he did not worry about himself, but was concerned about h's wife. His thought went to his children whom he had locked from outside and who were certain to die of starvation in their absence as there might not be a visitor to the bungalow for several days to release the children). He, therefore, tried to send her away by nudging her with the elbows. He could not, however, utter a single word to explain his thoughts. The tiger continued to growl in his face. By this nudging his wife lost her balance and the pitcher fell from her head and broke splashing water all around. With a deafening roar which Fago compared with a thunder, the tiger turned and leap 20 feet away, walked a few paces and sat under a bamboo clump east of the chaukidar's hut. He watched Fago and his wife still locked together for half a minute or so; then walked away briskly with a deep growl.

Fago's paralysis ended and they ran to their hut to embrace their children. The enraged tiger wreaked his vengeance on two bullocks belonging to Dibaur a quarter mile away and did not even lick their blood.

This and three other experiences which he narrated briefly forced him to submit his resignation. The authorities, however, could not afford to lose his services, and built him a new hut near the Beat Officer's and also fenced the bungalow as an additional measure of security. His two sons whom he snatched from the jaws of the tiger, however, died of natural causes around the age of 30. His daughter is married happily. His wife still cooks for him.

We drank the cold tea and thanked him profusely. The pleasure was ours and the change his. I drove the remaining 3 miles of the ghat section of the road looking for a surprise at each hairpin bend and under each bush. Anybody interested may meet Fago Ram at the rest house and hear the three other hair-raising experiences from his own mouth.

THE TIGER — A WIZARD

By DHIRENDRA NARAYAN ROY

PRADYUMNA SARKER was embarrassed by the unexpected visit of his father-in-law to his place. This happened when he was getting ready for a shooting excursion. What would he do now? On the one hand, it was going to upset his plan, on the other, he could not do anything that would suggest even the slightest indifference to this gentleman. After all, he was not an ordinary man. Mr. Biswamvar Santra—that was his name—had amassed a great fortune by trading in grain-husks. Having retired from business he was now enjoying the well-earned rest. Such a father's daughter he had the singular luck to marry and when such a father-in-law obliged them by his visit he could naturally claim Pradyumna's constant and devoted attention. In these circumstances, the idea of shooting excursion must have vanished from his mind. For the same reason he stopped coming to my parlour of which he was a regular visitor.

However, when he somehow managed to come to me, I started cross-examining him.

— How can I come, say? Well, my father-in-law has been here after a pretty long time and I have to attend on him both day and night. What a trouble!

My information was that Pradyumna went to the extent of massaging his distinguished guest's hands and feet after his major meals. Unable to keep it a secret, I retorted:

— Yes, you have eventually got to do all this when you are going to inherit your father-in-law's property. Isn't it? But one thing, Can you once manage to bring your father-in-law here?

Pradyumna hesitated: I doubt if he would like to come without a personal invitation.

— Don't worry. I am writing a letter to him and sending my car. Do please try to bring him.

Pradyumna left with the letter.

Another member of my parlour was Chhakari Dutta, a friend of mine from boyhood days. His special quality was his frankness to tell unpleasant truths.

No sooner Pradyumna had left with my letter, than Chhakari sarcastically remarked :

— My God, What a businessman! A dealer in grain-husks fastidious about his prestige! Funny, funny. He deserves little attention. I am sure he has made a mint of money in the blackmarket and is now trying to pose as an honest fellow.

I rebuked him saying:

— This is uncharitable.

— That's not well. Trading in grain-husks is no bad thing and not all are bad people who take to this line of business. Why, are they not men?

— Well, man is man, and he deserves respect to the extent he is that. Property, bank balance, artificial status is society and other considerations cannot be the yardstick to measure him. I know this man well enough to judge him. He has made a mountain of wealth by abominable malpractices and is a consummate liar with a polished, respectable-looking exterior.

— Please stop now. If any one hears you saying all this, you will be regarded as a mad man. Gold has no value, now-a-days, we are apt to praise the gilt ones. Now, please do one thing. Tell

Charan to arrange a few cushion chairs on the balcony and place a centre table. Today's parley will be held there.

Pradyumna did not take much time to return. As soon as the car reached the portico, I went forward and received the gentleman:

— Good day, sir, come this way—this way.

What a sight! A huge body, a disproportionate roundish head, a pair of small searching eyes giving the impression of a man who hides his real feelings. A big cigar was held between his lips, a small piece of bamboo, so to say. Releasing it from the smoking mouth he uttered in a low voice 'Namaskar' and then just to please me added.

— I have heard a lot about your hunting skill and seized this opportunity with pleasure to meet you on receiving your call.

On being requested to take tea, Biswamvar Santra said he would like a bowl of milk.

Chhakari Dutta, who was behind me, commented:

It appears nothing but milk and butter suits your palate.

Casting a significant look at him Santra turned to me and reposefully said:

— Ever since I heard your name, I have been anxious to meet you. But opportunities are rare. I myself have done a lot of hunting in the past. You can very well call me a veteran in the art. Will you believe that in a single excursion I killed a dozen tigers, yes, as many as twelve of them? He chuckled and seemed to congratulate himself on his grandiose performance in some dreamland.

Obviously, the nonsense was too much for Chhakari to bear. He asked: Was that in India or in Honolulu?

— Honolulu? Where's that? I never knew that tigers are in abundance also there as in the Sundarbans which is my field of activity — heh, heh.

— Interrupting his eloquence I said how lucky I shall consider myself if you are by my side during my hunting excursion this time at Palamou.

— In the land of the Santals? Yes, I have had some experience of it. Once, I had been to Daltonganj in connection with my business when I thought of hunting also. But it was all so horrible! There seemed to be no end of dense jungles unfit for a human being to get into.

Chhakari immediately retorted:—Oh, then you do your hunting and kill tigers without any jungle!

At this stage Pradyumna appeared with a big bowl of milk.

Just to help Pradyumna get a respite from constant attendance on his father-in-law I proposed:

— Well, I am starting tomorrow. As for you, you may enjoy rest in your daughter's house and allow Pradyumna to accompany me.

After an exchange of glances between them Biswamvar said:

— Quite a good proposal. Yes, he may accompany you, and while with you, I see no reason to worry for him—heh-heh.

He took to sipping milk when Chhakari suggested:

— You also may go. Activities like hunting excursions will help in reducing the superfluous fat in your body.

Santra broke into laughter. Next moment he had a terrible experience. The milk going down his throat made an upward move with a quantity of it gushing out of the nose. He coughed and laughed at the same time and said:

— You are perfectly right. But, you see, this body has no wear and tear—it is a huge hill.

Our conference came to an end for the day. Obviously, Prodyumna was very happy with the prospect of his release.

Next day.

We were busy preparing for the hunting excursion. We went from Lalgola to Calcutta by train. Next day we started in a jeep for Palamou. An attached trailer carried all our luggage. Chhakari was an expert steward. He took all possible things that might be required even for a longer stay.

Our destination was Santali village, named Lat. It was a small village and its peculiarity was that as many as fourteen clans of the Santal race were its inhabitants, hardly two hundred in number. Of them Kherwas formed the majority. They were brave no doubt, but they had incurable faith in the existence of spirits, in mantras and the marvellous works of black art. Very plain and simple was their way of living. Agriculture and shikar were their habitual profession. On ceremonial occasions, they indulged in drinking-bouts, danced and sang and engaged in various other kinds of merriment.

There was an extensive jungle by the side of the village. Sal trees were in abundance, teak was scanty. These were so tall and went so high in the air that they seemed to protect the jungle like so many demons. There were also bamboo groves in abundance. The forest rest-house was about a mile way.

At 3 o'clock in the afternoon we reached there. After the long travel at a stretch we felt very thirsty.

There was a water-tap in the rest house from which we drank to our heart's content.

The night was dark. The rest-house guard lighted a feeble lamp for us. In half-light, half-darkness we prepared and finished our supper and then retired to bed.

I did not have a sound sleep. Early in the morning I wanted to go out to have an idea of the area.

Forest life with its jungles, birds and beasts has always a great attraction for me. What is more, it has some sort of a mystery which I cannot define.

As we were getting ready to go out the guard cautioned us:

— Beware, sirs, please do not move till Amrit Singh arrives.

—Who is Amrit Singh?

— Well, everybody here knows him. In fact, he acts as the leader of a hunting party.

— When is he coming?

— Any moment. Information was sent to him yesterday. All the Sahibs who come for hunting always look for him. Have I not done the right thing, sir, by sending him the information about you?

— What type of man is he?

From the forest-guard's description of him. We formed the idea that Singh was a sober responsible man with some education also.

'Oh! That must be the man we are talking

about. Yes, yes, there's the turban on his head,—coming in this direction," I exclaimed.

"That's he, sir," the guard corroborated.

Amrit Singh arrived very swiftly and greeted us with a salute.

As I told him about our hunting project, he shook his head in the negative, saying, no, Sahib, you can't catch sight of the tiger. Not that it is not there. It must be there, but hardly assailable. It is extremely cunning, never leaves any clue to its detection. Everybody believes it is a wizard.

When he uttered the word 'wizard', his face betrayed his dread of the animal. His eyes wore a strange look. I asked Amrit Singh:

— Can you tell me what exactly is the mystery about it?

Singhji folded his hands and reverentially bowed his head remembering the tiger. He then said in a very low voice:

— The tiger must have some godly traits, making it inaccessible to human beings. It jumps upon anybody at its sweet will. What is most striking about it is that it never comes to the 'kill' for the second time.

—Has it not been noticed as yet?

— No, sir.

The pug marks are often noticed and there is every reason to believe that it moves near about. Would you believe that last week, it carried off as many as ten head of cattle? It performed that unbelievable feat, sir. And only the other day it slew a sturdy youth. But it is not a man-eater, I am sure about it.

I suggested:

— You are the head-man of the village, is n't it? So is it not your duty to effectively deal with this menace?

— What can I do? I have long long been after it but to no purpose. It comes out only after evening. We are however always alert about its depredations which it can do any time. It must be a wizard, no doubt about it. Once a European pitched a camp here for fifteen days—there were beatings of the jungles day and night, laying of baits, construction of platforms and all that. The stage was well set for trapping the tiger. But nothing came out of all this. The beast was nowhere.

— Never mind. I shall not let it go. Why shall I not make an attempt when I am here? See how I cast hy hypnotic spell over this 'wizard' of a tiger as you call it. Are you ready? Yes or no?

Amrit Singh agreed but did not forget to caution me.

—Please don't stir out at night, Sahib. This tiger is endowed with supernatural powers and you may come under its spell. Take care, sir, take care.

Singh took leave of us and we met together in consultation. The guard of the dak bungalow also joined in our discussions.

Prodyumna proposed: Let us all go out tomorrow morning to get a first-hand knowledge about the place.

—I alone want to go with Singh. If any clue is available I shall have a discussion with you before arriving at a decision.

Singh came early next morning. We two went out but I took my rifle and a bag of shots.

Amrit was a good companion and had a pretty good stock of tales of tigers which he related one after another as we proceeded toward our destination.

River Charo was flowing by the side of the jungle. It was a shallow hill brook.

Coming back to the theme of this particular tiger, he started saying the same thing in various ways.

— The tiger is very cunning. It finishes its meal, drinks, water in the river quite unnoticed and repairs to its hiding-place God-knows—where.

We cautiously moved on along our side of the river, keeping a watchful eye all around. But not getting even the faintest clue to its detection we came back disappointed. But I was determined to pursue it.

This programme was followed for several

The Tiger must have some Godly traits.

days in succession. But the tiger remained a mystery.

I then asked Amrit Singh to get some beaters from the Santal bustee, with whose help we shall make a thorough search in the forest so that it becomes impossible for the animal to lie in hiding any more.

As arranged, we beat the jungles but the tiger was nowhere to be spotted. We placed the bait for it—the tiger came and fed upon it unnoticed. We made another attempt on a platform keeping the bait in position but the tiger never came there. It was however carrying on its depredations among cattle not very far from us. Night after night passed in this way.

Nothing was left undone, no stone unturned, in catching sight of the tiger. However, we came to learn, in course of our inquiries that often it appeared at daytime and lifted cattle in the presence of the cowboys looking after them. Peasants working in the fields also had some experience of it. So one day dressed like a peasant, wearing the head-gear peculiar to them, and holding the end of a plough, I started tilling soil, of course with the rifle in hand. But the tiger showed no sign of obliging me, little caring for all that I did to welcome it.

Then, one day I discovered the remnants of the carcass of a calf half-eaten by the beast. There were evidences also that it came to drink water in the nearby brook. I saw a few big pug marks just near the water but nothing was noticeable beyond that. Had it wings so that it could fly. A puzzle indeed ! This meant another day of disappointment.

Is it then really a wizard tiger casting its spell over all who were after it and then retiring to some secluded corner on the other side of the river! I thought I must examine it to my satisfaction and as I explained the matter to Amrit Singh, he also agreed.

Next day, accompanied by Amrit Singh, I made for the place where pug marks were noticed by the riverside and crossed the river on foot. It was a small brook with knee-deep water.

The other side also was full of deep jungles. No pug mark was noticed. We proceeded a long way along the riverside with searching eyes all around in the hope of catching a glimpse of the covetable pug mark. After about two miles we

found a stonepaved path about twenty feet wide. We crossed it and went a bit further. But our efforts proved a failure. No foot-print was traceable. We then returned to the metalled road.

The spot having a bed of stone blocks appeared to have been laboriously constructed by some

It was a small brook with k nee-deep water

expert engineer. It gave the beautiful view of a stone-laid way leading to the forest.

We returned to the rest-house.

The night for me was uncomfortable. Thoughts came crowding to my mind and I had not a wink of sleep. What could be done? Should I go back empty-handed from my mission? No, no, no. What then? After all, how could I believe that the tiger was a wizard! Was all my past experience in tiger-hunting of no use to me now?

I pondered and pondered and went to the depths of my mind and searched for an answer failing which I must have to renounce my long-established claim as a hunter of some reputation.

Suddenly, in the midst of gloom I had a feeling of elation? That's the idea, I captured it at last! Wizard or no wizard, the tiger could escape no more.

Next morning I divulged my plan and had a short talk with Amrit Singh:

— Look here. What I want to do is to construct a platform in a suitable place near the stone-laid path on the other side of the river and take a chance tonight. The permit expires tomorrow. So, I take the last chance today and have no manner of doubt that we shall succeed. We all proceeded to the spot. A Sal tree of medium height was selected and the platform was constructed on it. After covering it with leaves and twigs we came back to this side of the river. Prodyumna wanted to accompany me to the platform. Chhakari's eyes glowed with the expectation that I could take him along with me.

My idea was otherwise. None, not even Amrit Singh would be with me. So, in the afternoon, all of them retired after I had seated myself comfortably on the platform.

Amrit Singh sighed a sigh of despair.

— All to no purpose, Sahib, quite a useless enterprise.

— Well, I am hopefully taking my last chance. What's the harm in it?

The sunset presented a magnificent spectacle. The forest cast its elongated shadow on the hills. The huge blocks of stone appeared like so many giants in the encircling gloom.

The scene changed when the darkness deepened. The countless twinkling stars overhead seemed to convey a message to me. A slice of the new moon began to peep over the hill peaks and cast its wavy reflection on the waters of the river.

The wind was high and leaves were rustling. The sound mingled with the 'concert' played by the insect-world. I heard it all but took no notice of it. But it was too much for me to bear when swarms of mosquitoes assailed me with continuous humming in my ears. Whatever happened, I had to be another Cassablanca and obstinately struck to my seat on the platform. The rifle fitted with a torch was loaded. My radium-dial wristwatch showed about 2 a.m. The sleepless night was coming to an end.

Suddenly, the cry of an animal was heard very close to where I was seated wide awake the whole night. I was startled. Was the lord of the forest coming at last to oblige me?

Just then, the splashing sound of water came from the riverside. I became restless. I felt that my whole body was emitting electric sparks. A minute seemed to me an age. I could not brook delay.

In the midst of darkness it was visible that some animal rising from the waters of the river was coming up along that stone-laid path.

The majestic gait of the moving creature could be nothing else than that of a tiger. Immediately I focussed the torch. The animal bent its neck so as to ascertain the source of the light and instantly the starved barrel of my rifle was mad for blood when it sent forth fiery rage.

Ah — What's the matter?

There was no response from the other side.

I focussed the light again and found the beast lying motionless, on the stony bed.

Was it a fake sleep? I fired another shot. There was absolutely no sign of life!

I could hardly wait, the excitement was so great in me. On getting off the platform I reached the spot, focussed the torch and found that the great tiger had received the bullet under its neck which passed out piercing a side of its breast. The first shot was enough to do it. The second struck it in the belly.

I lost all sense of time and place, and having the hazards of crossing the river in that dark night ran toward the rest house.

My loud cheers and calls roused every body. Prodyumna, Chhakari and Amrit Singh — all of them were struck with awe at the sight of me coming at that unearthly hour.

Every one was dismayed. Had I been possessed by some evil spirits or captivated by the charm of the wizard tiger? What was the cause of my return at that hour of the night.

I shouted at the top of my voice :

— Come you all and see with your own eyes how the wizard tiger has been well laid by the spell of my rifle and transported to some higher world. Please come, all of you, and make appropriate preparations for its last rites.

The great tiger received the bullet under the neck.

THE PRESENT IMAGE OF RABINDRANATH: A PLEA FOR HEARTSEARCHING

Dr. H. B. MUKHERJEE,

THE present image of Rabindranath in our country is diverse and complex. To the large majority he is more a glorious object of periodical hero-worship than a poet and writer, near and dear to their heart; who heightens their joys and lightens their sorrows and infuses strength and inspiration in moments of despair and doubt. They revere and celebrate his memory, and ignore and forget his works. I do, by no means, underrate the necessity and value of the demonstration of such precious sentiment and gesture, individual or collective. It does serve to keep the memory of a great man alive and fresh, generation after generation. But this, I need hardly say, is hardly enough. It may, at least, help perpetuate a noble legend; it cannot bring to a great writer and thinker his true fulfilment in the lines of individuals and in the life of a nation.

Contrariwise, we must remember a band of devoted scholars, scattered all over this country and outside, who give their days and nights to the close study of a man and writer whose manysided genius presents to them a perpetual source of discovery and challenge. They, we may rest assured, will keep the light of Tagorean studies burning bright, bringing us fresh illuminations and new directions.

There must be also countlesss lay readers, men and women, who draw from his works delight and inspiration, solace and strength, in moments of recreation or heartsearching, in moments of soul-tearing conflict or soul-lifting love. It is more for them than for anybody else, the poet once confessed, that his muse waited, as it were, quivering in expectation, and in the ecstatic response in the depth of their heart he finds his fondest reward.

On the other side we have to reckon with the critics of Tagore of various discriptions and colours. An original genius, blazing a new trail in the life and letters of a nation is bound to provoke opposition among long-entrenched forces. When, however, he has established and consolidated his domain in the mind and heart of his people, through the sheer force of his genius, a counter-reaction starts questioning the values he has stood for and the causes he has championed. Tagore did not escape that destiny, and during the greater length of his career he had to meet with bitter opposition from various quarters to his revolutionary creeds in art and life. Younger generations arose challenging his unquestioned supremacy as the foremost figure in the world of thought in the country. But his over-all image, despite all that; remained undimmed and undwarfed, and his personality shone with full lustre till his last days.

Now that the luminous living image has increasingly receded for more than two decades behind the passing cloud of time, notes are being heard from different regions—some serious, some frivolous; some enlightened, some just critical, some clearly hostile — pointing to his one shortcoming or other as a man or as a writer and thinker. We are told that his politics were unpractical and social thinking outmoded; that his incorrigible optimism and romantic mysticism took little cognizance of the sordidness of reality and the agony of the age; that his educational philosophy was revivalistic and his educational experiment, in the last analysis, an expensive fiasco; that his music in monotonous and style ponderous; that his English was victorian and translations casual, which has proved to be a major factor in bringing down his reputation in the West, which *the Gitanjali* had once served to build; that he was inferior to Goethe in totality of vision, to Yeats in the range and sweep of art, to Eliot in insight into reality and in power of expression; that he was a lesser saint than Mahatma Gandhi and a less spiritually self-realized being than Sri Aurobindo, Maharshi Raman and the like; that in his private life he was feudalistic

and authoritarian, capricious and impatient—and so on and so forth.

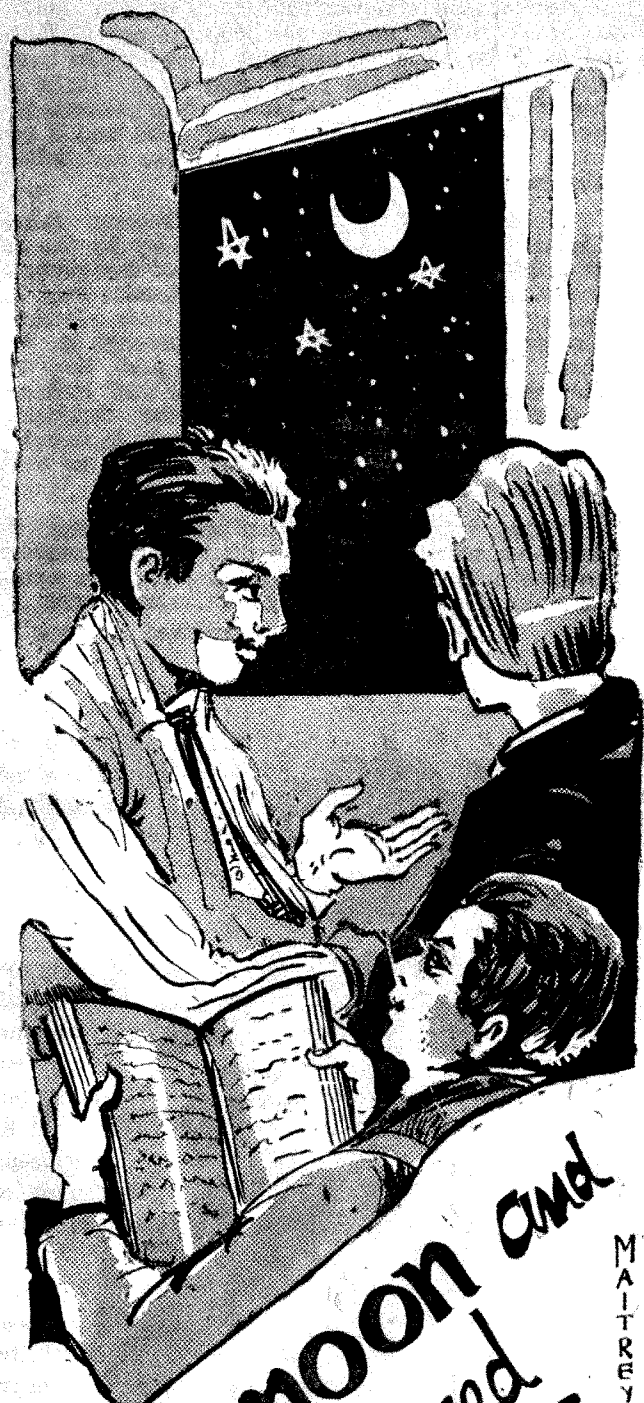
Some of these affirmations or insinuations are bynow state commodity, dating from a long time past when the Tagorean son was at the zenith of its glory and fame. Some, however, are new-fangled postures, off-springs of current modes and fashions in the intellectual and cultural climate of the land. It is not their substance that is of so much consequence—being value-judgements, they may be accepted or rejected for whatever they are worth—as the spirit in which these views are ventilated. Honest criticism, duly aware of its obligations and limitations, has its merit in compelling reconsideration and revaluation, possibly leading to significant re-discoveries. But when one discovers an ill-concealed glee in bringing down the cherished idols of a people, a pathetic self-conceit in meeting out supercilious treatment to the thought and works of great and mighty minds, an almost malicious industry in dwarfing and defaming objects of universal veneration, one really feels sad and confused at the sorry spectacle of crisis in values, of poverty of spirit, that shrinks from an open-hearted acclamation of true greatness where it is found.

It is my humble submission that it would be suicidal folly on our part thus to run down our own great men who have brought distinction and glory to our land, for the loss would be entirely ours. India can boast of many illustrious sons and daughters, but only a few of them have won a global renown for the country. Rabindranath, along with Mahatma Gandhi; was surely foremost among them. Any attempt to reduce their stature or cast shadow on their lustre would be an wise as to bite the hand that feeds or cuts the branch that supports.

Let me reiterate that I have no complaint against serious and respectful endeavour to understand and evaluate our great men with their merits and possible shortcomings. Even Homer sometimes nods, and the greatest of men have their failings, being human. But to treat them as if these are more to the point than anything else, is, to say the least, to be guilty of a vitiated perspective and a perverse approach. It is infinitely more important, and also more rewarding, to remember what special contributions they have made in their own fields, how much richer our life has been because of thus, and how much poorer it would have been but for them.

Rabindranath & Mahatma Gandhi

Talking of Rabindranath, how can we afford to forget that he was the first Indian in modern times who compelled the outside world to look on our country with an eye of respect? It was he, again, who put India on the literary map of the world. "You alone are sufficient reason why India should be free", declared Will Durant when India was in bondage, and we cannot but be grateful to one who could evoke such sentiment in a foreigner towards our country. We know how his heart bled for the humiliation and sufferings of his motherland, and in what agony of shame he renounced his knighthood, at great personal peril, as a gesture of mighty protest against a dastardly crime perpetuated on his countrymen. "Great sentinel" as he was, he kept a ceaseless vigil on the destiny and direction of his people and dedicated the myriod facets of his genius to the service and betterment of his country till his last breath. We need only recount a fraction of his rich legacy in order to remind ourselves how much we owe to him. In politics, he has taught us to transcend the narrow limits of communalism, regionalism and nationalism, and to operate on the plane of liberalism, humanism and international fellow-feeling. In social thinking, he has drawn our eyes to the villages and to the teeming masses and has pioneered the principle of building strength from within our indigenous social structure. In religion, he has lashed out against age-old superstitions and the prevailing vices in organized religious sects, and has initiated us into the Religion of Man which recognizes the divinity inherent in man. He has striven all his life to emancipate education from dead formalism and breathe into it the spirit of freedom and joy, and evolve through it his conception of fulness in life. To give practical shape to all this vision, he tore himself away from the dreamy seclusion of a poet's life and founded his institutions at Santiniketan which extracted almost all his time and money and exercised his most anxious thought till the last moment of his life. Above all this, he has left us the wonderful products of his creative genius, in numerous forms of art and literature, which treasures for us a rich world of values, of truth and beauty, to cheer and sustain us, and to gladden and inspire, in all conceivable moods, in all manner of needs in human life. For all these priceless gifts to our individual and national life, we cannot but he beholden to him, and he would be a poor soul indeed who would seek to belittle or pickholes in him out of his ignorance, malice or self-conceit. May the periodical celebrations prove to us the occasion for heartsearching and self-appraisal, so that we may learn to pay due homage to our great men by trying to be worthy of them.



The moon and the withered LEAVES

By

TUSHAR KANTI GHOSE,
W.B.C.S.

MAITREYEE

THEY must have been very important persons. A separate Compartment was brought and tagged to the mail train. The Guard perhaps never before carried such important persons in his train. He proudly blew his whistle and waived his green flag vigorously until the train was in motion. The great crowd that had gathered to see off the important persons paid their last respects and withdrew. One of these important persons was a space Scientist who had just returned from a trip to the outer space. Another was the Director of the Rocket Station and the third was a young space man who had undergone very extensive training abroad in space travels and who was now earmarked for a trip to the moon. There had been so great publicity about the two spacemen in the newspapers that their faces were known to many people. These three were returning to the Rocket Station after a week's tour in the Capital. They would go to the moon and bring gold back to earth, so said some people who had gone through such a line of probability in one of the newspapers. They would establish a space-platform for inter-planetary travel, said the more-informed. And there were many other speculations. There was no other person in the compartment. The young spaceman locked the doors of the compartment, perhaps in obedience to the signboard exhibited by the Railways, lest they were robbed of. But who would be benefitted by robbing them? No robber could as yet know the use of a space-suit or other instruments which were packed into the suitcases and boxes of the three persons. Still, it was better to obey the direction of the Railways, he thought. The other two nodded, approvingly. The Director was the boss. He first made his bed, slipped into his night dress and sipping a drink bade goodnight and helped himself into the bed. The senior Scientist called the junior by his side and opened a huge book and engaged themselves in a long and continuous discussion about some very difficult, technical matters. And the train moved on at an accelerated speed through forests and hills like a mad thing.

Even space Scientists were susceptible to the lull of sleep, particularly in a train journey, and so

the three soon fell asleep and forgot everything about the moon or the earth.

It was only when the scorching rays of the sun fell on their faces through the open windows that the three got up. The space-scientists discovered with wonder that their compartment was lying stationary on the middle of a very large field. There was no trace of the mail train. There was no human being near about.

The junior unlocked the doors and pushed the doors open. They got down on the ground to discover once more the reality. They wiped out their eyes and looked around but there was no change of the environments. Had they been less informed persons they would have thought at first that they had landed on the moon in their dream.

The Director took charge of the situation. He surveyed with his binocular in the distance but could not trace any intelligible data. The Senior space-man consulted the junior and examined the chain and the hook that tied the compartment with the mail train. The chain was broken! So it was clear that the mail train had long severed its connection with the compartment.

They felt thirsty. They had brought with them all gadgets of their space science but forgotten to bring drinking water with them.

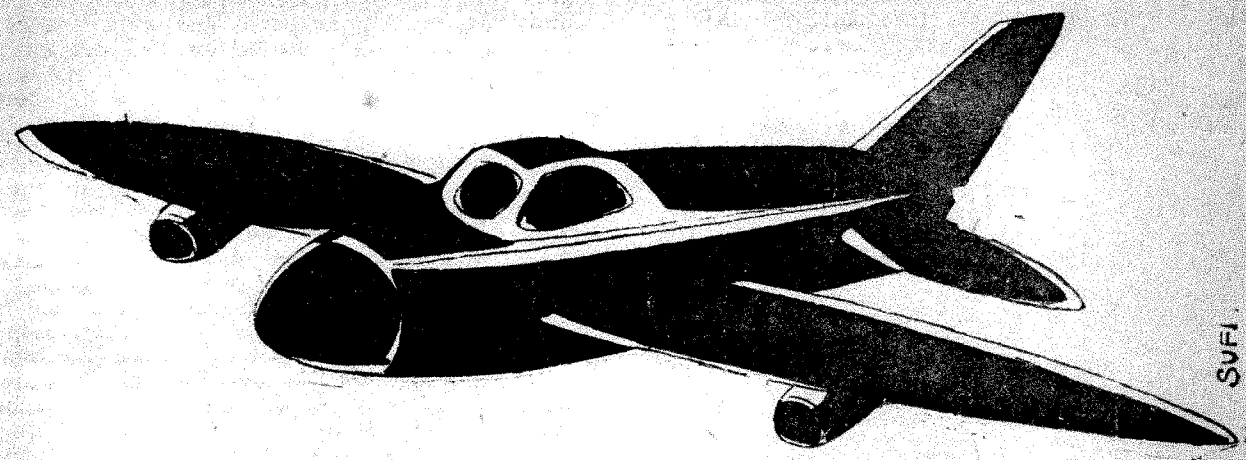
The Countryside had been experiencing a severe drought that year. Till the end of August there had been no rainfall. The heat of the atmosphere had exceeded all its previous records. The farmer waited and waited for the rains but to no effect. The vast lands withered and cracked. The green trees were all leafless and stood like burnt-down timber. All the ponds and wells, tanks and rivulets had dried to the bottom. The peasants bore everything, with the prospect of rains and a good crop. But that also failed. God's curse had befallen the countryside.

The three space-scientists had become thirsty. Thousands of acres of barren land lay by the side of a forest, and there was no trace of any source of water. The three conferred. The Director said that when the Railways would discover their mistake at the next station, the train would arrange to take them back. The junior spaceman said the next station would not arrive soon as the mail train was a through train, only stopping at the destination. The senior spaceman suggested a walk in search of water through the distant forest. And so began their search for water.

They travelled about ten miles through the forest—a short distance, no doubt, when compared to their orbit around the earth. But that was enough to make them exhausted. If the forests were not

Continued on page 138

One man brought an earthen pot and poured water.



THE PILOT

by. H. P. BASU

IT is midnight. The stars twinkle in the azure sky. Even the hooting of owls and the nocturnal stroll of beasts of prey are breaking the stillness of the night. At a distance is heard the booming of guns and rapid rattle of rifle. Then is heard the wailing of siren. Yes, it was an inferno to be in.

The curtain of this mystery is lifted and the ravages of destruction meet one's eyes everywhere. The dead and the wounded lay on the battle field. It is a night of haunting horror. Peace left the land and the enemy put the cap of martyrdom on the head of the heroes now dead. The last lamentation of the stricken man rises in the sky, "Oh ; why this barbarity in this civilized world".

— "Water, take a little water . . . ."

— "No no, let me die. I came to defend my country with my life and I pass away like a brave fighter."

— "Remove the bandage from my face and let me have a last look of my mother-land," said another almost done to death.

— "There, there come the Pakistani raiders, where is my gun ?" Many a voice with agonising zeal goes up in unison in the stillness of the night. They are all Jawans, the brave soldiers of India. Fired by the ideals of Sivaji, Swamiji, Bapuji and Netaji they came to grapple with the rapacity of the Pakistani rulers. Their arms have proved their worth and have proved to the raiders that India still is the land of heroes. India beckons to them. Her affection is their sole sustenance and her service is their high privileges

— "Why do you want me to open my mouth ?"

— "Please, brother, take this medicine."

— "Brother" ?

— "Yes brother, you will have to take it."

— "But I ....."

Yes, I know you are a Muslim. What of that ? There is no difference here in India between a Hindu and a Muslim and a Christian. We do not put a premium upon one's caste or creed. The wounded pilot Akbar looks at the lady volunteer, Kalyani of the Indian Red Cross regiment, like a man bewildered. After administering the medicine Kalyani asks "Why do you look so intently ?"

— "It is you."

— "Me you say ?"

— "Yes, it is and I recall the face of Amina."

— "Amina ?"

— "Yes, my younger sister. She also used to nurse with the same care and affection as you are doing. Kalyani replied with a smile "Very well, when you return home, tell Amina about me" and Akbar retorted in elation "Certainly I will. But ....."

— "Why do stop ?"

— "But I have no mind to return home. You will not realise how we fared under the Pakistani rule. No food, no clothes, the country is reduced to a desolate land full of frustration and despair."

— "But we hear a different tale."

— "What you hear is a cock and bull story. That is due to the false propaganda flung broadcast by the Pakistani administrators."

— "Remove the bandage from my face." Kalyani advances towards the next bed occupied by a wounded Jawan.

— "Why do you shout like that." Kalyani pats him on the head.

— "No body will understand it. I gave a word to her, promised her that the love between us shall be like an offering at the altar of our motherland."

— "That you have done already."

— "I have done it ? Is it ? No. No. It's a lie We will have to teach a good lesson to those Pakistani barbarous raiders who have shattered the peace of our land, from whose nefarious attacks the temples, mosques, churches and Gurdwars have not escaped unhurt and the homes of peaceful men have gone to rack and ruin. They have blasted the fair face of Kashmir.

"Get over your illness."

— 'Oh, when, how long will it take ?"

— "Well, only a few days more." After paci-

fying the man, Kalyani was going to leave the place.

— "You are leaving ?"

— "Yes, do you want to say anything ?"

— "I will ask you a question."

— "Well, tell me."

— "What's your opinion about girls ?"

— "Girls ?"

— "Well. I am bed-ridden, wounded for a few days but she could send me a letter."

— "A letter ?"

— "Can you write a letter for me ? I feel better to-day. If I don't write now, I may miss the chance but although I have the mind I have not the ability to do it now."

— "Tell me what you want me to write."

— "Will you write ?"

— "Yes ?"

— "Then write. It is about a month now that I have been wounded and lying in bed and all the time your picture comes to my mind. I have followed the promise I gave you. I have killed the evil designs of the raiders. You will be astonished to hear that when I was flying freely in the air like a bird checking the advance of the raiders then your face was floating in my mind's sky all the

time. Your photograph remained always with me and it has been a source of inspiration to me and nerved my drooping mind to action.

— "What's the matter, why do you stop ?" Kalyani's eyes become moist in emotion.

— "Kalyani . . ."

— "Kalyani ?"

— "Yes, yes, I am writing this letter to my Kalyani."

— "Sujoy ?" Kalyani breaks into a sob.

— "Who are you, who is it ?" Sujoy wants to tear off the bandage from his face. Kalyani held his hands tight in her grasp and cried out "I cannot allow you to remove the bandage, Sujoy. Your love, your affection for me is tied up with mine and is at rest here in your bandaged face, please don't break up this peace or everything will fall to pieces. "This conversation is hushed in silence. Next day from the newspaper report it appears that the two lovers have fallen a victim to the reckless bombing by the Pakistani air force.

THE MOON

continued from page 136

there, they thought, they would surely die. They thought of all this—of their Rocket Station, and of the moon, and soon fell asleep beneath a shady tree.

When they got up, they found themselves in a strange environment. They were lying on mats made of leaves. Short-statured people, black, almost naked, had gathered round them. The Director at first shuddered out of fear, taking them to be cannibals. The junior looked at the girls with amor inspite of the fear. But these three very much intelligent persons did not take much time to realise that they were very innocent, poor village folks who saved their lives this time. One man brought an earthen pot and poured water. The three drank to their heart's content. After some time, the villagers brought some hot curry mainly of local plants and leaves. The three ate, because they were extremely hungry. They took some rest. Language was no bar for realising the extreme goodness and poverty of the villagers. They took the few moments before nightfall to see the village and the withered lands. Not a thatch was in tact, and not a soul had full meals of the day. Children were lying on the open uncared for. Many were ill and there was no doctor, no medicine. In the field they saw the withered paddy seedlings dying for want of rains. The barren lands were lying untilled, and the only prospect of crop in the whole of the year was shattered. They saw the gloom of the land and sighed.

They returned to one of the huts as it was night. Except the fire-flies there was no streak of light anywhere. The Director once thought of his Rocket Station and again of this land. The two spacemen sat with gloomy faces resting against their palms. The horrible poverty created by drought gave them no respite. The junior asked what could be the reasons for not having rains. None answered.

The senior sighed and said their orbit round the earth would mean little to the village.

The Director criticised the Government department responsible for irrigation. He also suggested that Government should take up the project of Artificial rains more seriously.

None else could join the conversation as none of the villagers understood them. Before falling asleep, the junior did not fail to hear a distant rhythm of tribal music. They could sing inspite of their poverty, he thought and then closed his eyes.

Their morning arrived with loud sounds of horns and mixed cries. A cavalcade of cars and men had arrived in the village, much to the bewilderment of the villagers. Zeeps and big cars and so many men were never seen in the village. A very fat and big man came out of a car and embraced the Director and the other two spacemen, pressed their hands in deep apology and took them in their car. Tears could be seen in his eyes. Perhaps he was the leader of the salvation party.

The police officers who came in a zeep abused the nasty, ragged folk who had made no good arrangement for the space-scientists.

The party took not more than five minutes to leave the village, and the zeeps and the cars blew their horns, trampled the dried leaves, and rushed at the top of their speed, leaving behind a trail of dust and burnt petrol smokes on the withered leaves. They must hurry, lest they become late in reaching the moon.

THE GIFT

By
NARENDRA NATH MITRA

A MAN came near to me and asked me "Would you buy some tooth powder, Sir ?" "Three for two annas" he said, dangling his small green boxes before my nose. Annoyed, I withdrew a few steps. "You had better go, I don't need any such stuff." I said.

But he followed me. "Please Sir, you have to take some. Of course you buy these things from a shop, don't you ? Why not let a poor man earn some money ?" He kept on saying.

'How many times do I have to say no"—I said as this put me out completely.

I had every reason to be flurried at that moment. In the terrible heat of noon I had to go out for consultation—wasting a precious Sunday. The client being a poor relation there was little chance of any payment which added to my vexation.

"Please Sir, have mercy." I turned back. Undaunted, the hawker followed me. "Stop this nonsense", I said again. "I told you I don't need any tooth powder. I use twigs of the neem tree."

The man was not interested in my techniques of brushing teeth. Instead he simply said "I have had no food since yesterday—the children had nothing to eat."

I looked at his unshaven face, torn and shabby dress, the sunken cheeks. He looked famished. I gave him a two-anna piece. He looked at his boxes of tooth-powder. I said, "No, no, that's all right."

He was not perturbed. I was ill at ease. I had better to take a box of powder for the sake of self-respect.

Still, the hawker did not leave me alone. He kept on following me. "Let him," I said to myself. He can't ask for money now. To keep up talk I asked him "How much do you make this way ?" The answer was prompt. "It is no good, babu. Four annas per rupee is the commission. But to sell a rupee's worth of powder is not easy. Nobody seems to want them. If they don't need them, how shall I live ? You tell me, babu."

I nodded absently and then quickly turned round the corner in the vain hope of getting rid of him. But he would not leave me and he asked "Tell me babu, what is left for us to do ? Rob ? Steel ? Kill ourselves ?"

Something in his tone compelled me to look at his face. I saw a glint of anger shining in his eyes that betrayed hunger. Desperate and helpless, his ugly features and puffed lips had a look of being totally ousted. Though the impulse to moralise was immense I could not persuade myself to give him a sermon in economics. Instead I said, "Don't give up. If tooth powder is not good business try something else. Quite a number of people sell fruit near our court. Papayas and sugar canes—it's supposed to be good business—". "Yes, babu I know", he broke in, "but where do I get the capital to buy fruit with. There's not a single relative and acquaintance to whom I haven't gone begging for money. I asked only for a couple of rupees, but they were not disposed to help me. So many people in the city, yet no one was kind enough to put life into me and see me begin anew. Man is so selfish."

That this man should take a wrong view of human nature seemed absolutely unfair. So I fished a two rupee note out of my pocket and gave it to him. I made it quite clear that it was not a gift, that he must return it to me as soon as he was capable of doing so.

Immensely happy, he took the money and said,

"With your blessings sir, I would pay you back in ten days—now would you be so kind as to give me your name and address ?"

"Let's see how you keep your word", said I as I gave him my whereabouts in a chit of paper. The man touched my feet once again. "All right, sir", he accepted my challenge. "Sripati Biswas would rather die than break his word."

When I came home I told my wife of the Sripati episode. "If you want to be charitable why should I object". But she was cross. "The wife gets her share of virtues from the husband".

"Who wants to be charitable ?" I retorted. Surama smiled sarcastically. "So you think your Sripati would one day pay back the money with interest ? He might even make you his business partner for all you know".

"Wait a minute" I said, "Let's say 'I have thrown that money away.' Poor man, let him at least have one good meal for once. Don't we spend a great deal more for an evening's entertainment?"

"Very true", admitted my wife grudgingly.

I let the matter end here. To be honest with myself my conscience did prick a little. Two rupees was a little too much for charity.

The following week I forgot all about it. Once Surama referred to him obliquely. Keen as I was to bury the hatchet I said "We had better go to the cinema." Surama replied, "No more movies now, I have made up my mind to give away whatever I have to the first hawker I meet on the streets".

But the next week we patched up our quarrel and did go to a movie. The shadow of Sripati vanished for the time being.

Then one morning as I was getting dressed for the court I heard a rasp at the door. Surama was fixing my tie. "Let me get it" I told her. "Must be a client". I leaned from the balcony "Who is it ?" Are you home sir ? I'm Sripati"—came the answer from below.

Even though he was not a client, my heart gave a leap. "I knew he would come" I told my wife jubilantly.

"Babu, are you in ?" Sreepati called again. I opened the door for him. Sripati did not change, he had the same pack of green boxes with him.

"What's the matter", I asked.

"By and by, sir. First, can I have a glass of water ?"

"A glass of water ?" I repeated. Looking up I could see Surama all alive with ill-concealed curiosity. I asked the maid to fetch a glass of water then put a stool for Sripati. He drank the water in big gulps, then put the glass down with a sigh of relief.

"Tell me about your fruit business" I asked. I was in a hurry to start for work. Sripati said "That's what I've come to tell you, babu. It didn't work. I made good use of your money. I bought pineapples and papayas, babu, but bad luck would have it. I got cheated. The fruits were all rotten. Couldn't get even six anna."

Sripati looked at me.

"Hm" I said gravely.

Sripati continued "If you have once been kind to this wretched person, wouldn't you, once more" —he passed

I said sternly "What do you want me to do now. Give you some more money to buy more pineapples and papayas ?"

Hopeful, he said, "No sir, I have done with fruit now. If you give me five this time I would start selling ready-made clothes. It's a paying business. If all goes well I would give you back all your money within a month."

I didn't let him sense how angry I was. Coolly, putting my hand on the torn shirt on his shoulder I said "Listen Sripati, I am a lawyer. We have to deal with cheats and rogues of all sorts. We know them by sight. That day when I first met you near Sealdah do you think I didn't recognise you for what you were ? I very certainly did. Still I gave you some money just to test you. Now if you don't leave my house I am afraid I'll have to send for the police."

Sripati opened his mouth in protest but I didn't give him a chance to speak. "It's getting late, I have no time to listen to you."

In spite of this rebuff Sripati was undaunted. "Please may I have a rupee then", he pleaded.

"Not a pice" I said "now get out."

Sripati moved a little, then pleaded "Please babu, don't go. At least buy a few boxes from me. Three for two." "Some other time". I said "I haven't finished those I got from you last time."

"But my tooth powder is good for the gum, sir "said Sripati. I rushed towards a moving bus without bothering to answer.

That evening at tea Surama was furious. "You had no right to be rude to him" she said "If I were he I would have sued you for defamation." "Have you fallen in love at first sight ? "I mocked. "If he had been a little more handsome though."

Surama flared up "You've cast decency to the winds." This is what comes from always arguing for rogues and rascals. But answer me, why did you insult him for nothing ? One act of kindness does not give you any right to do that."

"You are right" I said "But the point is if he had not lied about the whole thing, if for example he had admitted that he spent those two rupees in buying milk and fish for the kids, got drunk or went to a particular quarter.—"

"Enough, enough." Surama left the table. "You lawyers are no different from thieves and policemen. To you all men are wicked."

"Oh come, come, we don't say all wives are wicked"

This was more than Surama could put up with.

As usual we made friends shortly after. Once again Sripati disappeared from our thoughts.

Three or four months later, one evening a lady visitor caught us at tea. She was accompanied by a little boy of about eight and that she was in an extremely agitated state of mind.

This could be a client. So I said to Bhajandas, "Tell her to wait in the parlour". "So I said, sir. But she said she couldn't rest in peace till she saw you" said Bhajandas.

I was slightly sceptical about her class but Surama thought this was no time to discriminate. Unless she was in real trouble she wouldn't have come. So Bhajandas was to summon her directly upstairs.

A little later a veiled woman followed my servant to the room. But she stopped at the doorway, with her stood a boy of seven or eight.

"What is the matter ?" I asked. She did not answer. Only a half-chocked sob emerged through her veil.

I asked the boy—"Tell me, what's the matter."

"The police spirited my father away."

"Why ?"

"Because he stole. But father steals all the time, why did they have to take him now ?"

"You have a point there. All right. I'd ask the police. Now tell me the name of your father."

"Mr. Sripati Biswas" said his son

I was too stunned to speak. The boy produced a dirty folded piece of paper on which was

written my name and address. This was what I had given to Sripati on our first encounter. "Father gave this" the boy said.

Now the veiled woman spoke. "He told us to come to you in need. He said you would save us. You are the only hope for poor people like us." She came forward probably to touch my feet but Surama took her hands. "Come with me, sister. Make a clean breast of it. Don't worry. He'll do what ever he can to help you. I give you my word." She took her to the next room.

Surama came back later with the details of the case. "Sripati is caught on the charge of picking pockets. But you have to save him by all means. The poor girl has two more kids at home. For the last two days they didn't have any thing to eat."

"That's probably true. But what good would this case be to me ?" "I don't care. All I want you to do is to have him acquitted. Are you quite sure you are not the person who led him to this ? If you hadn't called him a cheat that day, if you had given him a rupee may be"—"That's enough". I stopped her. "Sripati is an old hand in this line. He didn't have to wait for my insinuations."

Still, I took the case without charge. A petty case of pickpocketing, and it wasn't too difficult to get it through. My senior briefed the police inspector. Sripati was released on bail. In the final police report he was discharged for lack of evidence. Though I did not work for money but had to remain obligated to my senior lawyer and the inspector for their favour. That was all I gained from the case.

But father steals all the time, but why did they have to take him now ?

Sripati brought his family to my house to show his gratitude. He touched my feet as well as my wife's and said "Nobody but you could have saved me, babu" "Now don't you ever go on doing it again". I warned him.

Sripati was vehement in his denial. "Oh, no, babu, never again. I have been taught a lesson."

Our next meeting occured a month later. I was looking for a way out from a narrow lane in an unfamiliar spot in Beliaghata where I had gone to visit an ailing relation. Then I lost my way. I asked for directions but nobody could enlighten me; suddenly under a lamp post I bumped into Sripati.

"Babu what are you doing here ?"

"Had come here to visit. It was good I met you. Come, walk with me up to the main road."

"Of course, babu, but may I ask for a favour?"

"What is it ? What have you been up to ?"

Shyly he smiled, "No, it's not what you think. Since you have come here would you be so kind as to step into my house, its just around. I haven't forgotten what you have done for me babu. Even if I made shoes for you out of my own skin I couldn't pay you back."

Though an obvious flattery, I liked the way he said it. It was gratifying to see he remembered my act of kindness. At the same time a strong desire to visit his home took hold of me. Let me go and see what it looks like at least for the pleasure of relating it to Surama.

With cautious steps I followed him down narrow alleys past dirty slums and evil smelling gutters.

"Watch your steps, there's a ditch there" and "This part is bumpy, be careful babu" Sripati kept guiding me all the way. ... .

Then he stopped in front of a house and shouted. "Come here, mother of Tunu. bring the lamp. See who's here".

Tunu's mother came out holding a smoky lamp. "Who is it, dear" she asked. Her voice was familiar. When she came sobbing to my house her face was veiled. To night in the dim glare of the tiny kerosine lamp I looked at her fully. A dark beauty, this was hardly what I had expected in this shabby hut. Her face was happy, radiant and smiling. Happiness is far more becoming than grief—I had this sudden realisation.

But she drew the end of sari down on her face as soon as she reiognised me. "I should have thought you had more sense". She mildly admonished her husband, "I thought it was our 'brother-in-law. Where would babu sit in this mess ?" ...

"All right. You don't have to worry" said Sripati. "I asked him here for the dust of his feet. We will bow our heads at his honoured feet. Do you think he cares for a seat ?"

He made a good a salesman, I was reminded once again. But this time his verbosity touched me. It was sincere.

I went past a row of rooms. Garbage piled on the yard, but the verandah was kept clean. Some

Continued on page 148

BOROLINE HOUSE • CALCUTTA-3

By

SWARAJ BANDYOPADHAYA

Even then

THEY no longer lived in the dark, clumsy, disgustingly smelling room in this narrow blind lane. They have moved to a furnished flat on a broad road. Banalata is surely earning a lot and receiving frequent calls for dance and acting from Office Clubs and Dramatic Clubs. Her charge now is forty rupees for one performance and seventyfive for two in succession. She has changed her name. For actresses and dancers it seems to be a must. A rising dancer or actress must have a catchy and sweet name to become a hot favourite with the public. Banalata of this cursed blind lane has therefore come to be known as Malabika Shome. With her younger sister and widow mother, she is enjoying her days of comfort. With her luck and demand increasing, she is having a number of admirers also. Who knew that a girl like Banalata, with a thin unnourished body and pale face would turn into such a charming lady with well-developed breasts and hips and a wonderful slim waist in the course of three years?

She is now happy and prosperous; Let her be so—thought Jadunath sitting on a mat in a small dirty room with one window, at the corner of the narrow blind lane. Banalata is now beyond his reach. She can now at best feel compassion for this poor petty clerk of a small company. Nothing more can be expected.

Jadunath sighed and lit up a cheap cigarette. It was only two years back that Banalata used to come to this room, wearing a torn dirty skirt with obliging smile in her face. She was then only fifteen. She looked at him—and there was ample evidence in her eyes that she was down and out—she whispered imploringly, "Can you lend me eight annas, Jaduda?" Jadunath knew the reasons. It was the twenty-eighth day of the month, and they have naturally no money to buy mustard oil, spices etc. with. Jadunath looked sympathetically and gave her two annas more than what Banalata had expected, "Give your mother eight annas, and two annas for you".

Banalata stared at him stupidly open-mouthed. Gradually her eyes seemed wet with tears of joy as she murmered, "Two annas for me!"

"Yes". While speaking Jadunath wished that he would at least touch Banalata, if he could not gather so much courage to embrace her. But he could not even touch. He only laughed nervously and as he had not the guts to do this. He could not raise his trembling hands despite his best efforts.

Jadunath really was a coward. He was small with thin legs, and his body had no muscles. His skinny arms were like delicate sticks. His home was near 'Kanthi', where lived his parents along with their five more children. He lived alone in Calcutta, employed as a Clerk in a small firm, rented a very small room at the corner of this narrow lane, and took his meals in lower grade hotels. In addition to paying for meals and rents he had to spend for smoking and lending rupees five or ten to Banalata and her family. Jadunath tried to think that he had no object behind this help. As a man, it was his duty to help a poor neighbour according to his ability. He felt satisfied assuming an air of generosity.

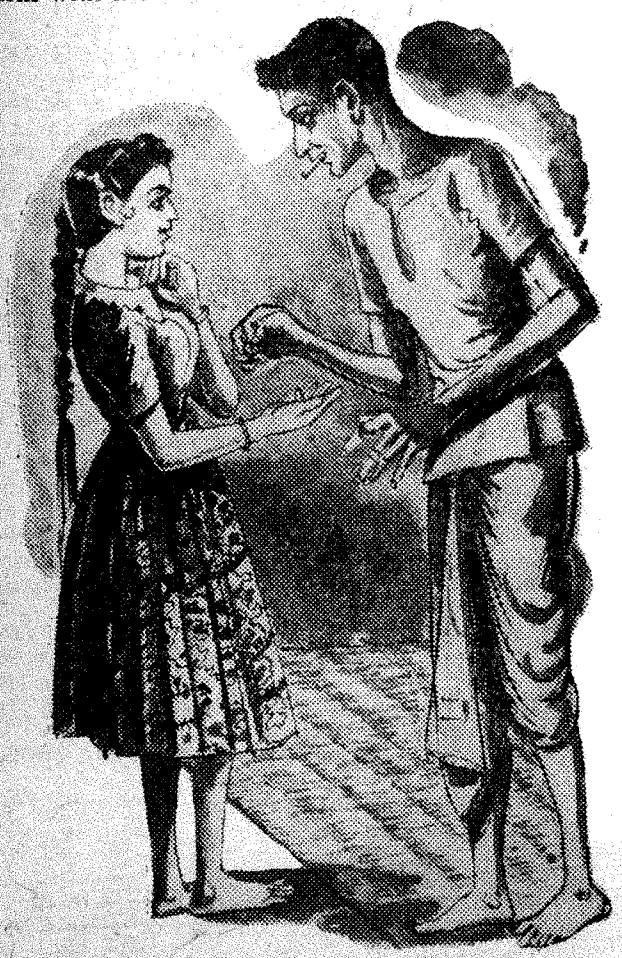
Banalata's widow mother was a teacher in a Primary School. As she lived on a pittance it often became difficult for her to maintain her two daughters. By the end of almost every month she had to send Banalata to her Jaduda asking for a small amount of loan and curiously enough Jadunath found that she always forgot to repay the loan. Jadunath, of course, never asked for repayment. Sometimes he decided to ask for the money he had lent, but as he stared at Banalata and found

her lovely slim figure with long, strong, naked legs beneath her skirt, he was at once overwhelmed by a queer impulse of depression and fear. He could not utter a single word but only wished Banalata to sit by his side pressing her body against his, laughing and whispering into his ears a word of fun.

He knew, Banalata was always sent by her mother to him. But why Banalata, why not her younger sister? Was there any planned object behind that? Had Banalata's mother any plan in her mind? Did she like Jadunath to be her daughter's husband?

He got excited as he thought of this, and through the imagination he would derive his only and the greatest pleasure in these routined dry lonely days. But before realising the position properly, Jadunath gave way to despair. Abrupt transformation of Banalata's position made him stupid and stunned. He at last realised the situation on Banalata's leaving the dark lane, and turning into an attractive woman with a changed name. Jadunath sighed deeply and lit up the cheap cigarette. As he was smoking, his colour bones became remarkably visible and his big stupid eyes seemed like those of a driven-out gasping dog. He was sweating. As he touched his chest he found the hair wet with sweat. He placed the cigarette again between his pale lips and began smoking.

It was only sixmonths ago, Banalata came for the last time. Returning from the office Jadunath was taking a rest leaning against the damp wall looking very tired and nervous. Banalata rushed into the room and sat very close to him. She was dressed in a low-cut skirt, very tight for her firm, fresh, developed body. She seized Jadunath's left arm with her firm round arms, leaned forward over his body carelessly and whispered, "Can you lend me five rupees?"



Give your mother eight annas & these two annas for you.

In the last week of a month, Rupees five was too much for Jadunath. To give it to her, he would have to reduce his expenses. He thought for a while, but did not send Banalata away. He gave a five rupee note and smiled nervously looking at her.

Banalata laughed coquettishly and said "Would you mind coming to our house, to-day sharp at seven to seven thirty?"

Jadunath wanted to ask, "why", but could not utter a word. He held her left hand, tried to feel its warmth and softness.

"Please, Jaduda, try to come"—said Banalata and went away. Usually Jadunath did not like to go to their house. Many a times he tried, but every time he was seized by a queer sense of fear and returned even from their doors. He could not understand clearly the reasons of his fear, still he could not overcome it.

That day Jadunath gathered courage and went to their house. Since he helped the family with no less than five rupees just before some two hours, he felt he could enter their house without any hesitation at least that day. He went and found two young men sitting on a bed chatting and laughing loudly with Banalata. Jadunath also found to his surprise that Banalata, dressed in silk-saree and Choli did not take his presence as anything important; She went on talking with them. Jadunath stepped inside the room hesitatingly and his face became pale as he was looking at those two unknown youths.

As one of the two, who was tall and muscular looked at Jadunath with questions in his eyes, Banalata turned swiftly towards Jadunath and said gaily—"Well, Jaduda is here. Let me introduce Jaduda to you. He is one of our wellwishers—and —" Looking at Jadunath she said again—"Here's Ashimda, my master and friend, my guide and.... I mean.....I mean.....Ashimda is a well-known dancer.....Haven't you heard his name? He is.....I mean.....a famous man in film world also". Banalata was getting excited, as she was describing Ashim's qualities, which seemed to be beyond her to express.

Partly because of Banalata's unreasonable excitement and partly of depression, Jadunath became unusually cold and silent. He looked at Banalata's Ashimda without any expression. Ashim was poring over a magazine, as he was possibly feeling embarrassed.

"And Pradipda plays on instruments, you'd only wonder, when he plays on Tabla with a dancer ....."

Before Banalata could finish, Ashim stood up on his feet and said in a hurry, "Let us go now. I think rehearsal has started already. Again we shall be delayed, I fear, quick Miss Some, we can't wait".

Ashim and Pradip walked out of the room putting on their shoes. Banalata at once, sprang towards Jadunath and caught hold of his shoulder with soft hand, whispered, "Would you mind Jaduda giving me two rupees more, 'I'd surely repay you. Really I need it badly, you see. I'd return you all. I am learning dance and preparing for my first performance. Please, rupees two only.....quick...."

Jadunath pulled out two one rupee notes from his pocket and handed it to Banalata silently. Banalata smiled obligingly and hurried out of the room. Jadunath sat silently for a while.

Banalata's sister Padmalata entered into the room, noticed him and said very casually, "Like to take a cup of tea?" "No, thanks"—Jadunath stood up and went away.

Two long impatient weeks went by and Jadunath found, to his utter despair, that Banalata did not see him even for a single time. Only for two days he saw Banalata in a moving car, sitting closely beside her Ashimda. The sudden glance of Bana-

He found Banalata standing before a mirror with a lipstick in hand.

lata's beauty brought an acute pain to his heart. He was now a bundle of nerves. His head reeled, as he realised that Banalata would never come again. Strangely he felt severely alone. Now he had nothing to look forward to, none to think of, and no thought to make him fearful or nervous. Failing to bear the dreadful pressure of loneliness he decided to see Banalata at her house; and actually he found himself in their room in the evening.

Banalata's sister Padma who was lying on the bed who suddenly turned her face hearing the sound of footsteps. "Oh God! Jaduda! "—Padma got up and smiled.

Jadunath found no other way but to summon courage to sit on the bed. Banalata's mother came in and greeted him smilingly. Padma got down from the bed and said to her mother, "Can you please send a cup of tea for Jaduda, or I may go to kitchen".

"No, no, you needn't bother, I'm bringing tea". —Her mother went out. Jadunath kept silent for a while, but asked at last hesitatingly, "Where is Banalata?"

Didi has gone out, a very big performance will be staged tomorrow".

"Should I come the day after tomorrow?"

Padma looked at him and asked by way of reply, "Got anything personal to tell her?"

"Nothing of that sort. It's only to meet her".

Padma concealed her smile, turning her face towards the wall. Her mother appeared again with a cup of tea, served it to Jadunath and parted silently. Jadunath took barely two sips from the cup and then he sprang to his feet.

Indifferently Padma said, "Didi is frightfully busy these days; Ashimda is negotiating with a film producer to get a role fixed for her. Besides her dance performances, Didi is heavily engaged in acting.....so many roles.....a lot of big people coming everyday.....what a strain, Didi is getting tired".

Jadunath came out silently. The day after tomorrow, again he went there but only to find Padma announcing proudly Banalata's absence.

He could not but go there again after seven days. He found Banalata standing before a mirror with a lipstick in hand, dressed in a transparent silk saree and sleeveless blouse. He gathered courage and came forward. While painting her soft thin lips Banalata said with a delicate indifference. "Yes Jaduda, anything to tell me?"

Jadunath felt a queer feeling of nervousness and could not utter a single word.

Banalata finished her painting, came forward, and said, "Excuse me, I am already late. Ashimda is waiting with his car. I must leave. Don't mind please....". Without waiting for any reply from Jadunath she went away.

That Ashimda again! That tall muscular young man. Where and why is he waiting?:

Jadunath's head was shuffled with many questions and curiosities but he could not utter single word. He left their house.

Again he felt tortured and tried by clumsy thoughts. An unknown power within dragged him again to Banalata's house. Banalata, as usual, was absent. Thus he came and came but failed to see Banalata. At last he gave Banalata up. She actually has fled away.

Banalata left the dingy little room in this narrow blind lane, and rented a well-furnished flat. She became Malabika Shome, the dancer and actress. She was no longer that Banalata, a poor girl of this dark lane. There was nothing left for Jadunath, either to do or to think over. He absented himself from his office for some seven days, kept himself lying on a mat in his small room, casting his look at the ceiling with his dumb and thoughtless eyes, and did nothing but to smoke eigarettes. Then he joined office and moved on his course as before, like a thoughtless moving creature.

Gradually he ceased to hope anything, and so there was no excitement, no depression acute. He felt himself like a moving machine sometime. Two prolonged years passed by. Within this period he saw Banalata not less than a dozen times while passing through the broad road, where stood the house Banalata lived in. Without any expectation yet almost accidentally he found Banalata coming out of the house accompanied by one or two well-dressed persons, unknown to him. As if looking at a nice picture or a multi-coloured flower Jadunath stared at them. He did not feel excitement or depression within as he had ceased believing Banalata's existence. Actually she passed beyond his ken.

Two years went by. One summer noon Jadunath was lying on his mat, feeling very uneasy for the suffocating heat. He was sweating and trying vainly to fall asleep. Suddenly he heard a knock at the door. At the first he was astonished, then he got irritated. Who the devil might come so untimely in such a skin-frying noon! Then came the second annoying knock. He was feeling also very tired and therefore pulled up his body on his feet. He opened the door, and surprisingly found Padma, Banalata's sister.

Padma's face was sweating. It was clear from her nervous look that she was feeling distressed and helpless. She got into the room, and sat on the mat sighing heavily. Jadunath stood silent.

Padma broke the silence,—"Didi has called you". It was the second and a greater surprise for Jadunath,—"Me—called me?"

He heard Padma's feeble voice, — "Yes, you. Didi is now in Hospital".

"Hospital! Why?"

Padma remained silent.

Jadunath could not believe his ears. He sat on the corner of the mat, and voiced after a pause,— "How long?"

"For over two months. She slipped and fell down while dancing, and the bone of her right leg

was fractured". Padma raised her eyes. Janunath found her eyes full of tears.

"When should I go?" asked he.

"She is in cabin. You can meet her any time. If you like, you may go with me".

Jadunath got up at once, put on a shirt and said in excitement, — "Come on".

A fresh excitement, a tremendous feeling of excitement, felt Jadunath again for Banalata. He came over to their flat with Padma, as she wanted him to meet her mothtr first. Padma's mothor began to sob when she saw Jadunath.

"I don't know what awaits my fate. To the last farthing we have spent for Bano; I now fail to understand, what we should do next!" Again she broke into noisy sobs. Jadunath had no word, he went dumb. He came out of the flat silently, but resolutely.

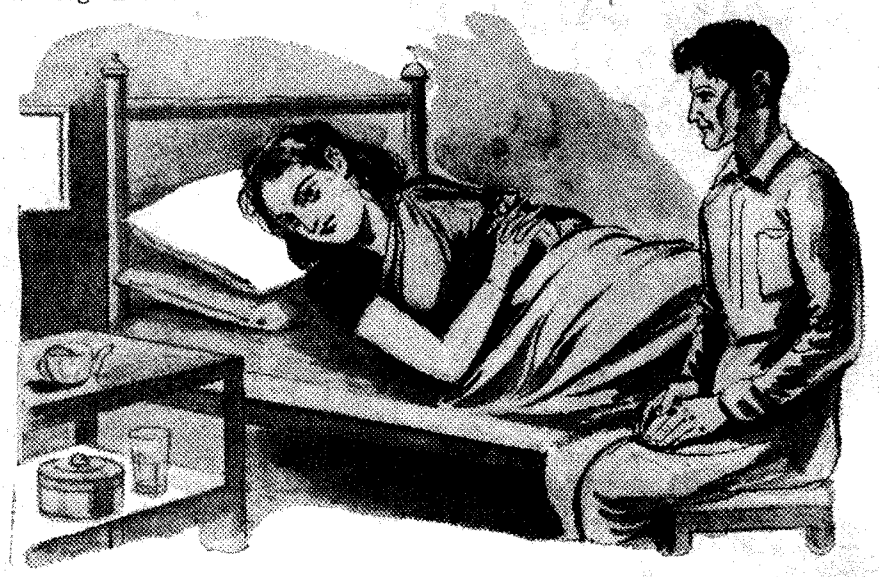
A heavy but pleasuresome feeling was softly pressing his heart, that Banalata has called him at last. He reached the hospital, and did not have much difficulty in finding Banalata lying in a cabin. He stood close to her bed. Banalata cast her watery big eyes on him; Her eyes seemed to be extremely tired and her look vacant. Jadunath sat on a stool silently and watched Banalata weeping with trembling lips. He remained awefully silent to find Banalata's right leg amputated from the knee.

In the spell of a dreadful silence he again found Banalata weeping, covering her eyes with her palms. Banalata would dance no more. As she lost one of her limbs she would no more attract Ashimda, Paradipda and others. They would never come again. Banalata was sobbing, sobbing, and yet sobbing. Now she would be forced to vacate the well-furnished flat and rent a room in some narrow dark lane, may be in the previous one. Again she would sometimes be compelled to approach Jadunath for loans. And the loans would never be repaid.

Jadunath was plunged into a dream .... He would marry Banalata and feel no less happy. His love never depended on Banalata's legs.

Banalata was still sobbing.

Jadunath felt like laughing, and really he was laughing within his mind. Inwardly he was laughing incessantly with his watery eyes fixed on Banalata. Tears flowed down his cheeks.



Banalata lying in a cabin.

THE GIFT

Continued from page 141

of the curious neighbours peeped, but did not dare come near. Then I followed them to a room.

Their children were asleep in a bed laid on the floor. The small room was packed with neatly arranged boxes, pots and pans. Sripati's wife was looking like a queen in her own dominion. She whispered something to her husband. Sripati rushed to the next room and brought me a wooden chair about to fall to pieces. "It's all right, Sripati" I said "You needn't bother. I can't stay."

Now the voice from under the veil spoke. "If you have been kind enough to come to our poor dwelling sir wouldn't you ?"—and she spread a cushion on the seat of the chair. "This was not necessary" I protested. Sripati said "Too many bugs in the chair, Sir. You won't be able to sit without it.

Sripati's wife had another consultation with her husband. Sripati took some money and was just going out when I stopped him, "No Sripati, don't. I don't take food outside, at this time of the year. I think I had better go now. You might come with me up to the road."

"Of course, babu. But you have done so much for us ; what could we possibly give you in return ?" He hesitated probably remembering something and said "But I can give you something of which you can have some use. You are a learned man."

Half in jest I asked "What is that ?"

Sripati opened an earthen jar and brought out something. It was a brand new Sheaffer's pen. From the unconventional hiding place it was not too difficult to guess how he had got this valuable object.

I did not speak for a minute then I said "Old habits die hard."

Sripati did not try to make a straightforward answer, he said "I have been thinking of giving you a present, but I don't come across good stuff very often. Even if I get such things they are gone in no time. A family man's problem, you know. But I haven't forgotten your services babu. Neither has Tunu's mother. As soon as I got hold of this I thought doing a good turn to you. You know the risks I run. If I could count on somebody like you—"

At the time of his trial I had told Sripati not to keep any secrets from his lawyer. Is that why he was determined to make a confession of his sins?

I said, "Sripati would you show me the way out ?"

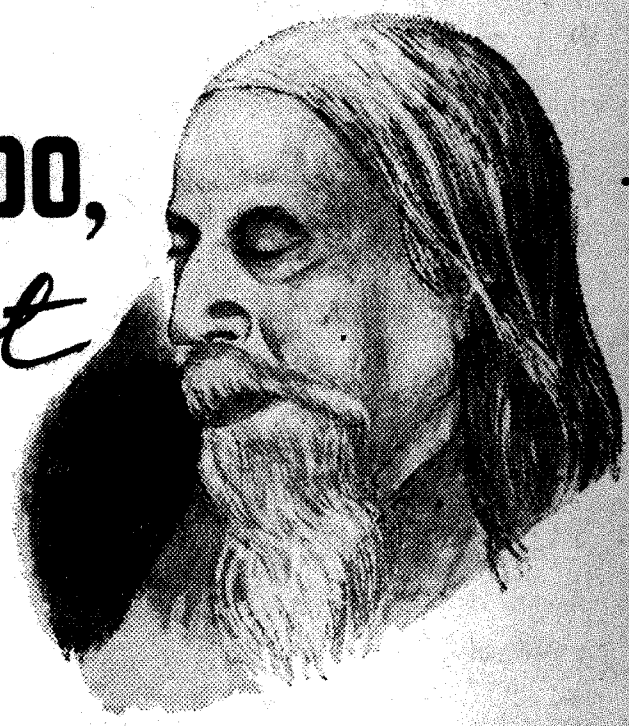
"Oh yes babu, but please keep the pen. Don't worry about my family. We'll manage somehow with your blessings. But I may not get something like this again, something that is worthy of you."

Then the veiled voice spoke. Her voice was gruff with emotion. "You have done so much for us. We are obliged to you for ever. It is beyond our power to repay you. So please take this."—

She meant every word of it. Still, I came out. How could I take that pen, being a conscientious man ? But what other gift could have given them greater satisfaction in giving ?

(Translated by ENAKSHI CHATTERJEE)

SRI AUROBINDO, *The Seer-poet*



By DILIP KUMAR ROY

YEARS ago our President Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan wrote to me in Pondicherry to request Sri Aurobindo to contribute an article on mysticism for a book he was engaged to edit for the West. On my approaching Gurudev he wrote to me in a light-vein: "I never never never was a philosopher. I was a poet and a politician." I regret I cannot endorse the epithet *politician* as it never fitted him except as a crown of thorns, but my heart sang, echoing the other title, *poet*. I would, however, prefer the Indian word *Kavi*, stressed in the Isha Upanishad, by which our ancients wanted to convey two roles the evolved man has played simultaneously down the ages: the seer and the prophet. In his immortal epic Savitri, Sri Aurobindo has enunciated a few more attributes of the *devas* (gods) who come down, incognito, to invest us with their powers, *bibhutis*:

I saw the omnipotent's flaming pioneers
Beyond the heavenly verge that turns towards life,
Come crowding down the amber stairs of birth,
Forerunners of a divine multitude.
Out of the paths of the morning star they came
Into the little room of mortal life.
I saw them cross the twilight of the age,
The sun-eyed children of a marvellous dawn,
The great creators with wide brows of calm,
The massive barrier-breakers of the world
The wrestlers of destiny in her lists of will,
The labourers in the quarries of the gods,
The messengers of the Incommunicable,
The architects of immortality.

I have often felt that all these luminous epithets could well shine like coronas on the brow of Sri Aurobindo, the great Illuminate, the more so as he came missioned, first and last, with the Poet's aureole of authority to summon us to adore what his Kavi-soul was destined to invoke. Not all poets are born dreamers of divinity; but those who are can respond to no other call. I myself have hailed Sri Aurobindo primarily as a celestial poet who came down to us to remind us of our lost heritage: the kingdom of heaven. And only a spiritual poet par excellence—by which I mean a poet of the soul-values, like Sri Aurobindo's cherished minstrel Narad—could sing as he did (*Savitri*, 6.1):

While in his measured chant the heavenly seer
Spoke of the toils of men and what the gods
Strive for on earth, and joy that throbs behind
The marvel and the mystery of pain
He sang to them of the lotus-heart of love
With all its thousand luminous buds of Truth
Which, quivering, sleeps veiled by apparent things.

None, I contend, can have truly appreciated this great "heavenly seer," till he has thrilled to his paeans of worship of gods and godly things so grievously ignored in our unhappy world by the powers that be. So I will confine myself today on the ocsasion of his birthday anniversary to the stupendous role he has played as a Kavi of the "thousand luminous buds of Truth which, quivering, sleeps veiled by apparent things."

Had space been at my disposal, I would have preface my tribute to the great Kavi by quoting passages from some of the mystic poets who had sung of the themes he loved to dwell on all through his life, improvising, with a deep inspiration of sustained sublimity, on what man must aspire to as a son of God because

A mutual debt binds man to the Supreme.
His nature we must put on as He puts ours
We are sons of God and must be even as He
His human portion we must grow divine.
(Savitri, 1.4)

I would have quoted passages like Dante's

L'amor che move il sole a l'altre stelle
(The love that moves the sun and the other stars) *(Paradiso)*

Or Wordsworth's

Dust as we are, the immortal spirit grows
Like harmony in music.....
(The Prelude)

Or George Russell's (A.E.)

But I have touched the lips of clay,
Mother, thy rudest sod to me
Is thrilled with fire of hidden day,
And haunted by all mystery!

But as I have to discourse on quite a few aspects of Sri Aurobindo's prophetic vision of the Millennium to come, to wit:

A few shall see what none yet understands:
God shall grow up while wise men talk and sleep;
For man shall not know the coming till the hour
And belief shall be not till the work is done,
(Savitri, 1.2)

I am obliged to pass by his predecessors and deny myself the joy of citing parallel passages redolent of what Chesterton characterises as "the mystic Rose." I will now go back a little to the early dawn of the mystic seeking in our *Kavi* when he sang rapturously as

A colonist from immortality and as such had to sing of *(Savitri, 1.2)*

The urge of miniature divinity,
A mystic passion from the wells of God .....
An unseen nearness and a hidden joy.....
The murmur of an occult happiness,
An exultation in the depths of sleep,
A heart of bliss within a world of pain
(Savitri, 2.7)

Sri Aurobinda, at 45

I cannot claim to be strictly chronological in my quotations nor deem it necessary for my purpose which is to speak as best I can of his unrivalled greatness as a **Kavi** who sang of the world of gods and the one God who manifests through His Vicegerents. I will only recite a poem which thrilled me to the core, and profoundly moved many another even in our Valley of False Glimmer, as he dubbed our present-day world in one of his letters to me. It reveals in a few stanzas the light of delight shed by the greot Gods culminating in the lone grandeur of the One who manifests through them all. It is entitled WHO, possibly to underline His fathomless mystery!

In the blue of the sky, in the green of the forest,
Whose is the hand that has painted the glow?
When the winds were asleep in the womb of the ether,
Who was it roused them and bade them to blow?
He is lost in the heart, in the cavern of Nature,
He is found in the brain where He builds up the thought:
In the pattern and bloom of the flowers He is woven,
In the luminous net of the stars He is caught.
In the strength of a man, in the beauty of woman,
In the laugh of a boy, in the blush of a girl;
The hand that sent Jupiter spinning through heaven,
Spends all its cunning to fashion a curl.
These are His works and His veils and His shadows;
But where is He then? by what name is He known?
Is He Brahma or Vishnu, a man or a woman?
Bodied or bodiless? twin or alone?
We have love for a boy who is dark and resplendent,
A woman is Lord of us, naked and fierce.
We have seen Him a-muse on the snow of the mountains,
We have watched Him at work in the heart of the spheres.
We will tell the whole world of His ways and His cunning:
He has rapture of torture and passion and pain;
He delights in our sorrow and drives us to weeping,
Then lures with His joy and His beauty again.
All music is only the sound of His laughter,
All beauty the smile of His passionate bliss;
Our lives are His heart-beats, our rapture the bridal
Of Radha and Krishna, our love is their kiss.
He is strength that is loud in the blare of the trumpets,
And He rides in the car and He strikes in in the spears;
He slays without stint and is full of compassion;
He wars for the world and its ultimate years.
In the sweep of the worlds, in the surge of the ages,
Ineffable, mighty, majestic and pure,
Beyond the last pinnacle seized by the thinker,
He is throned in His seats that for ever endure.
The Master of man and his infinite Lover,
He is close to our hearts, had we vision to see;
We are blind with our pride and the pomp of our passions,
We are bound in our thoughts where we hold ourselves free.
It is He in the sun who is ageless and deathless,
And into the midnight His shadow is thrown;
When darkness was blind and engulfed within darkness,
He was seated within it immense and alone.

He wrote to me many letters stressing not only the greatness of Krishna, Shiva, Kali but that of even the lesser Gods who come to remind us in our vacillations, that we must hunger sleeplessly for the viewless heights where

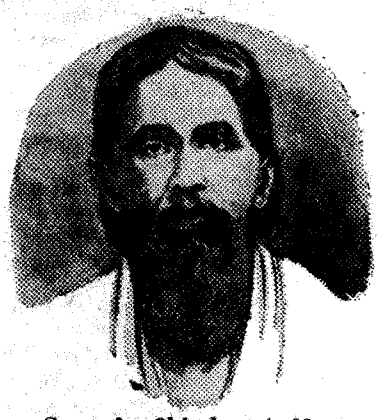
Immortal our forgotten vastnesses
Await discovery in our summit selves
(Savitri, 1.4)

For we do need to be constantly admonished that

A deathless littleness is not all we are ....
A mystic motive drives the stars and suns...

A mighty supernature waits on Time ..
A touch of God's rapture in creation acts.
(Savitri, 2.3)

Sri Aurobindo sang magnificently of this deep "mystic motive" when, at second phase of his poetic unfolding, he wrote auto-biographically of the great Rishi (Seer-poet) lost in his rapturous contemplation of the Supreme on the snow-bound heights of the Himalayas. The context in his own words, is: "King Manu ..... seeks knowledge from the Rishi of the Pole, who after long baffling him with conflicting sidelights of the knowledge, reveals to him what it chiefly conferns man to know."



Sree Aurobindo, at 60

As it is one of his longest poems, I cannot possibly recite it nor even touch upon "the side-lights of the knowledge" (jnan) the great Sage reveals. I must content myself with quoting only a few lines of flaming beauty. After answering the King's importunate and pointed questions about the Gods, the Rishi assures him a la Upanishad (*tat-tvam-asi*) that "thyself art He" and then enlarges on graded worlds and hierarchies of joys in cosmic life and ends by adumbrating the role of the evolving poet:

The poet from his vast and labouring mind
Brings brilliant out
A living world; forth into space they wind
The shining rout,
And hate and love, and laugh and weep, enjoy
Fight and shout .....

But these preoccupations are intended to lead him through the maze of the shimmering mind to the psychic realisation that he must

.... deem nothing vain: through many veils
This Spirit gleams.

And so the Rishi came to see that

.....Behind this visible world ....
Another stands, and in its folds are curled
Our waking dreams

But then there are dream worlds of ravishing beauty, and so

To bring those heavens down upon the earth
We all descend,
And fragments of it in the human birth
We can command.

Lastly, the great Revelation (to put in A.E.'s words)

"dawns upon the seer's enraptured eyes" :
He stands behind .....
We are but sparks of that most perfect fire,
Waves of that sea:
From Him we come, to Him we go, desire
Eternally,
And so long as He wills, our separate birth
Is and shall be.

So the final *adesh* (injunction) of the Seer-poet to the King was:

Shrink not from life, O Aryan, but with mirth
And joy receive
His good and evil, sin and virtue, till
He bids thee leave,
But while thou livest, perfectly fulfil
Thy part, conceive
Earth as thy stage, thyself the actor strong,
The drama His.....
Seek Him upon the earth. For thee He set
In the huge press
Of many worlds to build a mighty state
For man's success,
Who seeks his goal. Perfect thy human might,
Perfect the race.
For thou art He, O King. Only the night
Is on thy soul
By thy own will. Remove it and recover
The serene whole
Thou art, indeed, then raise up man, the lover,
To God, the Goal.

Sri Aurobindo held up before himself this mantra to be guided by all his life as he could believe in no lesser ideal for a poet of the spirit to inspire him, which marks him out as a king not only among men but also, and more so, among the poets each of whom, he sang:

.....receives from some high fount
Concealed in a supernal secrecy
The work that gives him an immortal name. (Savitri, 7.6)

And he becomes immortal because

The word, the form, the charm, the glory and grace
Are missioned sparks from a stupendous Fire (ibid)

But though these sparks sparkle incessantly in almost all his later poems, in none they gleamed like angel dazzles as in his masterpiece, Savitri which entitles him to the epithet of the epic poet in our age of materialist Reason, who, as

The eternal Advocate, seated as judge,
Armours in logic's invulnerable mail
A thousand combatants for Truth's veiled throne
And sets on a high horseback of argument
To tilt for ever with a wordy lance
In a mock tournament where none can win.
(Savitri, 2.10)

I call *Savitri* an epic poem not only because Sri Aurobindo characterised it as "a legend and a symbol" but also because it is shot through and through with the radiant beauty of the Divine which only an epic poet could envision with the inner eye, the *Shiva netra (Savitri, 10.3)*:

This universe an old enchantment guards;
Its objects are carved cups of world-delight
Whose charmed wine is some deep soul's rapture-drink

For he saw in the universe what a merely realist eye could neither spot nor decipher (*Savitri*, 10.3).

The All-wonderful has packed heaven with his dreams,
He has made blank ancient space his marvel-house;
He spilled his Spirit into Matter's signs
His fires of grandeur burn in the great sun,
He glides through heaven shimmering in the moon;
He is beauty carolling in the fields of sound;
He chants the stanzas of the odes of Wind:
He is silence watching in the stars at night;
He wakes at dawn and calls from every bough,

Lies stunned in the stone and dreams in flower and tree

I need hardly recount the legend of Savitri and Satyavan as depicted in the *Mahabharata*, (the great epic which was the fountain-light from which Sri Aurobindo's *Savitri* stemmed, as the epic of our day,) because everyone knows how Savitri was limned by the *Kavi* Vyas as a symbol of Divine Grace and Will who flowered on earth to repeal the iron law of Destiny because

In her own self she found the high recourse;
She matched with the iron law her sovereign right:
Her single will opposed the cosmic rule....
She faced the engines of the universe
(Savitri, 1.2)

Only, in his *Savitri* Sri Aurobindo created a new vibrant drama of marvel, beauty and suspense and portrayed with a breath-taking power how she worked the miracle by standing fearlessly "in the way of the driving wheels" of fate because

Her head she bowed not to the stark decree
Baring her helpless heart to destiny's stroke. *(ibid)*

Had she not defied even Death impelled by the master-light of her soul's urge:

I am a deputy of the aspiring world,
My spirit's liberty I ask for all
(Savitri, 10.4)

How she achieved it by her dauntless courage and diamond will that could not be broken by the pitiless hammer of Death, I cannot describe here. Suffice it to say that Savitri reached in the last Canto—in the *Book of Everlasting Day*—the door of the Eternal who, outruling the sentence of Destiny, gave Savitri, after testing her every inch of the way, the boon she sought: the life of Satyavan looted by ruthless Death,—counting no cost—and the Lord's blessing so that they might conjointly build on earth

"His proud and crystal Home".

And the boon with the prophecy of Supernal Grace, too, is breath-taking in its rapturous import and vast sweep:

The Boon granted by the Supreme to Savitri:

"O beautiful body of the incarnate Word,
Thy thoughts are mine, I have spoken with thy voice.
My will is thine, what thou hast chosen I choose.
All thou hast asked I give to earth and men .....
Because thou hast obeyed my timeless will,
Because thou hast chosen to share earth's struggle and fate .....
I bind by thy heart's passion thy heart to mine
And lay my splendid yoke upon thy soul.
Now will I do in thee my marvellous works,
I will fasten thy nature with my cords of strength,
Subdue to my delight thy spirit's limbs
And make thee a vivid knot of all my bliss,
And build in thee my proud and crystal Home.
Thy days shall be my shafts of power and light,
Thy nights my starry mysteries of joy
And all my clouds lie tangled in thy hair
And all my springtides marry in thy mouth.
O Sun-word, thou shalt raise the earth-soul to Light
And bring down God into the lives of men;
Earth shall be my work-chamber and my house,
My garden of life to plant a seed divine".

And the Prophecy (I can quote but a few lines):

The Spirit shall look out through Matter's gaze
And Matter shall reveal the Spirit's face.
Then man and superman shall be at one
And all the earth become a single life.
Even the multitude shall hear the Voice
And turn to commune with the Spirit within
This earth shall stir with impulses sublime,
Humanity awake to the deepest self,
Nature the hidden Godhead recognise.....
A heavenlier passion shall upheave men's lives,
Their minds shall share in the ineffable gleam,
Their hearts shall feel the ecstasy and the fire,
Earth's bodies shall be conscious of a soul;
Mortality's bondslaves shall unloose their bonds,
Mere men into spiritual beings grow
And see awake the dumb divinity .....
A divine force shall flow through tissue and cell
And take the charge of breath and speech and act
And all the thoughts shall be a glow of suns
And every feeling a celestial thrill .....
A sudden bliss shall run through every limb
And Nature with a mightier Presence fill.
Thus shall the earth open to divinity
And common natures feel the wide uplift,
Illumine common acts with the Spirit's ray
And meet the Deity in common things.
Nature shall live to manifest secret God,
The Spirit shall take up the human play,
This earthly life become the life Divine".

(The Book of Everlasting Day).

HYMN TO SRI AUROBINDO

Hail, Sri Aurobindo, Prince of seers, risen like Sun through mists of gloom,
Come to proclaim the kingdom of heaven descending in earth's hour of doom!
O channel of prophetic wisdom, announcing splendours of the One
When earthly vision failed thy thrilled eyes glimpsed in night Truth's golden Sun.
Thy stupendous beacon burns the veils of darkness from earth's face
Hail, paradisal Bird of bliss,, who shedst on the world His beauty's Grace.
Heir to the wealth of India's treasure of unfathomed Spirit's lore
Thy regal unconfined compassion opens for all Light's Timeless door.
On thy shoulder rests the emblem of transformed creation's ray
Thy heart's mantra of salvation initiates a new world-play.
Thy stupendous beacon burns the veils of darkness from earth's face
Hail, paradisal Bird of bliss, who shedst on the world His beauty's Grace.
Thou hast wrought Love's miracle drama touching clay to radiant bliss
And thy song has wakened Radha's stainless ruth earth's brow to kiss.
Mighty thy heart has rent the curtain blinding mind to the radiant Vast

Continued on page 158

Penalty

By

DAKSHINARANJAN BOSE

ARE you not Haridasi ? What's the trouble with you ? Are you still dealing in wine ?

Haridasi understood that the questioner must be known to her. The questions were all relevant.

'You must be our old 'Paranda' ! Where had you been all these fourteen years ?'—Pran Gobinda wondered how Haridasi could remember his old name so readily.

Pran Gobinda was a simple wage-earner at a factory near Asansol town. After hard labour in the factory Pran Gobinda would come almost every evening to Haridasi for he was given to taking crude wine made by the woman herself.

Haridasi made a name as she could brew good wine in the locality. Pran Gobinda used to go to her regularly and he was so dear to the woman that he gradually came to be her 'Paranda'.

But Pran Gobinda now could no longer remember just when he stopped going to Haridasi. Haridasi also perhaps could not remember when they met last.

The fact is that Pran Gobinda somehow managed to get a lot of money during the last global war. It was his ill-got money that made him think of doing a business on his own. He gave up his work in factory and himself started a factory. He thus changed himself from an employee to an employer.

He ceased to be 'Saha', and came to be known as Mr. Sahay. He became now a famous industrialist in Durgapur-Asansol industrial towns being the founder-proprietor of 'Sahay Industries Limited'.

Pran Gobinda today came to the court to give evidences in a legal case against his Works Manager, who had been accused by the police of the anti-corruption department. The charge levelled against him was that he offered bribe to a Government Official. Pran Gobinda did not like to attach any importance to the matter as he thought that by offering more gratifications to different men in the court he would win the case. He thought that he had something convincing in him that had brought him success and turned him from 'Saha' to 'Mr. Sahay'.

Pran Gobinda became convinced that he could have not been successful in so short a period with the title of his firm as 'Saha Industries'. He believed that any business would flourish if it could afford to spend money by way of gratifications.

The court convicted Haridasi and imposed a penalty of Rs. 50, in default an imprisonment for

one month. She stepped down from the dock and came near the chair where Dibanath Mitra, the Works Manager of Pran Gobinda, was seated. The Works Manager was granted bail. Dibanath was amazed to see Haridasi giving away five ten-rupee notes from the skirt of her sari.

Haridasi wore a look of happiness. The slim, tall and dark-complexioned woman looked at the little child on her arms with great affection. Dibanath felt tempted to talk to her. He called Haridasi to a lone corner and asked 'Do you brew all the wine yourself ?'

Haridasi bowed her head and slowly in positive response and said—'What else can I do ? I prepare small quantity of wine and that is my only business which keeps my family consisting of seven members going. But I can't live in peace. Men often come to my place, kick up a row, break pitchers, drums, and other carriers and destroy the rotten molasses and honey in them. How packed my trade is trouble !"

'To whom do you sell your wine?'

'Previously the wholesalers would buy the wine. But now I don't sell to them. They don't pay regularly. Many labourers of the factories after the break up come to my place to drink in the evening.

"What is your daily net profit ?"

"I am not an expert at accounts. But this I know that two rupees worth of molasses and honey gives me ten rupees worth daily, if excise men don't take a share of the profit. Yet it gives eight rupees a day. I have to put away two r u p e e s from that amount."

"What for ?"

"Often cases are filed against me and I keep aside the money to pay penalty to the Court".

"Is it ? Well, that is the case with all business enterprises. But what about the father of your seven children ? Does he not make anything ?"

"I don't know what is wrong with him. He often does not come home for months on end. When he comes he stays only for a month or for a fort-night and during the period he drinks like a fish and sleeps all the while. If I tell him anything, he chases me to beat me up."

Perhaps Haridasi was a bit ashamed and took her face away. She smiled a little. She possibly thought that she had better not tell it.

"Well, you see your trade is not legal, then why do you do that ?" — Dibanath continued.

"Not legal ? Why ? If it is illegal then why are the Government Officers be my customers ? Do I alone fly in the face of law as I am a brewer ? Don't they who drink break the law ? Why does the Government sell wine at a high price ? The Government can do no wrong, but I commit an offence whenever I make something to feed my children ! How is it ?"

Dibanath was hard put to it to answer to all these questions. So he tried to change the trend of talks. 'Well, you see the Government has embarked upon prohibition. What else can it do to carry its plan out in fact ?' he said.

Haridasi laughed out loudly. Just at that time Pran Gobinda came behind her and stood face to face with Dibanath.

Haridasi could not sense it. When the peal of the laughter died out she said—'Men can do without food, but not without wine. Law can't make it otherwise. The tiger drinks blood. It is his nature. You can't stop it.'

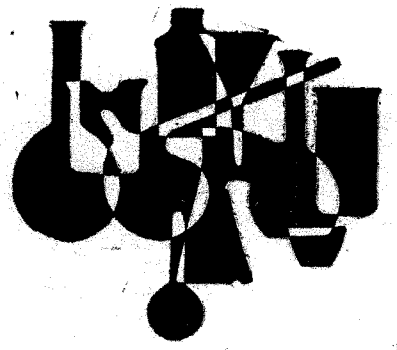
Haridasi paused for a short while. She became a bit serious and said. 'They want prohibition. But before doing that let the Government see to it that people have enough to live on. The labourers drink wine to forget hunger and grief and suffering. Can it suggest any solution ?'

Haridasi had enough argument. Dibanath remained silent, Pran Gobinda was looking at Haridasi. He must have been here before and known her a great deal. Pran Gobinda stood in front of her. Though a great change came in her profile Pran Gobinda could recognise Haridasi and said,

Continued on page 158

Debanath asked Haridasi "Do you brew all the wine yourself ?"

the NATION and its SCIENCE policy



By U.P.BASU

SCIENCE is a discipline that men of all nations have evolved in their search for truth and efforts for unravelling the mysteries of nature. It is not a religion, nor, something static to which humanity can pin its faith. Science looks at facts and bestows self-reliance in man in order to create in him ideas which is beyond conception and not known to the physical world. In its application some methods or materials may be found that can be profitably utilized for the benefit of the people by improving their health, reducing drudgery and increasing material comforts. These generally enchant the people and the politicians become interested in the development of science along with its twin brother technology. How science is to be developed and oriented for the benefit of the nation will depend mostly on the Government policy. Its education, promotion and advancement would, however, rest on the economic and social conditions of the country. Any change envisaged and translated in a developed country, may not be applied favourably to a developing society. How then the policy on science is to be followed in India ?

* * * * *

It will be futile to think over any science policy without bringing forth economic constraint. The nation will first ask what the country will get for any money spent on education in science and scientific research. But the advance of scientific knowledge cannot be solely achieved by the arbitrary selection of national goals, and simply by committing resources of men and money to them. Any astounding discovery occurs about once in a generation. There are, however, problems which can be easily worked out with the existing knowledge of science and technology that might offer more food to eat, better place to live in, and necessary amenities to meet their aspirations. Then there is also an infinite amount of territory in the whole field of science still unexplored and unknown ; any exploration in that direction will demand more financial resources, but this can be easily traversed if there be more understanding amongst scientists of different disciplines, and a clear conception of the environments of mankind. For success in any field scientists must know the whole economic framework in which they have to work and exist.

Before any decision on the science policy, a clear understanding on science must be on record. The values of science are nothing but values of rational thought. Recently in the journal, Science, the spirit of science has been defined in terms of seven underlying values : longing to know and to understand ; questioning of all things ; search for data and their meaning ; demand for verification ; respect for logic ; consideration of premises ; and consideration of consequences. In discussing these values, education of scientists or the subject matter of science should not be considered alone. It should be broad based and include education on humanities and practical studies. Science today works for finding out the truth as well as moves to shape the strategy of human action. The theme is to be imbibed from the teachings of properly trained teachers right from the stage at which the mind is immature. Here our shoes are pinching. A survey of secondary teachers and their basic qualifications conducted by the National Council of Education, Research and Training under the Ministry of Education, reveals that most teachers in schools have neither the proper background nor basic qualification in the subjects they teach. Only 16.56% of science teachers are qualified. On further scrutiny when this figure is broken up subject-wise, only 3.31% of physics teachers, 2.91% of chemistry teachers and 0.92% of biology teachers are eligible teach their subjects. A basic traning is more essential for taking up the responsibilities of higher scientific and complex technological work at a later period of life in any field. Our backwardness in material progress has been mostly due to our ignorance of the role that science plays in finding solution to the economic problems of the country.

* * * * *

A critical survey would show that we have increased our number of universities, established many national laboratories, and have encouraged technological training, but have neglected education in science in School stage. Boys and girls have become good aspirants for higher degrees, but they often do not possess the basic knowledge of science and as such when put into practical world are in difficulty for solving a problem of intricate nature. In following any discipline of science one is to work with devotion and is to integrate available knowledge for solution of one's problem in co-operation with his fellow scientist and/or his fellow worker. This is more so in our country as there is a past and

any new orientation is to be made with caution. Any policy on scientific development should be based on the above. Further scientists may do a job for a specific purpose but the policy is controlled by others. Science has virtually given to individual people a new vitality and a new dynamism in orienting his culture. The benefit will be more felt when efficient and timely steps are taken for utilizing their knowledge, their technique and their idea for the benefit of the people and not for any political end. In most cases politics come in and the scientists feel helpless to rectify the wrong, and under such circumstances they remain shy. The result is less work and less productivity. The science policy should be such as to renovate, to give incentive and to promote enthusiasm amongst all from the early stages of their training.

* * * * *

The above policy would create and maintain the morale of scientists to work for the cause of the nation. Here a vital question arises as science may be the same everywhere, but the institutions of science are not organized for a common attack on the common problems. On the contrary some sort of rivalry exists and in the interest of the nation this should be cannalised in a way that it does not affect the morals of the scientists. In order to avoid all these, groups discussions, seminars, and symposia are arranged from time to time. There are groups under the umbrella of organizations like Ministry of Education, University Grants Commission, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, Indian Council of Medical Research, Indian Council of Agricultural Research, National Institute of Sciences of India, Indian Science Congress Association, and many other scientific bodies in different parts of the country. These are practical and powerful institutions for tackling common scientific problems. But where is the co-ordinating body to inter-link the thought, ideas, imagination and work of the different scientists in order to ponder over the common needs of the country and the people and to put the science policy into practice.

For stream line movement and smooth running for nation-building work, there must be a clear understanding between the administrators and the technologists. The over-riding importance of scientific and technical officers has been recognised by modern countries, but in India they in major cases are not given due authority commensurate with their responsibilities. In such a charged atmosphere the progress is bound to suffer and the productivity is lowered. This is happening both in the field of industry and in the sphere of agriculture. The low productivity may be accounted for want of initiative from scientists and technologists. A tremendous demand of talent exists. There are more jobs to be done than there are efficient workers to do these. A survey would reveal that there are many vacant places in all stages of developmental work. Thus in the production of rice, the most essential cereal, the yield rate has not improved over the last 8-10 years. This yield rate in our country is very low and is about half to one-third of that noticed in countries like South Korea, U.S.A., and Japan. What attempt has been made to rectify the wrong by creating an enthusiasm amongst the agricultural scientists ? Without developing agriculture, it will be difficult to enhance prosperity of a nation where 80 per cent of population live on agriculture.

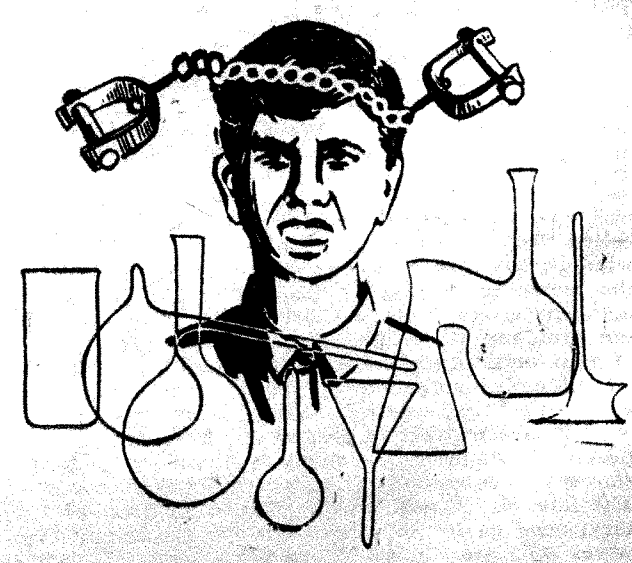
* * * * *

Science in general must bring-forth self-reliance to the mind of our people. Often a glamour of a developed country would bring forth a frustration. And there will be a tendency of the young promising scientists of the developing countries like ours to get lured away to the leading capitalist countries for better living conditions and other amenities. If the young scientists are given a better nourishment in body and mind, they are expected to remain attracted to the environments with which they are socially, mentally and culturally more interlinked. It is the political administration which would be primarily responsible for creating a social condition and environment in which the scientists and research workers will feel at home in their working centres, and be conscious of the usefulness of their contribution to the economic development of their country. Service conditions should necessarily need an adjustment. This would be more evident if one looks into the career of a science graduate who has devoted his life in his own profession, and into that of another who has joined an administrative service. We now find an agitation even amongst the college teachers, and scientific workers. The Government is moving for rectifying the same. Relationship between political power and science will remain critical for a time, but as science has become a force and the country wants rapid development, a co-ordination between the executives and technologists would be an immediate necessity. Without linking science with human action it will be difficult to make any progress.

* * * * *

We in modern civilisation live in the midst of a complex whirl of activities that would have astonished our forefathers. This may be evident from the fact that even for meeting the daily necessities of life, the commodities that we are using, are being brought or processed out of raw materials from lands thousands of miles away. One will be bewildered if any attempt be made to trace the interconnection of all the activities which provide us with bread made from wheat grown on the plains of the United States of America, with clothes made from wool borne on sheep nurtured in Australia, or made from the yarn synthesised in the factories of England, and with newsprint for dailies to satisfy our curiosity, made from the products of forests in Canada or Sweden. Various groups of people farmers, miners, manufacturers, traders, insurance companies, transport undertakings, financiers, agents, distributors, retailers and many others have helped in circulation of our necessities of modern life from different zones of our own country as well as from the different parts of the world. Have we ever dreamt how this has been possible? This is due to the modern industrial activity whose promotion has been virtually possible for the growth

Continued on page 153



'Bind me no'.

EDUCATION for INTERNATIONAL Understanding

by Dr PURNENDUKUMAR BANERJEE
MINISTER, EMBASSY OF INDIA. WASHINGTON D.C.

WE are living today in a world of conflicting national interests, racial and group prejudices and opposing creeds and ideologies that possibly cannot bear a moment of clear analysis. It is a mad, mad scramble for priority and advantage.

This struggle was not unknown throughout the ages; perhaps, it was in a different form and on a different key. What makes our age unique and without precedent, is the altered circumstances. This is wrought by man's resolute determination to unravel the mysteries of nature.

The discovery of atomic energy has radically changed the international milieu. The nuclear age, couple with revolution in mass communication has brought the territorially divided world technologically together. This is of course not to mention the conquest of the moon that once used to exercise the imagination of the forbears of science-fiction writers and which will still bring us closer together.

The universal values, applicable to all men, propounded by philosophers and preachers beginning with the Buddha and the Christ, are no longer mere metaphysical ideals and biblical tenets. Today they provide answers to many of our practical problems. The inter-dependence of the world is inescapable and is therefore complete. One has only to look around to dispel his doubts. Samuel Butler is no more a man with a flighty imagination, nor is Sir Thomas More. What has come about is an explosion of knowledge, of confluencing abilities, of genii in managing men and things.

We have today what Wendell Willkie once called "One World." It differs a great deal from what it was a few decades ago. Modern science and the means of rapid communication have conquered both space and time. We discuss and debate today the problems of a united world, of the parliament of man, and not a divided world. A war or a famine, an epidemic or the menace of an atom bomb reveals this inter-dependence in a striking manner.

It is also true in the every day life of the people. A strike in a distant port by the longshoremen denies morsels to many a mouth in India. The late Mr. Ernest Bevin, British Foreign Secretary, once gave this answer to the English housewives who were complaining about the fat shortage:

"You complain because you can't get fish suppers in Lancashire? Why can't you get fish suppers? The Fleetwood trawlers are bringing in the fish and there is plenty of potatoes. But the fish fryers can't fry. And why can't they fry? Because there is trouble in Indonesia; because there is a lot of bother in Burma and because we haven't got things straightened out in Siam. And because of all that, India can't get rice from these countries. And because India has to grow more food for its own people, we can't get groundnuts from India. And because we can't get groundnuts from India, the fish-fryers can't get the oil. And you can't get your fish and chips."

This age of interdependence compels us to evaluate our attitude towards war and peace. They are indivisible.

Peace is no longer a mere absence of war, but a constant and conscious nurture of fellow-feeling and of fraternal appreciation of ideas and values of other people and an effort to increase co-operation between peoples. Let us also not get, in order to emphasise this cardinal imperative that the scourges of mankind, the Timurs, the Attilas and the Hitlers have taken their toll of human misery and unhappiness and made some people feel that it is better to be dead than alive.

We can no longer afford to confuse ignorance with stupidity and differences in ethical standards with deceitfulness. We do not deride what we do not understand or reject what we do not recognise. We have to realise that the unity of mankind demands scrupulous appreciation of the ideas and ideals of life underlying diverse civilizations and by developing a world perspective.

It is sometimes presumed that a world perspective necessitates uniformity in civilization, religion and even ideology. Many of the conflicts in the past could be traced to this fallacy.

The Crusades fought in the Middle Ages had as their basis the superiority of one religion over the other. But even co-religionists have fought among themselves. The same religious affiliation did not bring peace to the peoples.

Europe, according to many Western historians, went into Asia and Africa to bring to them the boons of civilization. The 'civilising mission' was the cause of many wars in these areas. There is no evidence in history that common civilization prevents war. England, France and Germany, who

share what is generally called the Western civilization, have fought the bloodiest of battles. India and Pakistan, who share the same heritage, have fought each other.

Ideological conformity has not brought peace, as the Communists believe. The often violent attempts to spread their ideology has not proved to be a panacea for the ills of mankind. The headlines in the newspapers indicate a trend in the opposite direction. Both the Soviet Union and China swear by the same Marx and Lenin and each considers its brand of Commnuism superior. But today it is a foregone conclusion that Communism as a monolith is dead and there has come about a plurality of leadership for which each side is vying the other. In other words, the Sino-Soviet ideological rift has pulled a pillar from under the edifice of ideological unity as the basis of peace even in the Communist concept.

Diversity, as opposed to uniformity, in thought, in cultural accomplishments and in ideology has a better answer to our problems. Essentially diversity demands democracy. Democracy seeks unity in diversity and coexistence among various groups, beliefs and ideas.

Coexistence is an extension of democratic ideology in international relations. In the nuclear age it is the only alternative currently available to us. It permits us to exchange ideas and views with those who disagree with us, but not to destroy them. It devalues power as an instrument of policy and insists on serving international interests as opposed to national interests.

Democratic ideology admits that though there cannot be ideological unity in the present world, countries, irrespective of ideological orientation or form of Government, can certainly join without losing their identity, in an effort to solve the problems besetting a vast portion of humanity.

Many of the differences are not beyond reconciliation; they are mostly attitudinal rather than basic. It will be a matter of great advancement for peace if countries professing different ideologies live in this world, if not in complete harmony, at least in reasonable mutual accommodation and understanding.

There is one exception to this general rule. Coexistence between the rich and the poor nations is almost impossible. Fortunately, irrespective of our ideological differences, it is agreed that the etiology of the ills of our time is lopsided development where we are apt to disagree is on its prescription for treatment.

The essential problem of our time is not the conflict of ideologies, but the conditions that affect the majority of humanity, such as poverty, illiteracy, racism, hunger and economic insecurity. These are the real threats endangering peace and humanity because they can lead to catastrophic confrontation between those who are affluent and those who are neglected and exploited. Before this, all other problems pale into insignificance.

The present division of the world into rich and poor countries is a result of several factors. Primarily, we can attribute it to industrialisation and colonisation. The economically advanced countries of today should realise that at one time they were in somewhat similar condition as the developing countries of today.

Anyone who has read Dickens knows the conditions of unbelievable misery and humiliation in which millions of workers lived in England. With industrialisation and the fruits of colonialism the economically advanced countries made great strides. The colonizers prospered at the cost of the colonised. People from the former colonies who have suffered for such a long time cannot erase the belief that European prosperity is the cause of their poverty.

Historical attitudes cannot suddenly adjust themselves to new conditions. The prejudices and suspicions have to be fought patiently and steadily. Economic assistance to developing nations can help to demolish the wall of suspicion and bitterness and also bridge the gap in misunderstanding between the poor and the rich countries.

It is universally recognised that poverty is not an inevitable condition of life and that it can be removed by deliberate action. This is the basic premise behind the current anti-poverty programme in the United States. This is the driving force behind social legislation and egalitarian taxation in all developed and democratic societies today. The world has come to accept taxation of the rich to help raise the horizons for the poor in almost all countries today.

But what is an acceptable goal within a nation has unfortunately yet to gain acceptance on an inter-national scale. The developed world has yet to formally accept the responsibility—that developed and richer members of their society have accepted within their geographical boundaries—that smoother and more harmonious existence of the comity of nations can only be possible if the less developed nations are assisted out of their present stage of underdevelopment by their more affluent neighbours.

Lenin

Investing in the developing countries is an investment in peace. There cannot be a world half rich and half poor. Politifol independence is meaningless without economic equality. And this has to be achieved speedily. The revolution in the economy of a developing nation has to be telescoped to prevent its violent turn. For, the pauperisation of a majority of humanity would exert a kind of pressure that no diplomatic finesse could keep in check. No barriers would then be sufficient to contain it, but only the instruments of mass destruction.

The problems of underdeveloped countries cannot be handled piecemeal by plugging a hole here and there. Only a universal approach can solve their problems and this requires a kind of concerted approach by the rich countries. Ultimately it will ensure not only world peace, but great prosperity to the developed nations.

It is wellknown that the capitalists of England became richer than they were after their wealth was shared by their workers. Similarly, the developed countries can become more rich if there were more people in the world with money to buy the surplus goods which modern scientific implements are capable of producing.

On an international level, Europe in the Victorian age, invested heavily in the United States. The prosperity of the United States did not affect Europe adversely. On the contrary, the United

States actively supported and sustained the bulk of the cost of the two World Wars, and thereafter, single-handedly financed the reconstruction and recovery of post-warwar Europe through the Marshall Plan and other programmes. Western Europe, in its turn, is able today to participate in international oid programmes and contribute to the development of the rest of the world. Economic prosperity, when shared like happiness, proves profitable to all participants and wealth shared in productive ways is wealth increased. To respect this position, to understand its implications and to evolve a working arrangement for raising the standard of living of the less developed nations will be a constructive policy for the advanced nations.

They will also need a degree of idealism and compassion for the suffering people who lack the very rudiments of a good life. This is not a question of a 'white man's burden.' The aneedote about a little boy who was panting up the hill with his younger brother on his back is worth mentioning here. A posserby asked the boy sympathetically. "Youngman, don't you gnd the burden rather heavy?" The boy stood still looking at the questioner with astonishment and annoyance. Then he quietly said: "That, Sir, is not a burden, it is my brother."

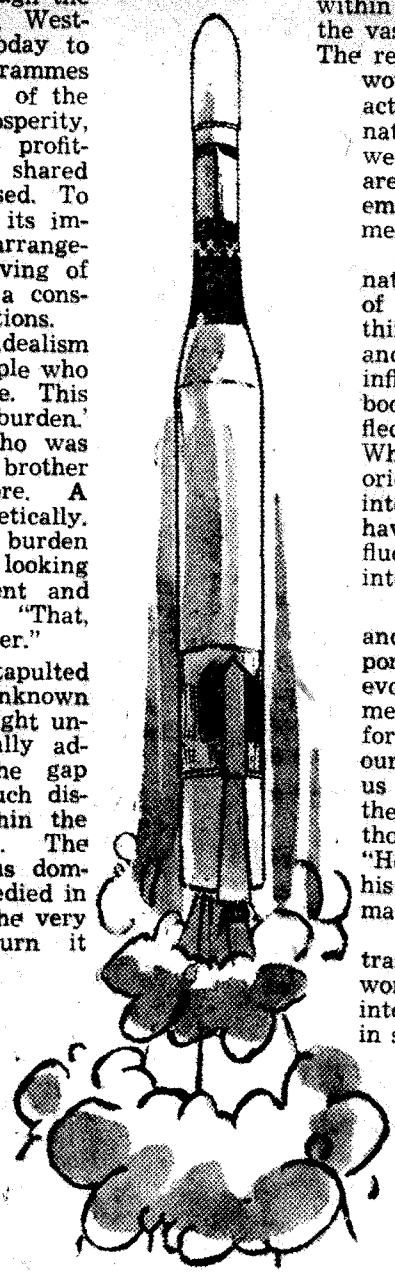
The present revolution hos catapulted man into space and released the unknown power of the atom. It has also brought unprecedented prosperity to economically advanced notions, further widening the gap between the rich and the poor. Such disparties would not be tolerated within the confines of any national community. The existence of a slum in a prosperous dommunity if not taken care of and remedied in time is bound to spread and infect the very prosperity of the community and turn it into an extended slum. The Economic Opportunity Programme launched by President Johnson attests this fact

On the international level, we need a similar programme. The per copita income of India when the British left was $60 per year and in 1966 it is $78 per year as compared to $78 per year 'as compared to to $3,000 in the United States. Such a disparity is injurious to the economic health of the world. Political self-determination must be accompanied by economic independence. This can be achieved only if the international community makes a concerted effort to vght poverty on a grand scale. This would be possible if every one of its plays an active role.

... ...

It is not beyond human resources to bridge the gap. Recently in an address at the University of Sao Paul, Brazil, the Secretary-General of the United Nations observed :

> "Resources are available to match our most imaginative schemes. The truth about the developed economics is that they can have in terms of kind and scale of resources what they decide to have. Defense spending may consume $120 billion annually but at the same time the leveloped economies have never had higher living standards. And even after all that wealth is poured into armaments, there is still spare labour, idle capacity, a surplus of food, and vast stockpiles of metals.....The means are therefore no longer a limiting factor; the will to use our many and various instruments of change and growth is the only limitation. It is well within the power of modern man to eradicate the vast areas of poverty in a world of plenty". The realities of our present day world must be woven into the texture of our thought and actions. We must either thick and act internationally or dis-integrate and perish. But we can neither so think nor act until we are trained to feel internationally, for it is emotion which provides the dynamic momentum for all purposive activity.
>
> There is need for education for international understanding. But when we speak of 'education' in this context, we are not thinking merely of what goes on in schools and colleges, but of the wider network of influences; the press, the platforms, the books, and the religious services, which reflect ideas and mould feeling of people. When these educational agencies are so oriented as to train people in the ways of international understanding, education fan have a far-reaching effect and decisive influence, strengthening in us the sense of inter-dependence and solidarity of mankind.
>
> What is needed today is an intellectual and spiritual awareness of this new responsibility. Ultimately we will succeed in evolving a universal culture. This will not mean a culture of regimentation and conformity but one in which the sharing o: our respective cultural activities con enrich us all. This thought was captured in one of the Indian scriptures the Upanishads, two thousand years ago, when it recommended. "He who sees all beings in his own self and his own self in all beings, he does not remain unrevealed".
>
> But the process of education leading to trained of mental attitudes is slow and the world has not much time to lose. It can be intensified by nations actually collaborating in several fields rather than remaining pitched against one another in a perpetual war with danger of destruction of human life and spirit.
>
> The sight 'that confronts us when we peer down into the state of a strife-torn world is disquieting and frightening but there are still some features which bring a measure of hope and faith and which need to be highlighted.



'...Catapulted man into space...'

Last year we observed the United Nations International Co-operation Year to endorse and emphasize the idea of Jawaharlal Nehru, that the world depends on co-operation and not on conflict. We endeavoured to learn and understand more about each other. We sought the bonds that united us and not the factors which divided us.

With freedom of mind, with reason as our guide, it is entirely possible for us to discover a common ideal. With this ideal there can be no doubt that the community of man will resolve its present divisions on account of politics, obsolete ideologies and skin pigments. The day then cannot be far off when the parliament of man and a federation of the world will come to attend on mankind. It must come even though with increasing credibility. History shall then have been made which posterity will guard zealously.

PENALTY

Continued from page 152

'Are you not Haridasi ? What's the trouble with you ? Are you still dealing in wine ?'

Haridasi too could not find much difficulty in recognising her old 'Paranda'. The past came crowding into their head. They recalled those days when Pran Gobinda had no relative. Haridasi had only two children. Her husband, Sidheswar, who was a hard drinker lived here and there. Haridasi liked 'Paranda'. She took a fancy to him because he looked picture of beauty. Very often she would leave all other customers to have chat with Pran Gobinda. 'Paranda' often got Haridasi's invitations and he could not return home all those nights. His room in the labour quarters remained locked up. He would drink and had not to foot the bill. They had a hilarious dinner and had the night all to themselves. He went straight to his duty in the factory in the next morning.

But Pran Gobinda soon was out to seek fortune and all these 14 years he could not find time to think of Haridasi. Sometimes he thought Haridasi might have left the place. He did not find her anywhere during all these years. He was now an employer. Was it possible for him to go to her place to get her news ? Still sometimes his conscience pricked and he felt pain.

Haridasi's third child was a very beautiful girl. Pran Gobinda loved the child and named her 'Radha'. Haridasi said that Pran Gobinda named his own child. But he could not accept that he had fathered the child. After some time they became separated.

Suddenly the profile of little Radha flashed in the mind of Pran Gobinda. He tried to remember the sweet little face and the words of Haridasi that he had fathered the child. He tried to think if Haridasi was right.

Pran Gobinda called Haridasi to a lone nook to know the fact. He gave her a name card and said, 'Your two boys are now quite grown up. If they don't find any job, send them to this address. I shall take them in my factory. Well, how is your Radha? She too must have grown up. Is she with you ? Well, I take also her responsibility. I shall get a good boy to marry her ?'.

There was a smile of joy on Haridasi's lips and said, 'Well, I see you remember all the things'. Instantly she got through a door and met her other companions who were also released on paying Rs. 50 each as penalty. Excise litigations ended for the day and she found her companions getting out of the court hall. They had to cover about 10 miles to go homes.

The words of the legal proceedings in the court very often rang in the ears of Haridasi and she thought 'Life in itself is a penalty.'

When all the women convicts left the court, an inspector came to remind Dibanath that now it might be his turn and asked to get his witnesses ready.

NATION AND ITS SCIENCE POLICY

Continued from page 154

and expansion of science and its twin brother technology. These have helped in altering the economic structure of a country by enhancing production of material wealth.

* * * * *

Any policy in developing a nation should be such as to create scientists who will possess the true spirit to work for the cause. They must have their own confidence and patience, should be eager to search for the truth, and possess a calibre to discover new things, methods or techniques. The policy must help in encouraging scientists to maintain their integrity and in offering opportunities to work efficiently for serving the people and the nation. These will induce a true spirit of science to scientists and which has been incidentally described by the poet, Rabindranath in his poem, "Vandi"—

"স্বাধীন করিয়া দাও, বেঁধো না আমায়
স্বাধীন হৃদয়খানি দিব তব পায়।"

Bind me not, make me free; for thy service my soul will be.

With this hypothesis the National Policy on science be formulated to have men and people to work for the country and the nation.

SRI AUROBINDO

Continued from page 150

O Poet resplendent, sent to us to resurrect
our Vedic past.
Thy stupendous beacon burns the veils of
darkness from earth's face
Hail, paradisal Bird of bliss, who shedst on
the world His beauty's Grace.
At thy advent storms rose lashing rebel
flails of envious wrath
Seeking to confound thy mission and deflect
thy skyward path
But thy soul flamed like Love's lighting
and thy thunderous cry awoke
Kaali's sleeping fire in Matter and fate's
aeoned bondage broke.
Thy stupendous beacon burns the veils of
darkness from earth's face
Hail, paradisal Bird of bliss, who shedst on
the world His beauty's Grace.

(Richard Miller,

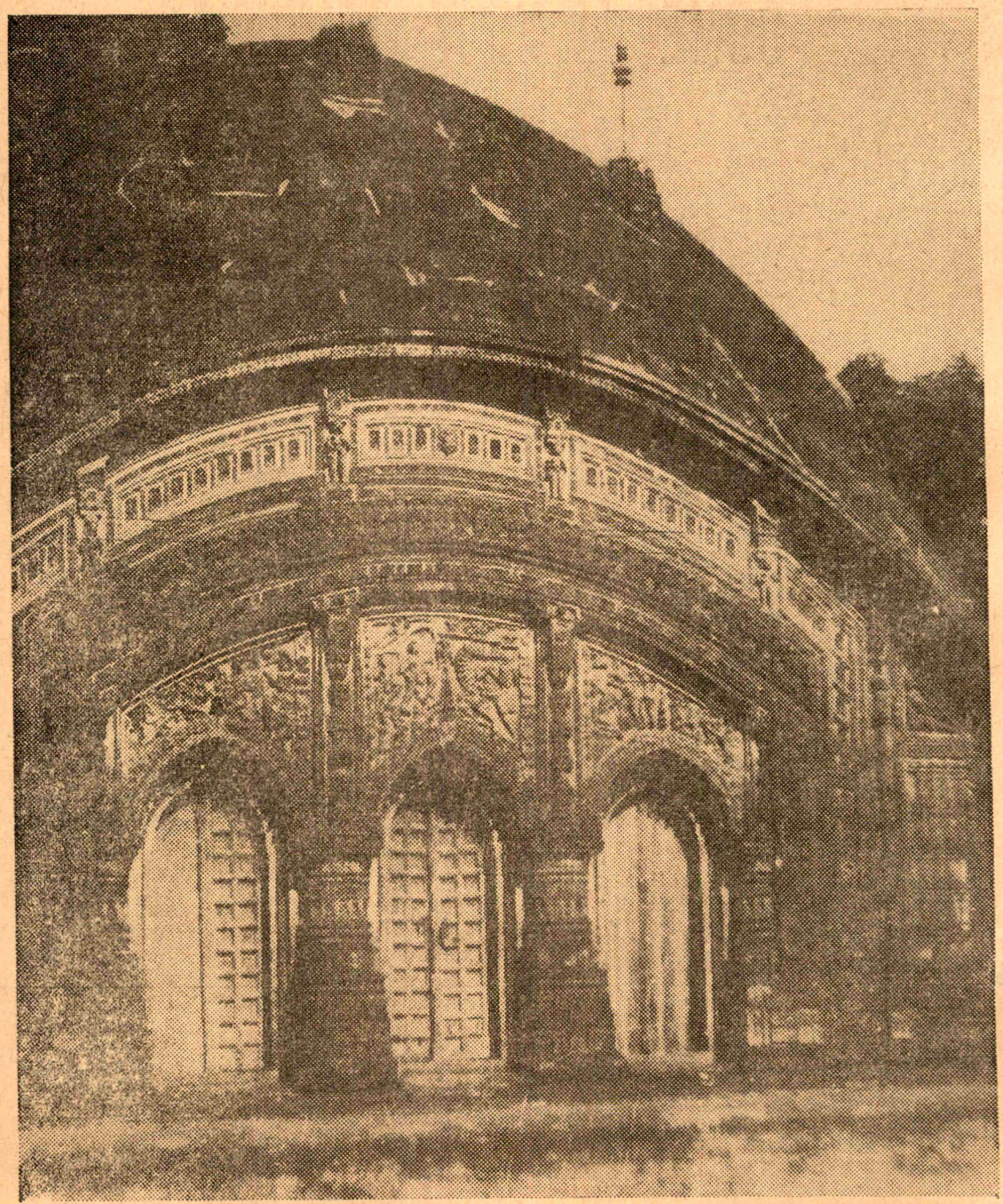
SOME ANCIENT TEMPLES *of* WEST BENGAL

By AMAL SENGUPTA

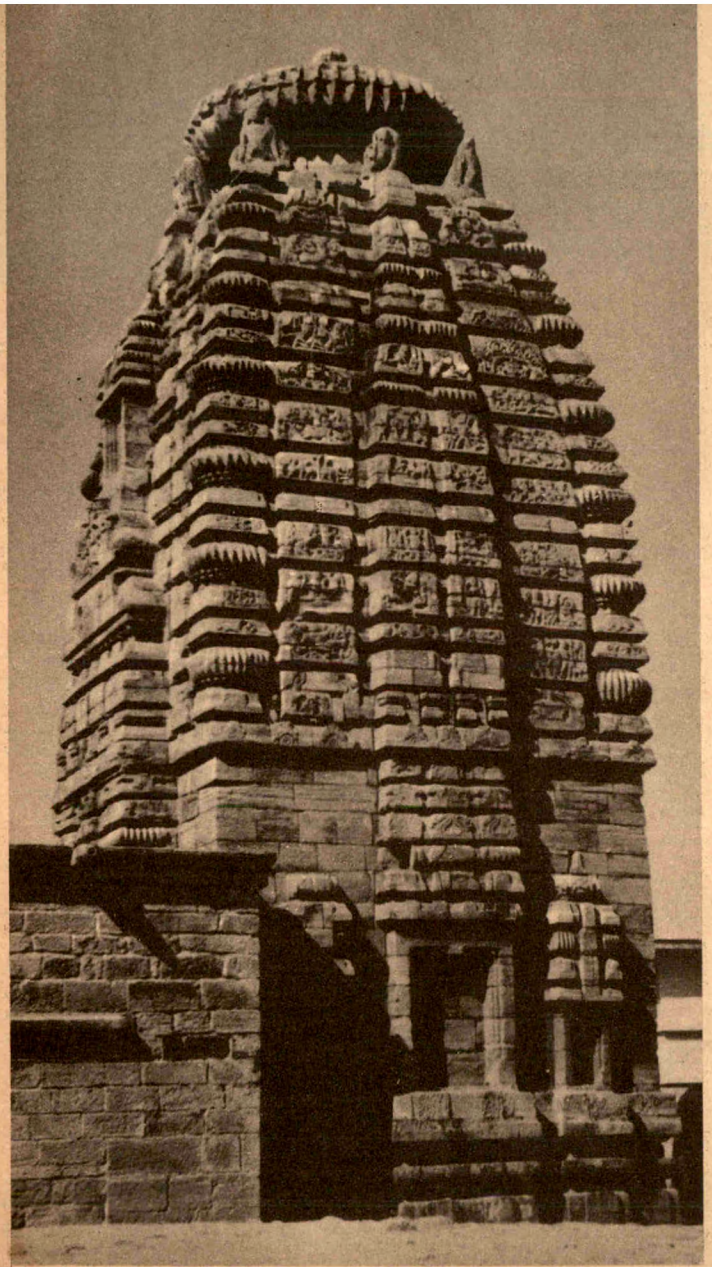
Bengal was once noted as the land of beautiful temples. There was scarcely a village which could not boast of a fine temple. Many of these temples displayed the wonderful creative genius of our master architects. Some of them had a hoary antiquity and there is evidence to show that they received unstinted praise from foreign travellers to this country like Fa-Hien and Hiuen-Tsang. Many scholars are of opinion that the distinctive Bengali style of temple-building served as inspiration to the construction of ancient temples of Java and Burma.

But alas ! it is now a faded glory. The cruel hands of time have already destroyed many of these superb creations. Only a few in dilapidated condition exist even now to proclaim the glory of their mastermakers.

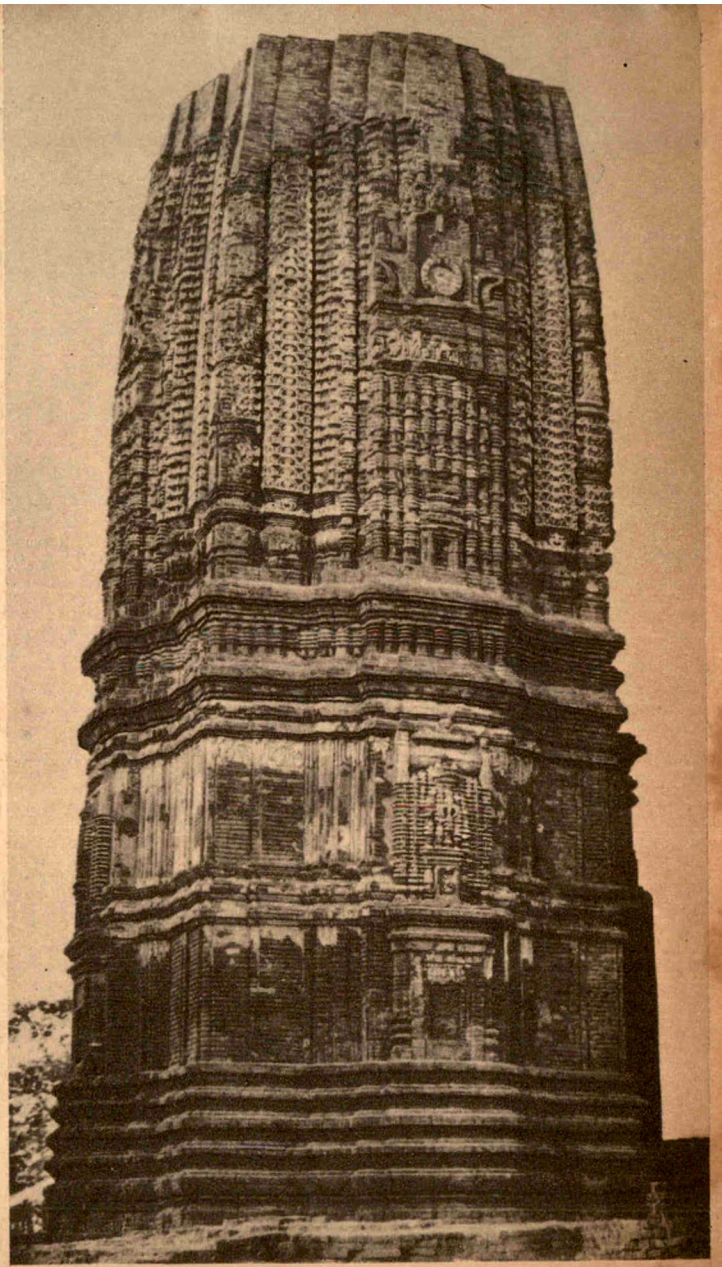
In the districts of Bankura, Birbhum, Hooghly and Burdwan lie scattered many such ancient temples. They came into existence in different periods of our history — some may be traced to the Hindu period and some to the Muslim period. Excepting two or three stone temples, they are all brick-built. Images of Gods and Goddesses, animal figures, and delicate creepers and flowers adorning the walls of these temples in terracotta designs are marvellous creations of art. They cannot but produce a lasting impression on the mind of a visitor.



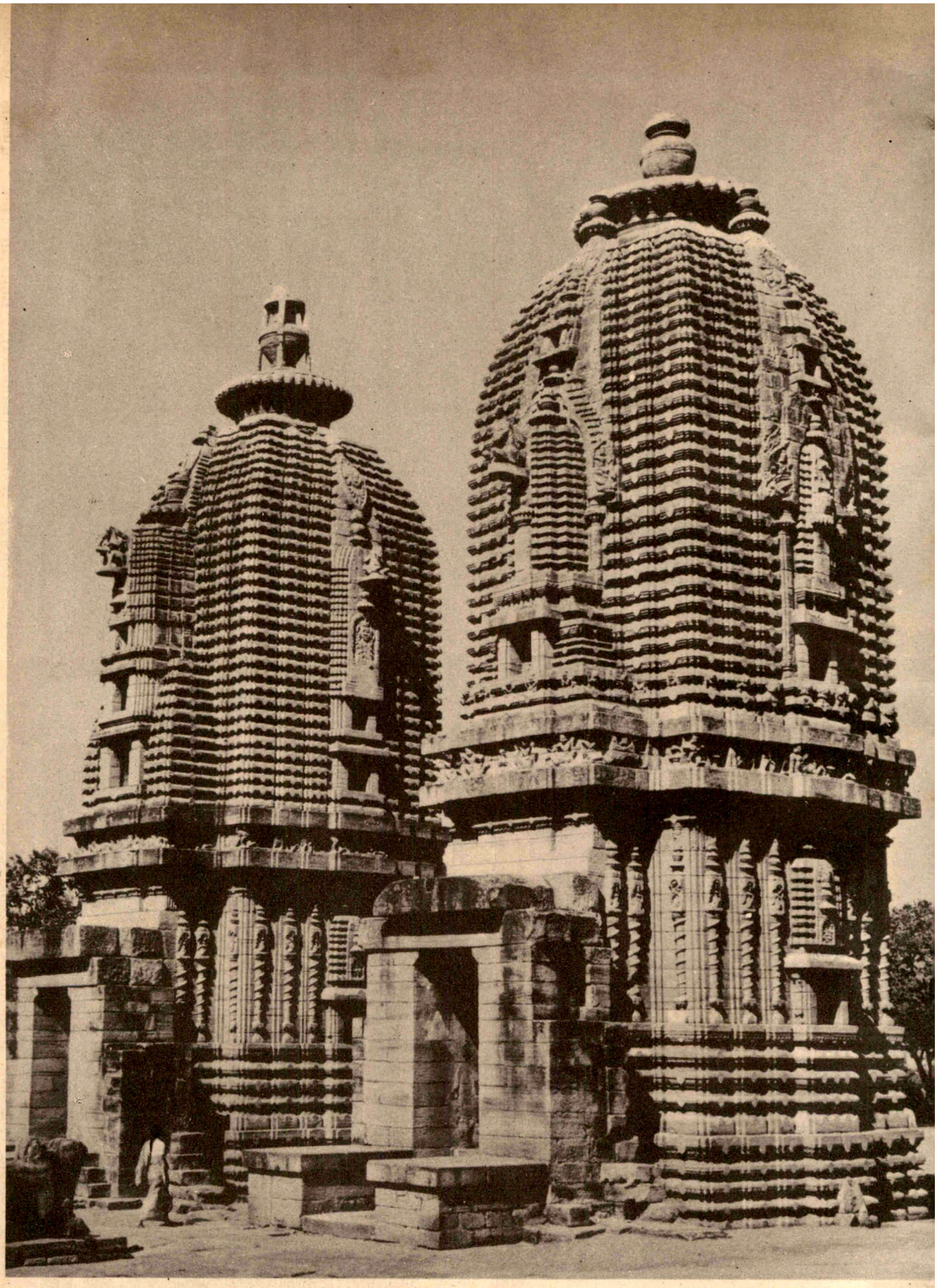
One of the four Charbangla temples at Baranagar (Murshidabad) constructed by Rani Bhavani in 1775. The walls of these temples display finest example of West Bengal terracota art depicting tales from the Ramayana and the Mahabharat.
Photo by : SUKUMAR DAS.



The fourth temple of Barakar (Burdwan) built in 8th century (AD), is perhaps the oldest specimen of the existing ancient temples in this region.
Photo by : AMAL SEN GUPTA



The Siddheswar Temple of Bahulara (Bankura). is believed to have been built some time during the period 10th to 12th Century A.D.
Photo by : AMAL SEN GUPTA



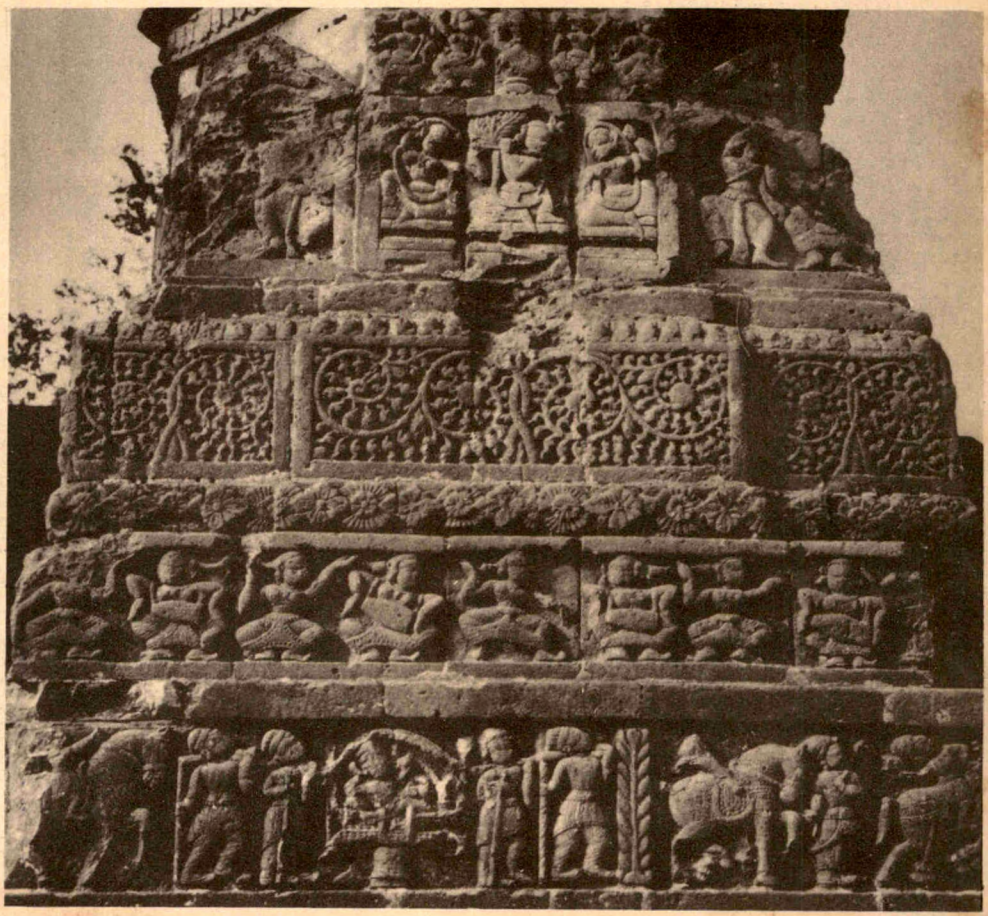
The first and second temples of Barakar (Burdwan) : They were built during the Muslim period.
Photo by : AMAL SEN GUPTA

Lakshmi Janardan Temple (Garbeta, Midnapore) : Probably came into existence at the time when the famous Vishnupur temples were built.
Photo by : AMAL SEN GUPTA

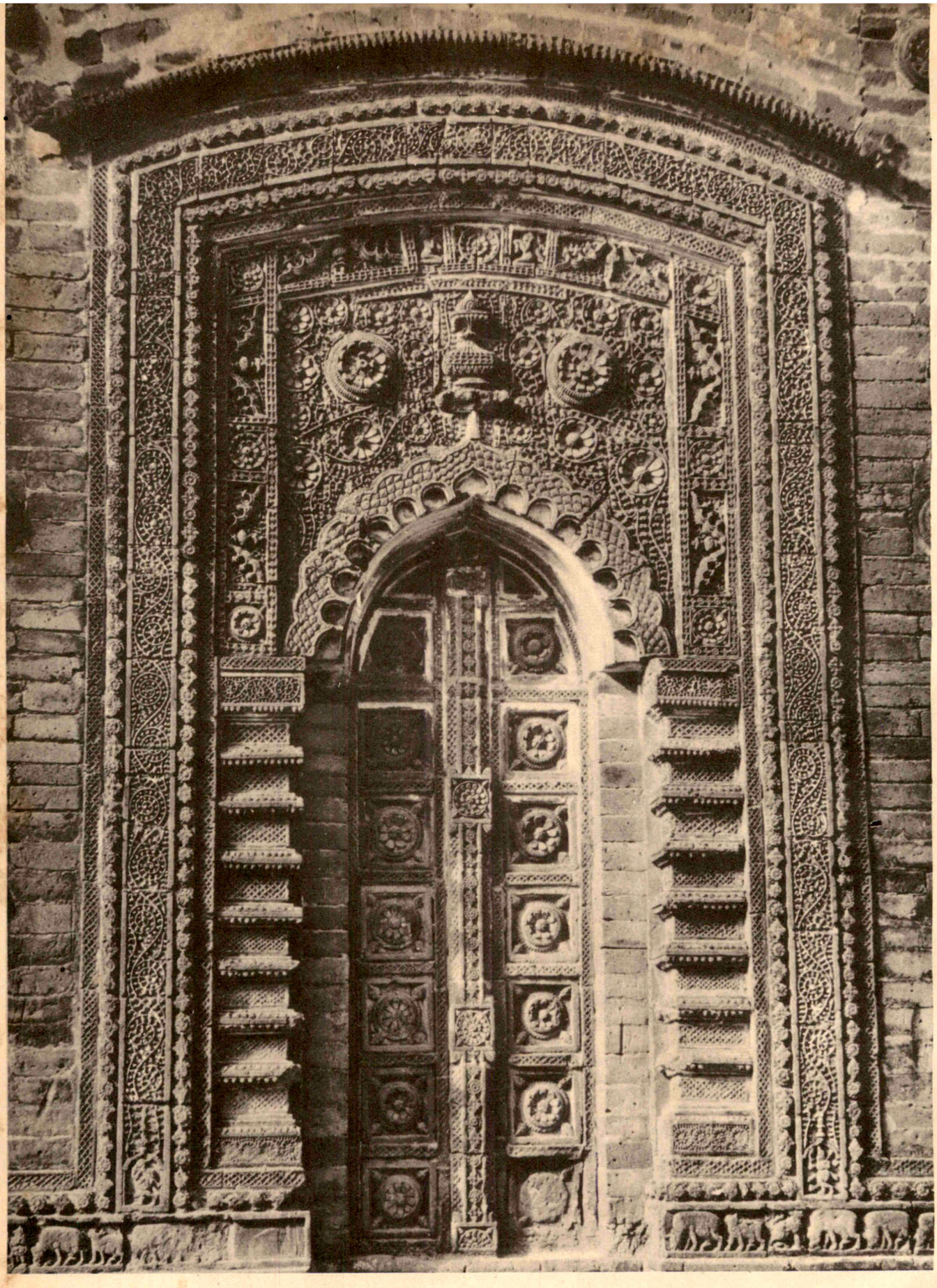
The Ekteshwar Temple (Bankura) : Built in the Muslim period. Striking for solidity and massiveness of its design.
Photo by : AMAL SEN GUPTA

Vasudeva Temple (Bansberia, Hooghly) : Built nearly 287 years ago by Raja Rameshwar. Such delicate terracotta designs are rarely found in the temples of Bengal. Photo by : AMAL SEN GUPTA

The famous Rash Mancha of Vishnupur (Bankura): Built in the shape of a pyramid. Photo by : AMAL SEN GUPTA

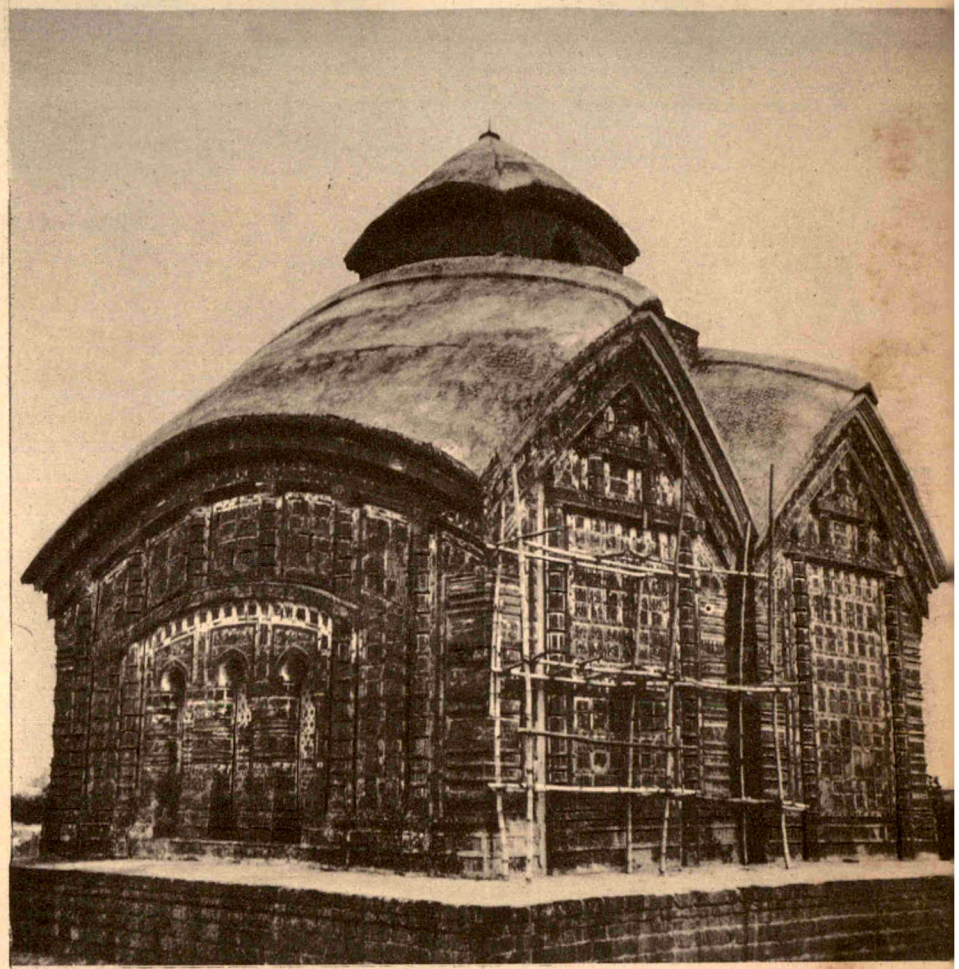


Details of the Terracotta relief work of the Madan Mohan Temple at Bishnupur. Photo by : AMAL SEN GUPTA



Details of the Terracotta motifs of an unidentified temple at Bishnupur.
Photo by : AMAL SEN GUPTA

Hanseshwari Temple (Bansberia, Hooghly) : The foundation stone was laid by King Nrisinhadev in 1799 and completed by Queen Sankari in 1814 A.D. Photo by : AMAL SEN GUPTA

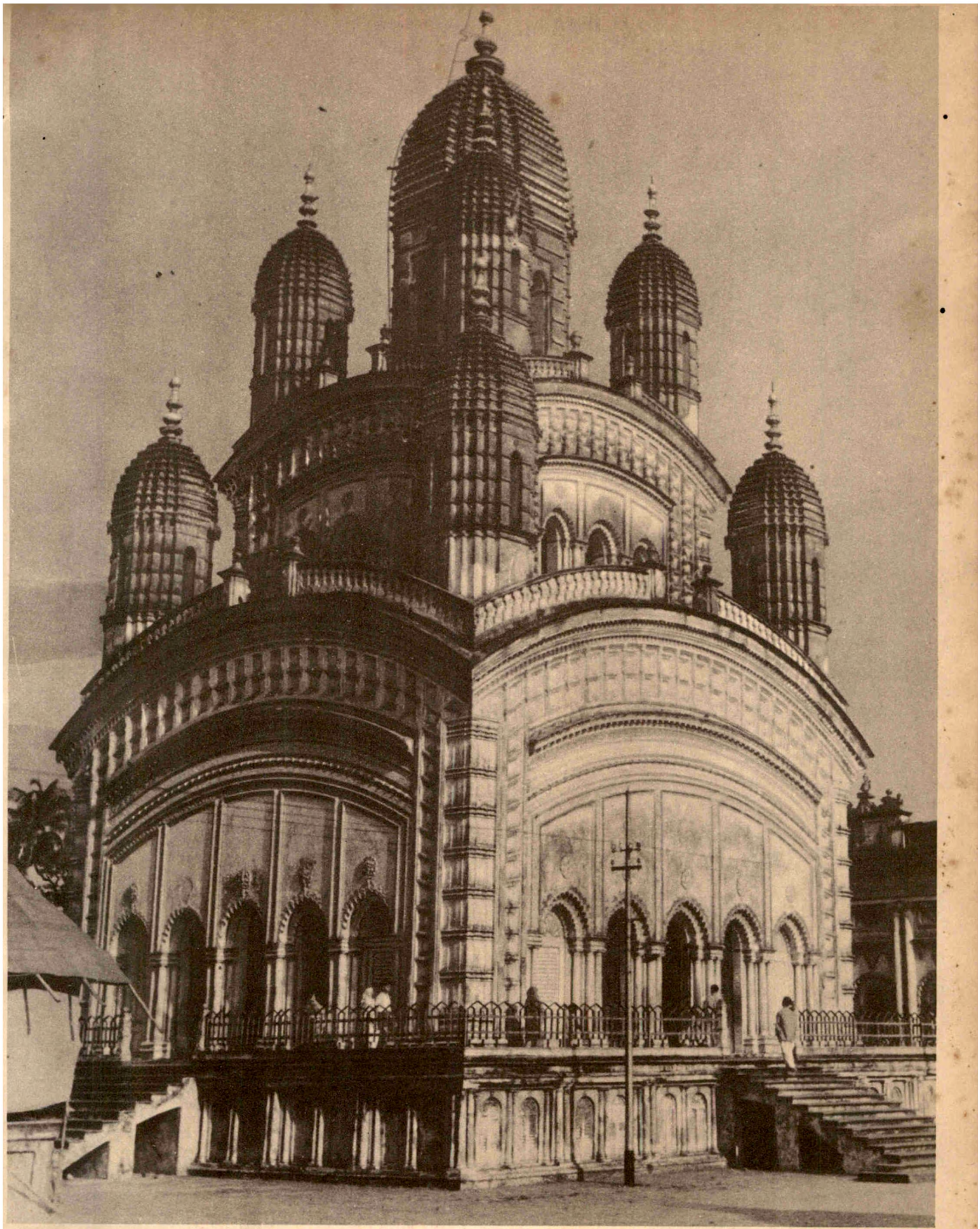


The Jore Bangla Temple of Vishnupur (Bankura) : Erected by Raghunath Singh in 1655 A.D. One of the finest specimens in the realm of Bengal Architecture. Photo by : AMAL SEN GUPTA

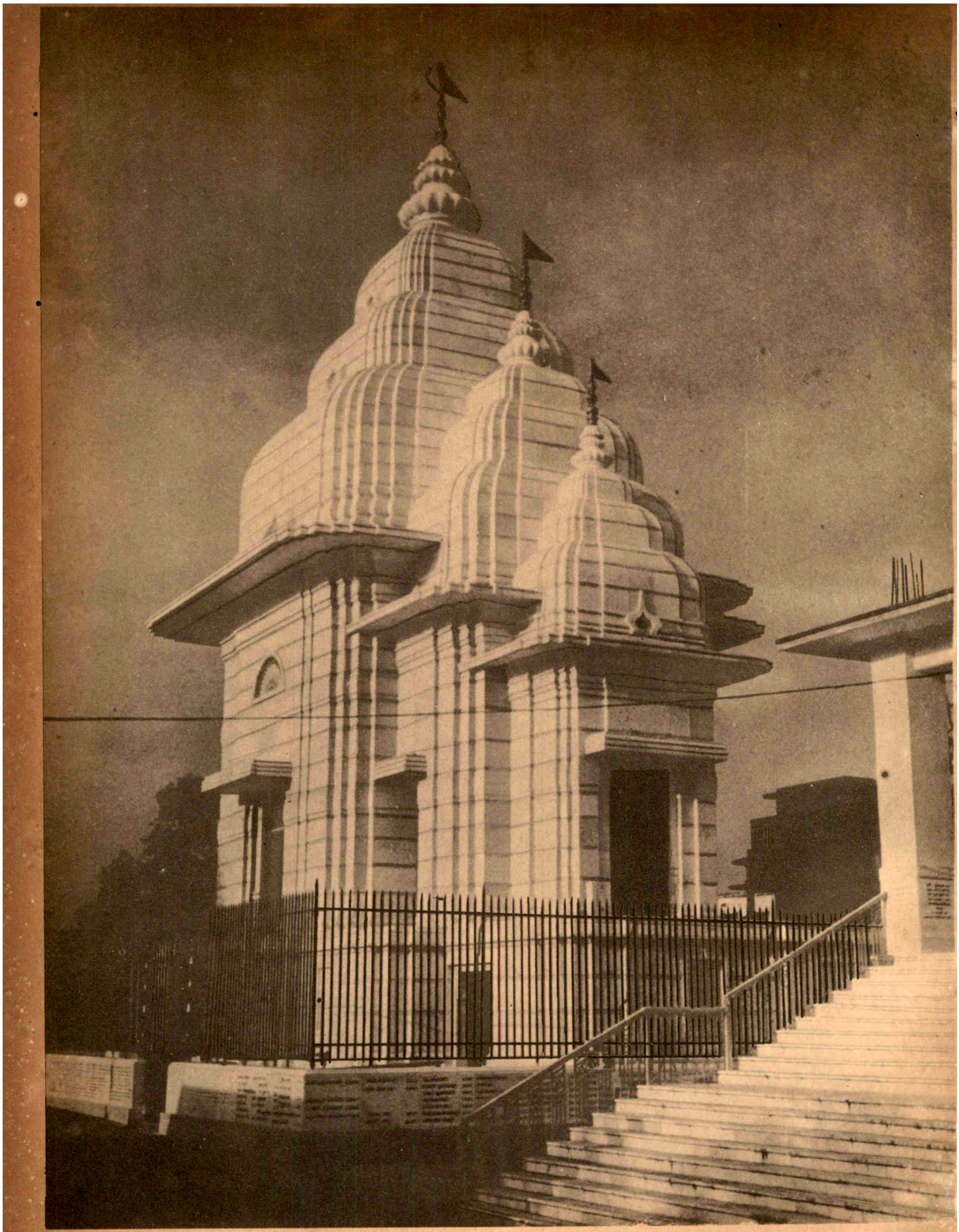
The Shyamrai Temple of Vishnupur (Bankura) : Built by Malla King Raghunath Singh in 1643 A.D.
Photo by : AMAL SEN GUPTA

The Kalimandir of Malancha village in Midnapore seems to be 500 years old.
Photo by : KANAK DUTTA

Shiva Temple at Tarakeswar which attracts large crowd throughout the year.
Photo by : SUJIT KUMAR DAS

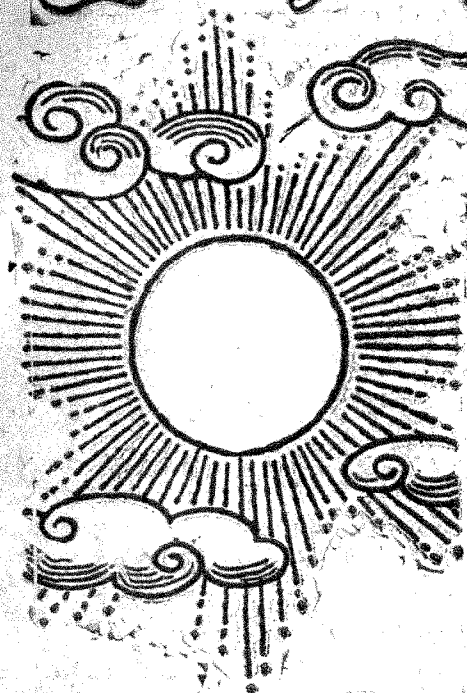


Dakshineswar Temple which was made famous by Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa.
Photo by : SUJIT KUMAR DAS



Adyapith Temple built a few years ago, is a specimen of modern temple architecture.
Photo by : SUJIT KUMAR DAS

Young Folk's Corner



To Young Folk

Dear Friends,

Clouds are rumbling in the sky as I write the Puja letter to you. A bold prophet alone may predict if there will be rain with all its nastiness or friendly sunshine and clear nights during the Puja for which preparations are very much in evidence. Are you not already elated over it? Quite natural, you are.

After all, Durga Puja attractions are not limited to its outward grandeur. Much more than your eye it gladdens you at the inmost core of your heart. There in its brimming fullness and genial warmth you find everybody everywhere bound by the common tie of unquestioned brotherhood. This really is the 'Puja spirit', not anything else that goes by this name. If worship of the Mother does not generate in you this feeling of oneness with others, you are only hypocrites when you parrot-like recite 'Durga Puja is the greatest national festival'. Be gay and merry, play, sing and dance, enjoy the festivities to your heart's content. But let not frivolity and unbridled mirth go by the name of the 'Puja spirit'.

This spirit works in many ways and the effect is magical. See, for instance, what is happening in the dingy, dilapidated hut in the melancholy vicinity of the rich man's mansion. A beamy smile from her baby, now in brand-new garment, earlier promised by her, brings the mother all the felicity of the Puja. Tears have washed away the trouble from her face. Here is the matchless glory of Durga Puja to which every heart contributes its cheer.

May your gloom be lifted to make room for gleaming hopefulness, may your defeatism turn into a robust sense of victory. For, mainly, it is the Puja of 'Shakti', the invocation of manliness, valour and courage.

Yours Affectionately,

Big Brother

By ARNABKUMAR BARDHAN
(Leaguer — 23005, Calcutta)

I laughed and laughed hearing the story from Sunderda. He is our close neighbour and a friend of my elder brother. So I must respect him. He is a professor of a wellknown Calcutta college.

When Sunderda was a college student he alone lived in a room in a rented house. There was a varandah in the front of his room. Few more rooms were by the side of it. In those rooms lived other tenants. One morning while Sunderda was reading a book, suddenly he heard a shout. A woman screamed in fear—"Dange, dange"! What happened?

Sunderda jumped from his chair and rushed to the door of a side room. The shout presumably came from that room. Sunderda peeped through the door and then entered the room "What happened"? Sunderda asked. There was a strange sight! A woman, possibly wife of Mr. Bose (who lived in that room), was on the top of a chair. Mr. Bose's son had jumped on the sofa and he said to his mother, "Mummy, why are you so much afraid of the cockroaches?" Mr. Bose who came running with a broom stick in his hand, felt embarrassed by Sunderda's presence. Sunderda said "Please, don't mind, what happened?" Oh, nothing a cockroach sat on the shoulder of my wife. So she shrieked out of fear," said Mr. Bose. Sunderda went to his room laughing.

Next day when Sunderda was about to go to his college, suddenly he heard a woman's voice "May I come in"? Sunderda saw Mrs. Bose and replied, "Oh, why not? Come in." "Good morning, Mr. Chowdhury," she said and handed him a packet saying "Here are some bananas for you. Please take." "Dange, fork, fork," suddenly shouted Mrs. Bose. Sunderda saw a frog and Mrs. Bose jumped on his bed shortly. "Kill it, kill it. As soon as Sunderda tried to kill the frog with Mrs. Bose's slipper, the lady shouted again "Oh, not with my chappal." Sunderda then killed it with his shoe.

That night Mr. Akhil Chandra Bose came to Sunderda. He told Sunderda about his brave wife—"Mr. Chowdhury, you know that my wife is mortally afraid of small creatures. You do not possibly know that she comes of an educated and rich family. She is also a qualified lady. She passed B.A. Examination with honours in English. Her father Bon Bihari Bhadra was a wealthy man. He had a mansion-like house known as Bhadra Palace. He was the founder of Bhadreshwar village. But I am a poor clerk. Where could I find a nice, decorated, insect-free house like Mr. Bhadra's. So my wife is feeling very uneasy here. But, mind you, she is very strong in English and shortens every English word, such as "Dange" for "dangerous".

Sunderda, of course, saw no reason thought that because to be doubtful about her 'vast' knowledge of English for she cried 'fork' at the sight of a frog. What's there to wonder if fork and frog meant the same thing to her!

Sunderda, of course, had not the opportunity to see the magnitude of Mr. Bose's father-in-law's wealth?

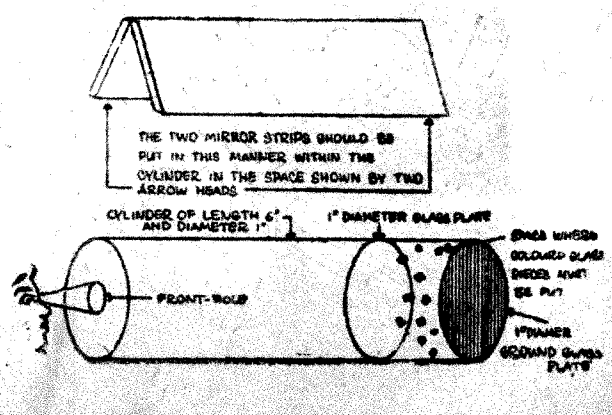
Kaleidoscope

By SUBHENDU GHOSH
(Leaguer — 20799, Calcutta)

KALEIDOSCOPE is a toy based on the principle of the formation of symetrical images by successive reflection at two mirrors inclined to each other at an angle. This toy can easily be made by all of us, if we can collect the following :—

(i) A thin board of 1½" in breadth and 6" in length ; (ii) One circular glass plate of 1" diameter; (iii) One circular ground glass plate of 1" diameter; (iv) two strips of mirrors of 3/4" breadth and 5½" in length; (v) Some very small coloured glass pieces (broken pieces of bangles will be).

Make a cylinder of length 6" and diameter 1" with the thin board. Close one of its end with a board keeping a small hole in the middle through which you will look in. Now put the two strips of mirrors in the cylinder at an angle of about 60° as shown in the picture. Place the circular glass plate on the other side of the tube (consult the picture). Finally put the coloured glass pieces on the space above and close the end of cylinder with the ground glass. Now if you look in through the front hole and rotate the cylinder, you will see hexagonal patterns of different kinds. As you will rotate it, the patterns will change. The patterns are formed by the reflection of glass pieces on the strips of mirrors. There is no fixed rule that the pattern will be hexagonal. It depends upon the angle at which the two strips are inclined. There is a formula :—$\left(\frac{360}{\theta}-1\right)$ where θ is the angle of inclination. As described above, if we divide 360 by 60 and subtract 1, we get 5. This with the original object forms hexagonal pattern.



Conquering laugh Photo by: KANAK DUTTA

KUMARI PUJA

By PRABHU RAM SUMAN

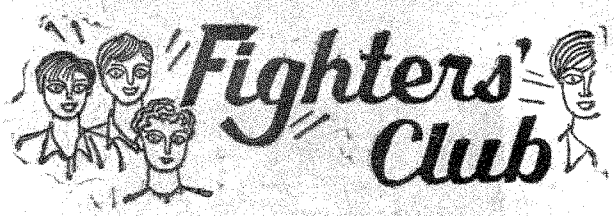
(Leaguer 22504, Howrah)

DEAR Brothers : the holy days of Navratras i.e. the first nine days of the bright half of Aswina come forgetting all differences of caste and creeds. We again assemble to worship our great Goddess 'Ma Durga', make pandals, decorate them with flower flags and colourful lights, place a fine image of 'Ma Durga' on the altar, play on fine musical instruments and utter the holy sermons of our dearest Goddess. We see nobody in the houses, perhaps all of them are gone to see and offer their best and humble respects and regards bowing down to and taking Prashada of the mother in different places.

This happens in almost all parts of the country but mostly in West Bengal. In other States of this vast land of the world's oldest civilization the same puja is celebrated in somewhat different ways. In Delhi, Punjab and Rajasthan Ram Leela is shown to the general public in the open grounds. There people of all castes, creeds and dharmas assemble and enjoy the pleasure of this auspicious fastival. Consequently, not missing the point we find that Kumari Puja is as popular there as Durga Puja here. It is called 'Kanya-Puja', Kanika Puja and Kumari Puja in different parts of the country.

On any day or especially on Saptami i.e., the 7th day of Navratras the young unmarried girls of the neighbourhood are called. The boys of households wash their feet and hands and then the girls take their seats on mats. After that the boys put *red tilak* on their foreheads, put the holy red thread around their right wrists ; *dhoop* is lighted and the Kanyas (lasses) are provided with choicest foods and some of the holy sermons of Goddess Durga are uttered at the same time. After meals the Kanyas are presented with clothes and coins. Sometimes ornaments also are presented.

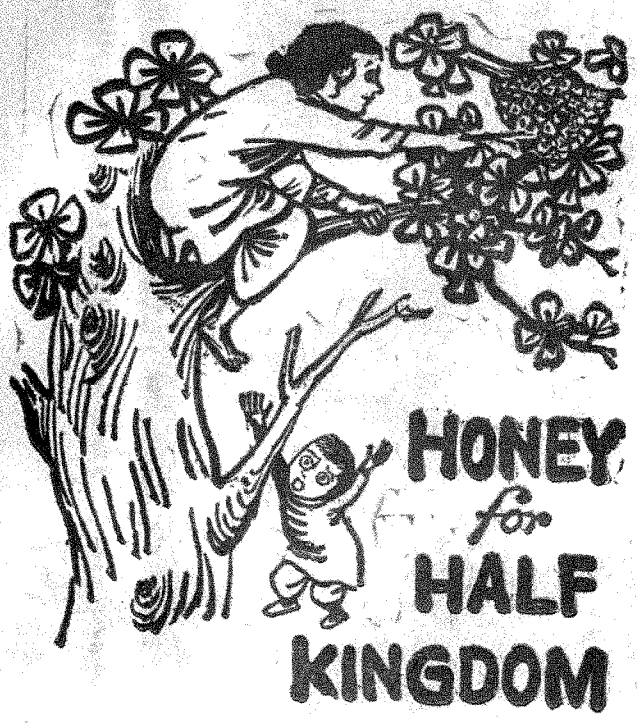
Whatever the method and the manner, it means the same i.e. 'Durga Puja'.



BY SHYAMAL DATTA

(Leaguer — 21712, Deoria)

A few school-boys meeting in a hall
Resolved with one voice to give a call
To all young ones who would not fear
To stand up against those who,
reckless dare
By their base misdeeds blacken our
fair society—
Whatever their position and however
high and mighty.
"Who says we are small without any
power?
Honesty, determination, courage and faith
are our armour.
We have respect for decency, we loathe
corruption.
We shall fight dishonesty, all forms of
deception."
This was these little boys' solemn noble
vow.
Thus was born Fighters' Club.
Then, she how
It electrified many others. Elder college
students came
And joined. Rapidly like fire spread
its name.
Those who scoffed at first remained
to pray.
What was most exciting happened.
when one day
Khokan's grandfather crying 'hurrah,
hurrah' came to declare
"Doing splendid job." Please, make me
a member.
There is yet fire in this old dog;
With burning zeal the Fighters' Club
is agog!"
The little members gave him a rousing
welcome
And asked him to be their leader.
'Be calm',
The energetic old said, "give me the joy
Of being led by the young. A boy
I want to be. I shall be with you
To work together, to start active life
anew."
Many others caught this infection and
seriously thought
'The battle against wrong-doers be
unitedly fought'.



HONEY for HALF KINGDOM

By ADHIR KUMAR BOSE
(Leaguer — 2836, Kharagpur)

ONCE upon a time there lived a King named Mahipal who was notorious for his foolhardiness. The moment an idea got into his head, he would plunge headlong into action without thinking of consequences. People were terribly afraid of him.

His only son, crown prince Vishnupal, who was 15-year-old, had already earned a reputation for mischief-making. As his boyish energy, after his mother's death when he was too young, was not given proper direction, he grew up to be self-willed and reckless.

He constantly picked up quarrels with other boys and girls, insulting and bullying them, but no one dared approach the King with complaints against the prince.

One day Vishnupal was playing with his friends in the palace garden. They ran around it, playing 'hide and seek'. Vishnupal climbed a tree and perched on one of its branches hiding behind the foliage.

Suddenly, he saw a bee buzzing round his head. His eyes followed its flight to the hive, a few branches higher up the tree coming near the hive.

He then broke a slender branch and he poked the bee-hive. One of his playmates who saw him do this warned him not to disturb the hive. But Vishnupal was past reasoning and like his father he could be obstinate.

He went on poking the hive until the angry bees swarmed round him in many hundreds and began stinging him mercilessly. His friends ran to tell the courtiers about the prince's plight. Before rescue could come the bees had had their revenge.

Prince Vishnupal's face was swollen like a pumpkin. All night he suffered from fever. The King was highly wrathful against the bees. He felt sorry for his son and heir.

He then sent for the chief minister and instructed him to have all the bee-hives throughout the length and breadth of the country burnt down. That will serve those bees right! What did they think they were doing when they attacked the prince, son of a mighty King?

The minister thought it would be unwise to destroy the sources of honey in the country. But the King was adamant and the minister knew that his orders would have to be carried out, however foolish they were.

Within a few days he got all the bee-hives in the land destroyed, otherwise he would have had to face the King's wrath.

Mahipal was very happy when he learnt that his orders had been faithfully carried out. Even then he himself went round the country to be sure of the fact.

Some months passed after this and the people in the Kingdom's began to feel the need for honey, the old stock having been exhausted. Fresh honey could not be collected as new hives were systematically destroyed by the King's men.

They went in a body to the King and fervently appealed to him to withdraw his earlier order. But all in vain.

Soon after, Prince Vishnupal fell seriously ill. The palace physicians and even the best doctors in the kingdom failed to cure him. His condition rapidly grew worse.

The King was greatly worried. He denied himself food and sleep. He didn't know what to do. Just at that time, a wandering fakir entered the palace and offered to cure the crown prince. The King was only too eager to try anyone or anything that might bring his heir back to normal health.

The fakir examined the prince and gave a list of various ingredients needed to prepare the healing portion. To the King's dismay, the most important item in the list was honey. Not a drop of it was available in his palace or in his entire kingdom. He had ruled it so!

"What an irony of fate," sighed the foolish King repenting his order to destroy the bee-hives. Now, to save the prince's life honey must be found. The Kingdom's future rested on it. What was to be done?

He sent his men to far-off places beyond his Kingdom to secure some honey. But everybody everywhere being aware of his misdeeds and ill treatment of people at his hands, refused to part with even a drop of honey. They said it would serve Mahipal right if his Kingdom went without heir after his death.

But a bright idea flashed across the mind of one. Immediately he sent word to Mahipal that one flask of honey would be made available in exchange of half of his kingdom. When Mahipal received this offer, he looked at the unconscious Prince and made his decision. He had no choice, he had to give away half of his Kingdom and save his only son.

Vishnupal when he came of age, ascended the throne a chastened man and ruled humanely over whatever remained of his kingdom. He was particularly solicitous about bee-hives!

Naughty eyes Photo by : SUSANTA KUMAR MITRA

Wonder-struck Photo by : SAMARENDRA CHOUDHURY

DISCOVERY OF SHOE

By ANGSHUMAN MAZUMDAR
(L-23099, Hooghly)

KING Haboo Chandra told his minister Gaboo : 'Listen, all last night I spent wondering why filthy dust should touch my feet the moment I land them on the ground ! You all are here only to get salaries from me. My own soil sullies me—what an anarchy in my kingdom ! Find out a remedy soon for it. If you fail, none will escape my fury.

Minister Gaboo fell in the deep sea. He was terribly gripped by fear. Streams of sweat flowed from his body. All the pandits' faces turned ash-pale and courtiers had sleepless nights. Food was not cooked in the kitchens. A hue and cry was raised in the zenana. Flooding his white beard with tears Gaboo bowed to Haboo's lotus-feet and spoke with emotion "if dust cannot touch your feet, how then shall we receive your feet-dust ?"

—That's true indeed, said the king swinging his body. But remove the dust nuisance first, then think of what you will do with my feet-dust. If for want of dust you cannot get my feet-dust, are you worth the salary you receive here ? In that case what's the use my maintaining so many titled scientist-servants ? Do the first thing first, think of other things afterwards.

On hearing the king the world around seemed bleak to the minister. From far and near Goboo-chandra gathered together all available talents and technicians. They sat in consultation tightening the spectacles on the nose. Nineteen large drums of snuff were exhausted. Then they made this joint representation to the king : 'If earth goes where will crop grow ?'

—If that's not possible, the king retorted, why you pandits are all here ?

There were long consultations again. Seven teen and half lakh brooms were requisitioned. Swept by them volumes and volumes of dust from roads filled the king's chamber, his mouth and whole body. None was able to open his eyes. The sun was obscured by the clouds of dust. People coughed and sneezed, the dust proved too much for the city to bear. Thus [illegible]

'Well, then, in getting rid of dust you are choking the earth with dust !

Then came in batch after batch 21 lakhs of men carrying huge water-filled leather bags on their backs. The river cried for water being robbed of it. Only mud was left in the banks and ponds. Aquatic animals began to die for want of water, those on the land tried to swim. Fever and cold gripped the people and groans of agony filled the air.

'See what you donkeys have done', king Haboo shouted. What was dust has been converted to mud.'

All the wise men then planned to cover the earth with mat beds everywhere and put the king in a hermetically sealed room with no opening. If the king did not touch the ground how would dust soil his feet ?

'Nice is the idea', said the king. 'But then. If out of fear of dust I, the King, keep myself shut up in a room, will not my kingdom be reduced to dust?'

—Then let us send for the men who can bind the earth with hides. In the hide-bound earth of dust will lie hidden the great king's glory.

So all shouted in chorus : 'Quite easily that may be done if men fit to do this work are available.'

Leaving all work undone, the king's subjects sallied in search of such people. When they came back and reported that no men equal to the task were available, an old hide-man with a smile came forward and submitted : 'If the king permits me I may show how easily the object which has been baffling you so long is achieved. If the king covers his own feet the earth need not be covered.

It was too much for Haboo to believe. How could the thing be so plain and simple when the whole country even after such herculean efforts failed to accomplish it ? Emboldened by the king's attitude, minister Gaboo suggested that the man be speared and kept in the prison.

Quietly the old man sat at the king's feet and covered them with hide. 'I had this idea at the back of my mind. How could you, old fellow, steal it ?'—the Minister shouted.

Thus the shoe came into being and began to be used by men. Thus also were saved Gaboo and the whole earth.

(Translated from Rabindranath Tagore)

NATURE

By BASABJIT BANERJEE
(Leaguer 21829, Calcutta)

Rain came over the old Oak tree,
Humming of bees was heard by me—
Horizon changed from blue to red,
I found a big rainbow over my head.

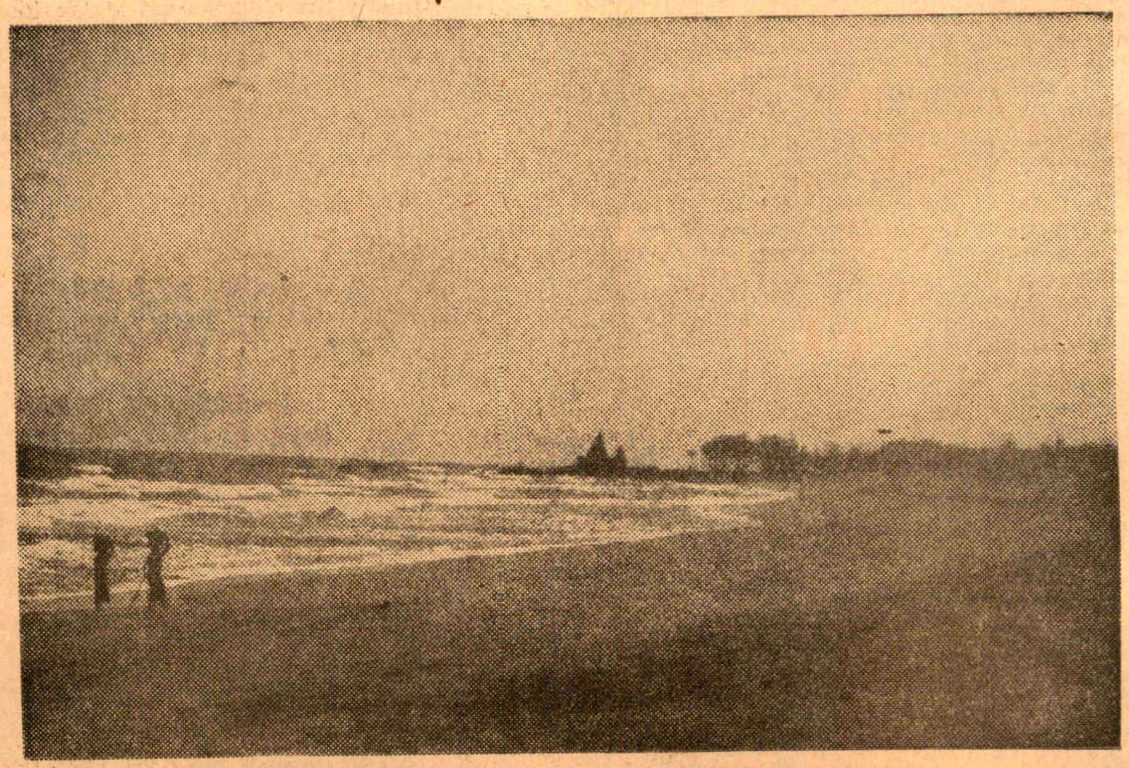
(2)

Deep black is the sky,
Twinkling stars are blue—
Milk-white is the Moon,
And an owl is passing through.

NEW YEAR'S EVE

Tomorrow is the New Year,
This is the time to remember
All the memorable events—

Solitary surveyor Photo by : ANIL SEN



Whither you go! Photo by : ANIL SEN

INNER PICTURE OF ATOM

By PRASANTA KUMAR BASU
(Leaguer 20942, Calcutta)

The visibility of matters depends upon the dimensions. If the value of the dimensions of objects fall below a certain limit we fail to visualise the same. Thus any attempt to describe the structure of atoms which render themselves invisible by virtue of their size, immeasurable by ordinary methods, would appear nothing but madness on our part. The problem atom had to unfold its mystery to the scientists at last!

Perhaps all of you have seen the yellowish substance, which is an indispensable component for cracker manufacture during the Kali Puja celebration. Do you know, what's that? Sulphur, commonly known as "Gandhak" suppose if we start breaking a small piece of sulphur we find that it continues to retain its characteristics up to a certain stage. This state of matter is called molecular state. At this particular state matter is able to exist freely but does not combine chemically with other substances. Now the question is, can matter be broken any more ? Science students would say—yes, it is possible to rupture it further, and ultimately it would be impossible to divide it any more by chemical means. This ultimate state of matter is called atom, derived from the Greek word *a temno* (not divided). All elemental substances are composed of this indivisible matter.

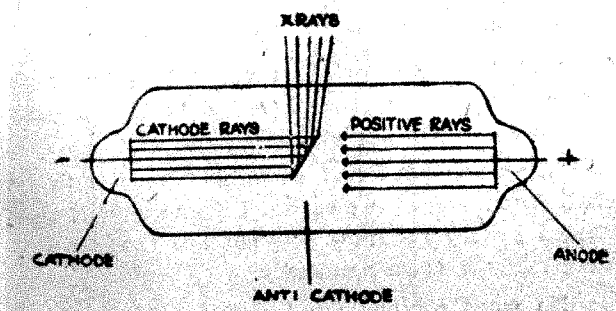
Structure of atoms was a subject of deep study of Indian and Greek philosophers of the early nineteenth century (scientists were then called philosophers). They hold divergent views on constitution of matter. They also confronted many difficulties for lack of suitable instrumental devices relating research problems. In 1803 John Dalton, father of modern atomic theory, postulated splendid classical information regarding structure of atoms. He said:

(i) Matter is composed of discrete tiny real particles called atoms which do not undergo any type of sub-division or reformation.

(ii) Atoms are incapable of being destroyed or created.

(iii) Atoms of any pure substance are identical with each other in weight, size and other properties and differ in weight and other characteristics from those of other substances.

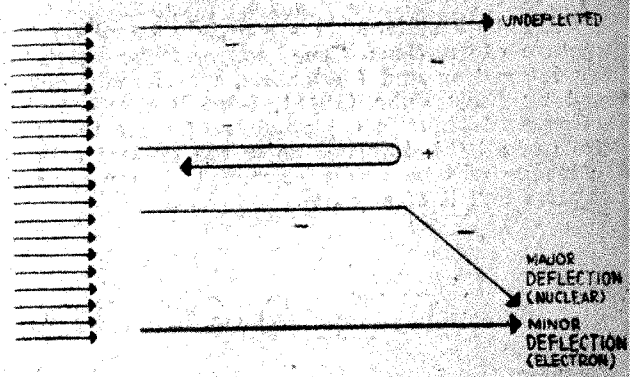
(iv) Chemical combination occurs by the combination or union of atoms in definite numerical proportions.



RAYS IN A DISCHARGE TUBE

Dalton's preliminary views were not proved by direct experimental evidences but later they tallied with other experiments and influenced chemical thoughts for a century. The names of other scientists which can be referred with glory were mainly Prout (1815), Faraday (1833) etc. The inescapable conclusions drawn from these experimental accumulated data showed that a number of subatomic particles were essential for the construction of atom. But after some time the scientists became very doubtful about the postulations of Dalton and considered them untenable, the following experiments being sufficient to discard the theories.

In 1899, Sir William Crooks performed a classical experiment. In a glass tube (the so-called discharge tube) when an elementary gas was kept



SCHEMATIC REPRESENTATION OF SCATTERING OF ALPHA PARTICLES BY AN ATOM

at ordinary temperature, and very low pressure subjected to high electrical potential difference, a high bright ray of light composed of very minute particles, streamed from the negative electrode to the positive one. No difference was observed by using various kinds of gaseous substances and different types of electrodes, which proved necessarily that atoms of all substance identically contain these essential particles (A) The peculiar properties observed from these particles were:

(i) rectilinear propagation

(ii) Production of bright glow around the surface of the glass tube.

(iii) Negativization of targets placed in the path of the ray.

(iv) Formation of shadows on installation of targets.

(v) Deflection from the original path by electrical or magnetic influences.

Scientist G. J. Stoney named these *particles* as electrons, symbolically represented as *e*, having negligible mass and unit electrical negative charge of -4.8029×10^{-10} units. Carrying on researches again on this kind of tube, it was also see

that a kind of ray (Canal ray or Positive ray) flowed in the reverse direction, the rays being the aggregations of minute particles called protons (p), the mass of which equalled to that of the hydrogen atom and the charge being opposite to the charge of electron that is $+4.8029 \times 10^{10}$ units. After these invensions, another important particle neutron was discovered which was observed to be electrically neutral but possessing same unit of mass as that of the proton. The logical solution involving these fundamental particles, embodied a multiplicity of particles, amounting almost twenty, the important ones being mesons, neutrons, positrons etc. It is thus seen that every atom is composed of these particles, which are necessary immutable and therefore none can be considered as truly fundamental.

But the main question arose about the static or dynamic existence of these particles. Rutherford introduced some positively charged particles, emanating from radioactive elements, through a thin metal foil of diametre about .0004 cm. and the particles passing through it finally struck a screen made of zinc sulphide, except someones, which embarrassingly returned to the original source making great angles. Rutherford then concluded that the negatively charged electrons were revolving round a positively charged centre called nucleus which essentially comprised of neutrons and protons. the system being like that of the solar system. (B) Sometimes after Moseley performed an attractive experiment on determination of atomic number (the no. of positive charges).

All these statements are mainly based on the structure of nucleus. The extranuclear picture, very interesting and fascinating, was mainly developed by Niels Bohr (1914), Lord Rutherford and G. Sommerfeld. It is not possible for me to give details of all this information in the present article. My labour will be amply rewarded if my fellow Leaguers find it of any use.

BELOVED SHASTRIJI

By BAN SHIDHAR PARIDA

(Leaguer — 23514, Cuttack)

Long years after
As if blessed by God,
Lucky Indians got him.
Bearing hardships,
Acquainted with poor Indians' Lives.
He fought for country's interest,
And there lies his victory.
Deeds but not words and
United efforts are
Required for country's advance — was his aim.
Service for the nation and to feed the
Hungry millions he tried his best
According to Gandhiji's self-denying policy.
Searching for everlasting peace he went to
Tashkent, where he succeeded and passed away.
Right was his vision and uncommon his dedicated leadership.
Indians always remember him with his slogan
—"JAI JAWAN and JAI KISHAN"

By PRASANTA K. CHATTOPADHYAY

(Leaguer — 8536, Delhi)

I have dreamt many a dream but none of them was as exciting and terror-striking as the one I had recently. It was all about this wonderful world of ours, about the two great powers and how their folly brought about its destruction.

The two great powers were busy in preparing themselves against each other. Each of them knew that their powerful nuclear weapons could destroy the world. So the question of an attack was not there. A cold-war was on and it was being maintained for a very long time.

One day however, a spy of one of the two powers divulged to their men that the other side had decided to use its most dangerous nuclear weapons against them. The other power also had similar news. Except for two, one on each side, the top scientists of the two powers protested against the use of nuclear weapons in secret sessions with the politicians and they were mercilessly murdered. The two who were left out, sat in their control rooms and almost simultaneously each pressed a button. There was a tremendous bang. Yelling a hundreds and thousands of dying men, women and children filled the air. I was silently watching things as they happened. Suddenly I saw the two giant slaughterers of mankind. There was no more any flesh and blood in them. I found two skulls resting on the back bone moving towards each other with the same jealousy as they had before. Their eyes were burning with fire.

"What did you gain?" I asked. There was no answer from any. Instead I found them villifying each other and still fighting.

"Stop, we have had enough of you." I thundered. And then, still gasping, I found myself surrounded by my relatives. "What has happened?" Asked many a voice agitatedly.

No word escaped my lip. Even today, whenever I am alone, I reflect on the dream. I ask myself 'will the dream come true?' I shudder to think any more.

Who Fail—They or We?

By MAMATA NAG

'SPARE the rod and spoil the child'—this age-old instruction meant for parents' guidance, be better discarded, if not already done, than followed. Those who do not wish to learn what then to do, must blame only their bankruptcy of ideas before fixing the guilt on the little boy or girl.

Why not try other methods to correct him or her? What are we, elders, ourselves? Are we perfect in all that we do, think or plan, in our manners and conversations? We can never be; nevertheless, we do not relax our earnest efforts to be as near the ideal as is humanly possible for us.

If we do not succeed let us not bid good-bye to our sense of failure. It is only when we lose this sense that we are unable to understand with sympathy why a child, not to speak of others, 'misbehaves' offending 'good conduct rules'.

No sensible man or woman disputes the argument that a child deserves more sympathy than others. This understanding constitutes the very basis for the structure of the edifice of humaneness.

In simple words it means a child fails only when we fail. Our failure comes first. Why then should the poor thing be taught with a rod? Because we are privileged to use it. Very well, then. But please pause for a while:

Is it not a child's privilege to go wrong, to be indecent according to our civilised standard though we expect it to be the reverse of it? A candid answer is wanted if we are really anxious to fashion 'a man' out of the erring, mischievous, untractable child.

Not to speak of a child. That also is the privilege of a 'full-grown man'. Read the lines below:

"Look. That cow grazing in the field or this wall in front of you does not make any mistake. But the cow will always remain a cow and the wall a wall. It is only the privilege of a man to make mistake, to go wrong, to commit sins. But he alone in God's creation is endowed with the unique power to turn round and prove by his thoughts, talks, acts and manners that washed of all dirt and impurities he also can shine and delight others like a piece of diamond!"

Countless people have benefited and are still inspired by these imperishable words of Swami Vivekananda.

They do apply with equal force to all—elders, youths, children. If we are unwilling to profit by them we ourselves are our worst enemy.

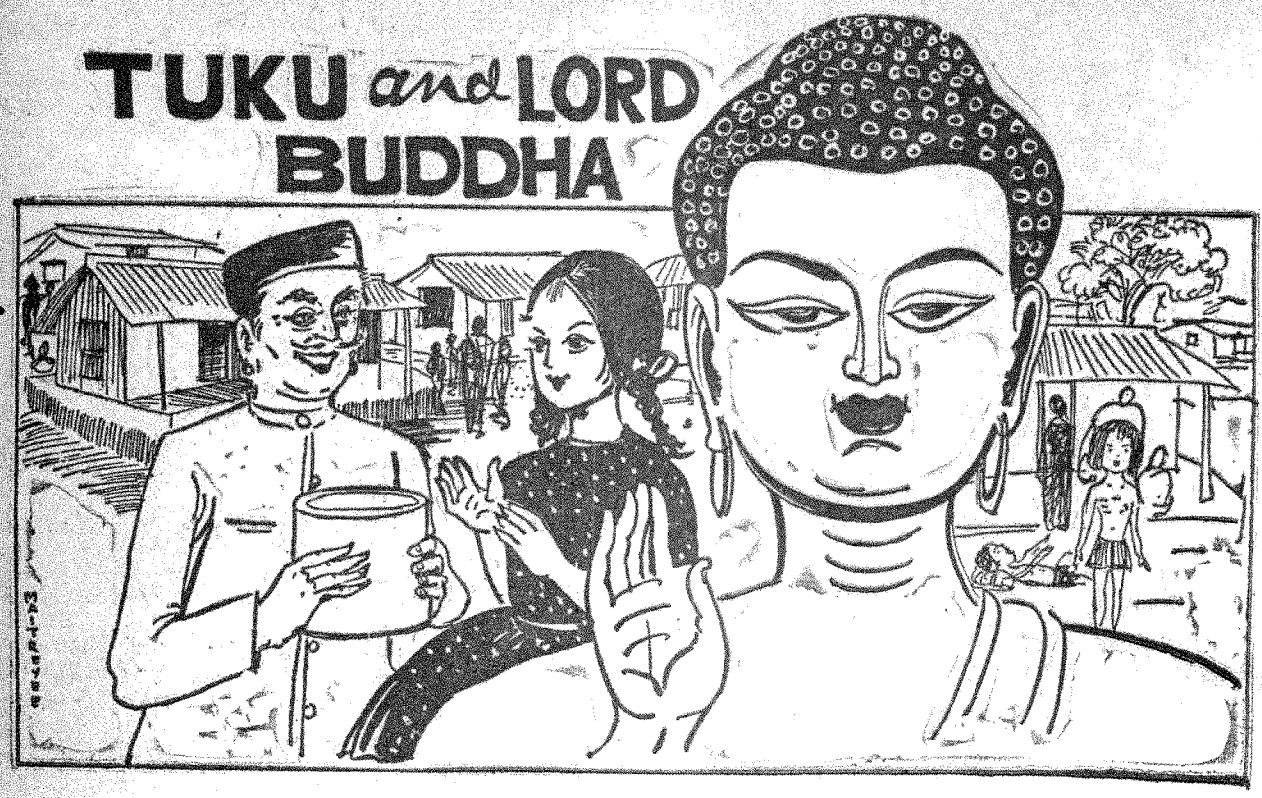
Within my limited experience I have never seen a 'bad' boy or girl failing to be good when people interested in their welfare did not fail in their attempts to properly direct them.

To the bad boy, say 'you are already good. You must be better.' It is only when there is weakness in us that we choose to classify boys or girls as bad or good. Why should the 'bad' of today be condemned for all time? He may be good tomorrow. If we have no patience with them, better leave them alone.

To members of the Young Folk's League in whom I have great faith I would say this: 'Do not neglect your little brothers and sisters. If they cry for your company, give it them in preference to your friends and comrades outside homes. Helping and 'fashioning' them is your first responsibility. Treat them with tender sympathy, love and affection. Let not these little lamps of today fail to give light. Forget not what you and your families expect of them. Who can say they will not succeed where you may have failed? Will not their success and prosperity reflect greater credit on you?

Why should the bad of today be condemned for all time?

TUKU and LORD BUDDHA



BY DEBI BHATTACHARYA (Leaguer — 23217, Calcutta)

ONE day a new tenant came to our slum. Here we were many families from all States of India. About one hundred of us, children, speaking different languages, used to play, sing and dance together every day. The common tie that bound us was our miserable existence. Our leader, Jhumu, a girl of 14, having left the place after her marriage, Tuku, a girl with beautiful eyes filled her place. She was highly intelligent and we were proud of her leadership.

The new man rented a shabby room in the bustee at a very cheap rate. A few months passed but nobody came to occupy the room. So everybody thought he must be a rich man, who just to satisfy one of his many whims, engaged a room, regularly paid the rent but would not care to make use of it.

One night unexpectedly the new member made his appearance with a handcart-load of luggage. Some children out of curiosity came to watch the unloading of the goods. He attracted a lot of attention of other co-tenants also. What however struck everybody most was that he had no family members, no furniture, no household utensil, nothing of what is necessary for day-to-day life. The entire room was stuffed with packets of dried-milk tins. A curious man from the crowd asked—Hullo Seth ! Are all these tins full of milk? With a smile he said 'yes'. Tuku, our leader, stretching out her hand prayed—give me some milk, uncle Seth. That smile again—Don't pray in this way my child, he said. These tins do not contain milk powder. All the dust of my heart is packed in these tins.

Tuku went away disappointed. Her youngest sister Minoo was dying for a drop of milk. Mother being seriously ill, she was not getting breast-milk.

One night seeing her father very worried she said—our new uncle Seth has brought hundreds of tins of milk powder. You may buy one from him, father.

Shaking his head impatiently the father said —it is sold in blackmarket and the price charged is exhorbitant. For a poor tailor like me it is not possible to get one. If he sells at moderate price certainly I will try. Now, Tuku, try to sleep and let me sleep. I don't like to be disturbed any more.

Thus rebuked Tuku sobbed for a while and then hit upon a plan. Rising from bed at midnight she quietly went to Seth who was then busy counting changes and currency notes. Startled by her call he told her in grave tones—if you want milk I say I will not give it. I can't give it.

Tuku pleaded—do not say 'no', uncle Seth. Sell one packet to me. My hungry sister must not die for want of milk. My mother is very very sick, oh uncle !

Seth said—hush ! hush ! Of course, I may sell a packet but it will cost you ten rupees. If you are ready, take one.

She ran home to tell her father about it. He was staggered to hear it and said—this is horrible blackmarket price and I for one am unable to meet the demand. I may pay five rupees, that's raher moderate price, the maximum.

Tuku took her father to Seth. He begged of him to part with a packet for five rupees for his little hungry sick daughter.

"Dear brother", Sethji replied with his usual smile, "I came here to stock my goods in this room with the idea of earning larger profit. How can I be kind and distribute them?"

His repeated appeals having failed, Tuku's father left the place.

Tuku had a brain-wave. She hurried back home and picked up the stone-made beautiful image of Buddha which her father had bought from a 'mela' for five rupees. She ran to Sethji and requested him to sell a milk-packet in exchange of the image. He was simply charmed and closely examined the image. He then told her to come next morning. Leaving Lord Buddha's image on Sethji's bed Tuku hopefully went away.

At dead of night a miracle was happening in

(Continued on next page)

MAHA PUJA

By SUJIT SOM
(Leaguer — 17192, Calcutta)

SWAMI Vivekananda in a statement narrated that, "Mother is the first manifestation of power and is considered a higher idea than father. With the name of mother comes the idea of "Sakti" divine energy and omnipotence, just as the baby believes his mother to be all powerful, able to do anything." Similarly, Goddess Durga is the Mother of all Hindus and is the source of all "Saktis". So, the ensuing festival viz. worship of Goddess Durga becomes a part and parcel of our religious life.

It was Ramchandra worshipped Goddess Durga first in autumn to rescue his wife Sita from Ravan, the king of Lanka.

Mother Durga is the daughter of the king of the Himalayas who comes once a year to the house of her father, oppressed with the load of her worries and difficulties. Poets like Ramprosad, Kamalakanta and Dasharathi went into ecstatic raptures out of devotion to her.

Durga, the Goddess of battles has ten hands each holding a discus, a sword, a trident, a lance, an arrow, a bow, a shield, a goad, a noose and an axe. She has three eyes : two as usual, one in the forehead. She mounts the lion, strikes the "Mahishasur" straight with her arrow. On her right is "Lakshmi" the goddess of wealth and prosperity standing on her symbol lotus, on her left "Sharaswati" the goddess of learning, arts and science on a swan and holding a lute in one hand. In the extreme right is "Ganesha" who stands for prudence and prosperity. It is considered highly suspicious to involve his blessings at the commencement of any undertaking. Then there is "Kartika" the great general of goddess Durga.

The puja is not the monopoly of the "Saktas". It is a non-sectarian, non-denominational puja. The materials essential for her worship are, dew-drops, durba, "Syamaka" plants, lotuses, fruits and sweets etc. It is "Japa" which constitutes her meditational and functional characterization centre round a purely "Puranic" formula. Durga puja is designated as "Maha Puja", an epithet which is associated with three "Tithis" viz the "Saptami", the "Astami" and the "Navami", the seventh eighth and ninth days of the moon. The technique of the puja is a consummate procedure with its elaborate "Snana" or bathing, her "Pranapratistha" and so on. The preliminary "Adhivasa" or consecration singles it out as an auspicious ceremony because of the manner in which it is gone through, similar to that in the sacrament. "Dasarah" or "Vijaya dasahmi" or tenth day of the moon is the last day when the Goddess is taken out from the pandal or temple towards the river for immersion.

The elements in her composite nature that have caught popular imagination are not so much, her power and grandeur as her sweetness, beauty or harmony and protection. Again, her composite nature goes side by side with her cruel, destructive force in war. She is the most beautiful woman imaginable; grace, harmony and serenity are hers in pose, form and conduct. She is the Great Mother dealing out affection and tenderness everywhere.

So, we see that instead of spiritual now-a-days instead of "Family Puja" the number of "Sarvojanin Puja" or community puja which has made of the puja a training-ground for social service, is increasing year by year. But we are to remember that this is after all a puja, a thing of the heart and spirit, entailing purity of both the body and the mind. Amusements should never be allowed to spoil the puja.

Spring

By TAPAN KANTI DEY
(Leaguer — 12700, Howrah)

The spring has come again!
Nature looks green all around,
Trees putting on new leaves,
With cheerful birds singing
Proclaim the advent of spring.
The earth is in a queen gay mood —
My mind is also awakened
To respond to the general joy.

TUKU AND LORD BUDDHA

(Continued from previous page)

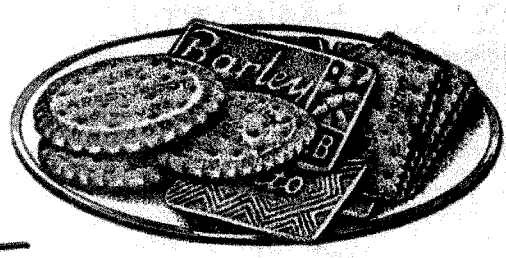
Sethji's room ! Roused from his dream he saw a heavenly light glowing behind the image of Buddha and heard a clear voice telling him :—Seth, distribute all your milk-packets to the sick babies of the slum. They are my children. They are now dying. Let them live, laugh and be merry. God will bless you if you are kind to them. If you store these milk-packets they will rot and come to no use. Take my love to the babies. You also take it for your kindness to them.

The light was no more. The Seth was in tears.

Next morning he met Tuku's father and requested him to take one packet for which he need not pay. Instead, he begged Lord Buddha's image of him. 'Please allow me to have it. I am a poor businessman. I have not the wealth that I may offer as its price. Kindly give me this, kindly."

Tuku's father could not understand the mystery. It was just a play doll for the babies. It seemed to him to have neither any virtue nor any real value. What then made the Seth behave this way ?

On festive occasions



Treat your guests with

LILY

BISCUITS

LILY BISCUIT CO. PRIVATE LTD. CALCUTTA-4

A HOLIDAY FROM WORRIES

I took a day off today. I just wanted to put a spectacle — the kind of glasses that would allow me the privilege of looking at this Institution as a third person — indeed to have a third eye view.

By SAMAR CHATTERJEE

WHEN I entered Aban Mahal—the building dedicated to a great painter of India—I heard a symphony not of music but of the various sounds which emanated from amongst a number of ladies and gents seated on their small chairs and discussing all the subjects on earth. It seemed to me that they had no worry in their lives. This Sunday morning they had taken leave of all the mundane things of their routine life; of kitchen and pantries and of daily chores of a harassed father or an official or businessman. This symphony mingled with shrieks of laughter of the children playing or munching at the snack counter business and of the office clerk accepting money or giving away change. There was in the centre a man leaning in an easy chair and speaking to a score of persons at the same time. This was the general concourse of CLT.

Standing below the staircase I could hear music in one end and rhythmic tapping on the other. There were children everywhere. Out on the street the mason and labourer were working putting on more bricks and mortars to the mammoth 11 lakh rupees building. From the exhilarating outbursts coming out from different rooms, you would not have believed that serious work was going on all the time. The laughter and the running steps of the children all elicited a rhythm and melody of its own .These were flowering buds sending out a beautiful perfume.

A parent queried, "Where is your discipline? There seemed to be a continuous tumultuous noise!" The enquirer did not know that in the living world of children you could control noise only by having some more noise. Only difference was that these were spontaneous outbursts of a joyous childhood. The man who gave you the CLT said, "Children are so fed up with the usual adomination to keep quiet that they would like to have some place of their own to have a full go!" It was because of this that nobody in this building ever said, "Children! Keep quiet"; but that did not necessarily mean that no work was being done. The little ones are fully alive to their responsibilities. When the teacher initiates a movement either in a song or in a dance, they are serious learners. This has been made possible because the main object of the CLT is to foster group movement. No child would like to be backward in singing a song or putting up a dance movement. They have learnt that they have to be good to make a combined movement beautiful. When it was time to work, the children indeed worked with a vengeance!

I moved on to a big hall in the basement very quiet and yet very much alive. I found more than three scores of children in various postures painting with a single minded devotion. A few of them were contemplating the object of their easel ! Was it one of despair? Or was it an appreciation of the object of their painting. The children appeared to me to be a part of this beautiful hall around which there were their own paintings very neatly arranged by the teacher. Do they know all about the colours? Some know it very well and others do not care. To the latter, all that mattered was a splashing of colours. I was present when the famous painter, Debi Prosad Roy Choudhury, said, "Oh! This indeed is a symphony of colours". Many paintings that I saw were delightfully original and the others had their own story to tell. As I said, the children were not at all anxious to conform to a set standard or rule. There were easels and there were boards; the mosaic floor offered excellent place for most of the children. The teacher moved about helping a child here and one there. He knew that the child would find his own style in due course and besides, who knows whether this one would take up painting at all? The main thing was to play with colours. Who knows? There might emerge from them the painter of the Atomic Age.

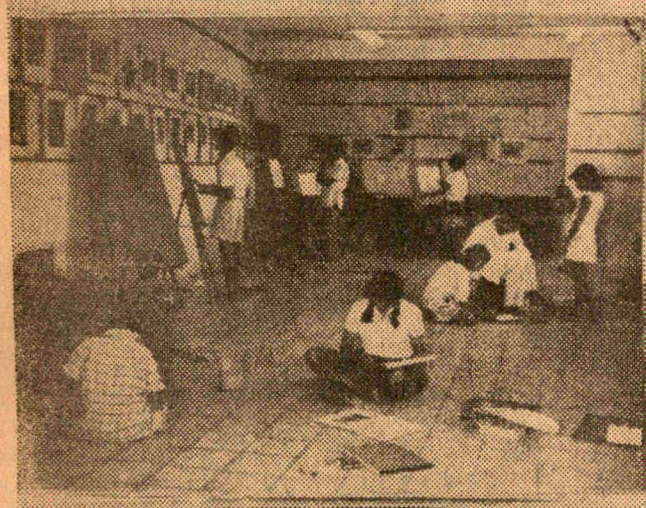
While in the Art Gallery, came a noise from an upstair room. I asked a child ; could he tell me

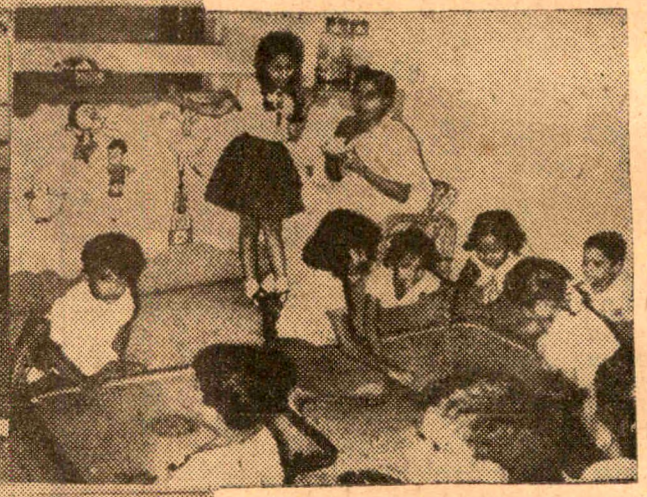
HAPPINESS ABOUNDING

Choral Group Learning a Tune

*

Till the next class





(Centre left) Painting the hard way

*

Pandit Ravishankar in CLT music Room

Photo : SANDIP SEN

what the noise was about? He laughed and said, "Oh! It is coming from the TIYA Room. They are rehearsing Kippling's Mowgli." Oh! TIYA Room? What was that? I was told all the Studio Rooms were named after birds. The Art Gallery was named GAGAN KUTHI while the studios were named as CHANDANA, MAYNA, TIYA, KOKIL, KAT THOKRA. How beautiful; who does not know the inborn love of the child for the birds? Bird Room in Aban Mahal! What could be more appropriate?

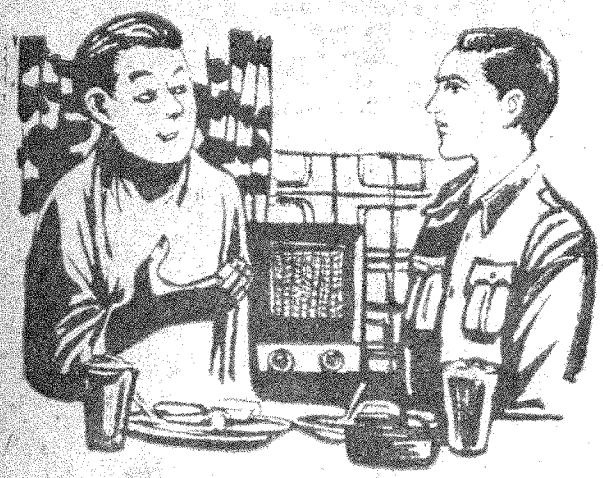
I left GAGAN KUTHI, NANDA KUTHI and making my way gingerly through many bamboos, bricks and mortars, I came to the TIYA Room and peeped in. There were about 40 children and two teachers and they were making a great deal of noise. Only, these noises were duly regulated! There was a little Mowgli amongst the wolves giving a good deal of scolding to Sherkhan the tiger; and directly thereafter there were the monkeys shrieking in front of Kaa the Python. A couple of years ago there were not many boys in CLT and now it is different. It was difficult to get boys to come to the Rhythm Rooms leaving aside Football, Cricket, Swimming and other outdoor sports; but they are now coming in large number. I was told that most of the old boys of CLT were now in different Engineering and Medical Colleges as also in Defence Academy doing extremely well. There was, however, this difference in the training of boys; the entire media was different than those used for girls. All the scripts are distinctly boyish in character whether in Drama, Ballet or Music. In fact the emphasis is on virelity and there was nothing feminine about the plays or Rhymes. Use of Lazim, Durmuz and other implements made for a most robust form of entertainment.

I climbed three flights of stairs through a maze of sets and settings, to the Puppet Room. There were rows and rows of puppets. Ram, Laxman, Lab, Kush, Balmiki, Mouse, Monkeys, Chimpanzee, Ducks, Rabits and a large number of other characters. On the fourth floor there was a beautiful Open Air Auditorium for 200 children where the puppet exercises and shows were to be given as a regular measure. I could well foresee the happy expectant faces of these 200 children in this special Auditorium. This was indeed a kingdom of children and Puppets! There were Dadas and Didis handling puppets and at the same time making many kind of noises behind the microphone.

While coming down the stairs, something was rolling on and on. On the third floor lobby the children were romping on Roller Skaters! This was a mosaic rink which I was told would be shortly replaced by a real wooden rink built of Canadian pine. The children—mostly girls—were in ecstasy of delight of a few falls withal! They were skating with ease and confidence, sometime jumping, sometime gliding on one foot and sometime taking short and long circles with grace and beauty. They were giving life to a Ballet on Roller Skater composed from the inimitable writing of Budo Angla by Abanindra Nath. If only, Abanindra Nath was alive today.

From the lobby I could see the scaffolding ring, on which workmen were adding brick after brick and bringing up the 70 feet high stage. I could well imagine the impatient anxiety of the CLT people for completion of one of the finest stage in this country. There behind the stage, atop the first floor concourse, refrains of music were pouring in. Ballet music was being recorded in CLT's own Music Room. The artists were a bunch of young teenagers —all former pupils—and now vocal artists on their own right. One of the musicians told me. "It is a pleasure to play here. Where could one get such pleasure in providing music for children?"

This then was a real Children's House — a house dedicated to the nation's unsophisticated and uninhibited children. I have seen quite a number of institutions abroad dealing with children in an entirely different manner. I have seen the Scouts & Guides and also the Pioneers each pursuing a policy of their own but remaining within the framework of its rules and regulations. But here it was different. There were no rules and directive and yet the youth conform to the greatest rule that one could frame and that was to get unalloyed and unfettered joy if you could call singing, dancing, frolicing, reading etc. verily a part of education. The glasses that I had put on while visiting the various sections I took off and came to the basic reality of confrontation of a challenge to give every child of this country the facilities that were given here in this Hall of Children. In the Fourth Plan there would be planning galore for so many good things. We need no doubt basic education, expansion of irrigation and agriculture activities, expansion of industries etc. Will the planners make it possible for completion of a plan that would go to make the child—living a most useful and joyous childhood?



DEFEAT TO FRIEND

BY SIPRA SAHA

(League — 21547, Calcutta)

BIRESH was very poor. He lived with his old grandmother and two sick sisters in a bustee, while Mrinal lived in a lovely mansion nearby. Biresh and Mrinal were friends in their childhood. But the tie of friendship started loosening since Mrinal realised the difference in their status. Due to Mrinal's indifference Biresh felt wounded at heart and from then on he tried by all means to keep himself aloof from Mrinal.

Mrinal however envied Biresh since he was no match for him either in sports or in academic pursuits. Though poor, Biresh and his family members were full of noble qualities and patriotic sentiments. Love for the Motherland was in their blood. Biresh's father embraced a warrior's death. Excessive love for wealth and extreme selfishness destroyed all the good qualities of Mrinal and his family.

Under compulsion of circumstances Biresh had to forego his studies and join a factory to maintain the family. Mrinal became a typical hampered youth.

Despite the extremely hard struggle for existence Biresh was not cowed down and when an opportunity came for serving his country as a soldier, he eagerly seized it. He became a regular soldier. When news of Pakistani attack came Biresh was asked to proceed to the forward operation area. Before his departure he went to pay a visit to Mrinal.

"Mrinal", said Biresh, "I am going to the front to fight the enemy. Would you like to join the army? Who knows, you might be able to kill a few enemies."

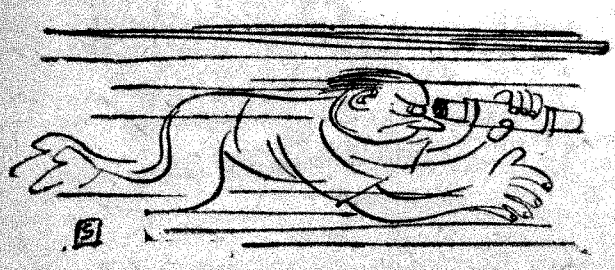
Mrinal switched off the radiogram, ordered refreshments for Biresh and said, "Look, however much you pose to be a patriot, it is poverty that has impelled you to join the army. There is no point in thus playing with your life." Biresh was rather hurt and replied, "It is no question of rich or poor, neither do I pose myself to be a patriot, I simply feel it is a duty. Mrinal's face hardened and he said. "Since you are determined to fool away your life with no hope of return, please pay me back the money you owe me."

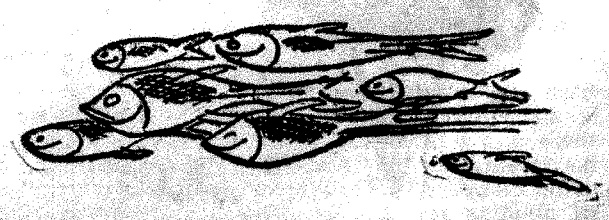
The cakes, sandwiches, biscuits and the glass of chocolate with cream on top which were offered to Biresh remained untouched. Burning with indignation Biresh returned home as he had never expected such a reply from a rich friend.

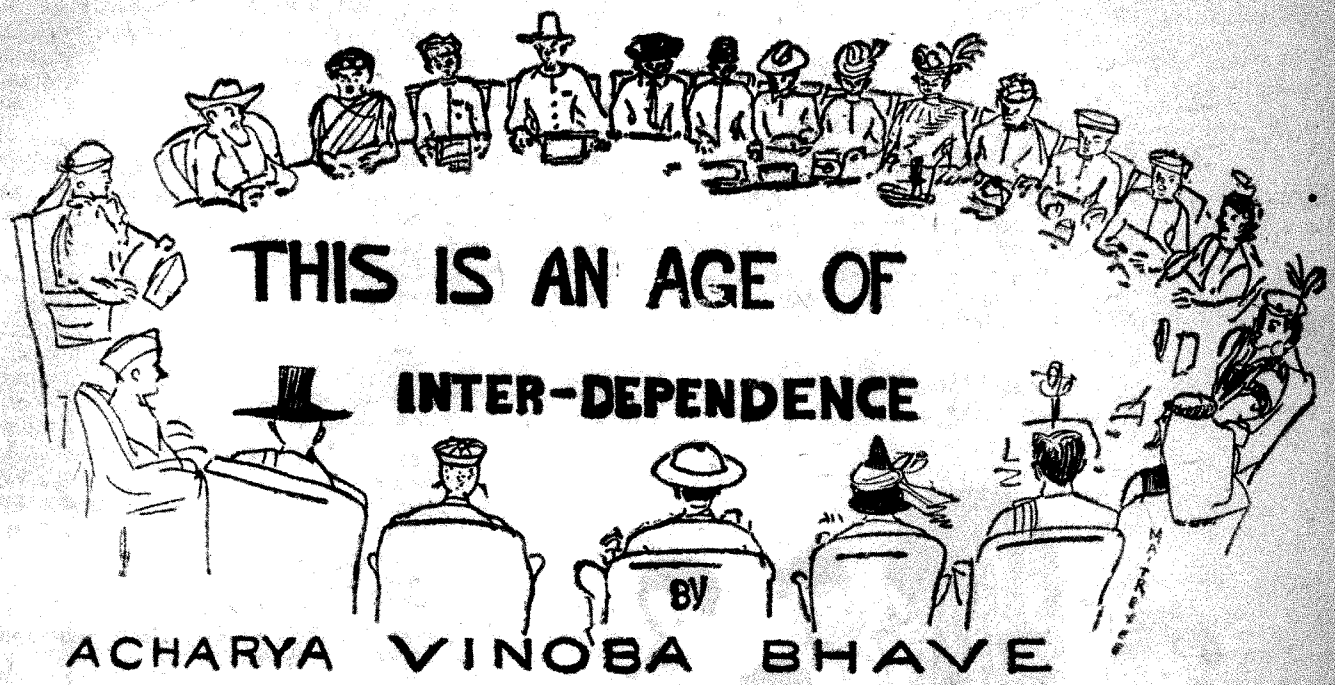
What was he to do? He had no doubt that he had taken money from Mrinal in time of need. But was this the time to ask for it? A mere sum of Rs. 200 was nothing to a man who possessed lakhs of rupees. With tears in his eyes he sold the two gold bangles of his dead mother and took the money to Mrinal. Mrinal was rather surprised to find the money, but did not wish him a farewell.

Biresh fought bravely. He killed two men of the enemy and lost one eye. But still he fought, and killed a few more. But at last a bullet struck him in his head and he fell dead. News came that Biresh had embraced a hero's death. The Government decided to honour the brave martyr with military awards.

When Mrinal read the report in newspapers he realised how mean and unpardonably rough he had been. He was seized with the desire to commit suicide. But, no. Suddenly the idea flashed across his mind that he would take all responsibility for properly looking after Biresh's family. With tears in his eyes he realised once more that he had been no match for Biresh.







THIS IS AN AGE OF INTER-DEPENDENCE

BY

ACHARYA VINOBA BHAVE

THIS is the age of science. The call of science is the speedy construction of a common human fraternity. According to a world-wide survey, the largest selling books, in order of total sales made, are: The Bible, the works of Lenin, Tolstoy and Tagore. That the Bible should have the largest sale is but natural as it strengthens the bond of unity between man and man, and also because there is an organization behind its sale. For selling Lenin's works, too, there is a well-organized and concerted drive. Communist ideas have influenced men's minds in many places of the world. In fact it may be said that the world is today ideologically divided into two main camps and in every country, there is an organized group which promotes sale of Lenin's works. There is, however, no such organization or centralized effort for selling the works of Tolstoy or Tagore. The universality of their appeal is at the root of their popularity. Never before had universality of outlook been so universal. Of course, saints and seers of all ages had preached universalism and had thought in world perspective, but the thinking of the common people had never been so broad in nature. The mind has widened with the advance of science, but the heart has not. That is the root cause of all the strifes and conflicts in the present day world. In other words, they arise from the conflict between the head and the heart. While the former has grown, the latter has remained narrow. In this context, comes the call of science for human unity and breadth of vision.

Never before were there so much fear, distrust and exclusiveness in man. Never before were so many barriers raised between nations. Wherever there is a conflict today, we find man is applying his intelligence to divide lands and peoples in the name of peace. The wise seem to mistake the act of dividing for that of uniting. In this way, Bengal, the Punjab, Korea, Germany and even Berlin, the capital of Germany, have been divided.

Travelling abroad is becoming increasingly difficult. It is a paradox, that when people did not think internationally and had little geographical knowledge, they could travel freely. Many travellers had come to and gone out from India in the past. The names of Fa Hien, Huen Tsang, Al Beruni, etc., are all too familiar to us. Similarly, many from India went out. The Caspian Sea was named after Kashyap—a wandering Indian Rishi. They did not require passport or visas for travel, were never refused entry or looked upon as unwelcome guests. And journeys those days meant taking great physical hardships which have been overcome since.

In the early days of the East India Company, a voyage from London to Calcutta took some 15 days and now in the aeroplane age it is not more than 15 hours. It is quite possible that a day will come when the distance can be covered in 15 minutes. It is a pity that in an era when even a dog can go hundreds of miles up into outer space, the human mind has broken to pieces.

I was a teacher of geography for some time. To illustrate the shape of the different European States, I used to tell my pupils that if a drinking glass is let fall, it will break to pieces. In the broken pieces can be seen France and Germany and the whole of fragmented, Balkanized Europe. There is no reason why Europe should not be unified. There is no insurmountable barrier standing between France and Germany. Indeed, they are sorry that there is none! So, Siegfried and Maginot Lines had to be set up to keep them separate and the problem of national defence was thus supposed to have been solved. But now, when aeroplanes fly across the sky, these Lines serve no purpose.

In the age of aeroplanes, the taller a building, the more is it exposed to the danger of demolition by bombing. A few years ago when Khrushchev came to Calcutta, he was surprised to find sky-

scrappers going up in the city and said in the atomic age they were positively disadvantageous as they would be the easy targets for the bombers. Instead, he suggested that we do some 'advance thinking' and do not build sky-scrappers.

We are witnessing the advance of science on the one hand and narrowness and exclusiveness of the heart on the other, thwarting the free movement and intercourse between the peoples of the world.

Poet Tagore has sung of a Viswasabha — a World Assembly. Where is that to be found? In international conferences delegates sit at a round table so that the order of precedence in giving them seats may not pose a problem. At a round table everyone gets the first place and all are equal. But what is the upshot of all this? The end result of a Round Table Conference is also round, that is, a zero. And when they sit face to face, still the result is a zero.

Where there is no mutual trust, the result cannot but be anything else. Talks are rent by distrust for one another. A tremendous advance in man's knowledge on the one hand and a pathetic narrowness of his heart on the other—this is the picture today. Even the smaller nations have gone to pieces. Within the nation there exist party, power and parochial politics. These are anachronisms in the science age, are attempts at swimming against the current and those trying to do so will be swept away. It is time we realized that politics and parties can and actually do fan only national aggrandizement, which is harmful. I have, therefore, said several times that in the age of science what we call "politics" has become outdated and antiquated.

What is the characteristic of the present age? It is interdependence of nations and societies. Divisive politics is the antithesis of interdependence. Just as a flame glows brightly before it goes out, the present omnipotence of politics is the presage of its death. In the Gita, God urges Arjun to be just instrumental in his opponents' destruction, who, He says, may be taken to be already dead. Similarly, God now urges Sarvodaya to show the way to the world through the union of hearts.

"I used to tell my pupils ....."

Conflicts arise in the early stages of every good thing. Suppose some one wants to get into a railway compartment. He may quite possibly find a few passengers within barring his entry. They may even try to push him out. After initial jostling of however, he may make his way in, though the fellow passengers within my not even so much as ask him to be seated. In the end however they will relent. The man next to him will offer him a seat. A casual tete-a-tete will begin, and they will have made friends. They may very well end up by discovering a distant relationship between them. Bitterness, conflict and war generally attend all contacts between civilizations and cultures.

When Subhash Babu was amidst us, there were a few other great men in India. All of them were staunch patriots as well as internationalists. They were profoundly thoughtful and of a saintly nature. The Second World War was then raging, Germany, Japan, etc. were arrayed against Russia, France, America, England etc. The question arose in our country as to what was India's duty in this war. Subhash Babu thought that the war presented a unique opportunity. If we joined the war against England, we could free our country from British domination. From the British, he thought, we could never wrest independence. He therefore, took a courageous step and left the country incognito.

What however, did Shri Aurobindo do? He was in deep meditation at Pondicherry and might not have troubled himself with the affairs of the world. But he posed the question: "which side does God take in this global war? More or less both sides are to blame. But whose case is comparatively righteous?" And, through his meditation, he came to the conclusion that the Allied Powers had justice on their side because the Divine Power was

(Continued on page 192)

VOLTAIRE: THE ARISTROCATIC REBEL

by A·D·CHOUDHURY

IF anybody asks me, "Who is the most energetic, most colourful and most influential European intellectual in the last three hundred years?" I would, without a moment's hesitation, reply "Voltaire." Of course, most of his controversial writings, full of French wit and clarity, have lost their appeal. They centred round topical subjects and theological queries—questions that have little importance today. But the brave spirit in the frail body, the great rebel can never be forgotten. It would be a fatal mistake, however, if he is pictured as a dishevelled, grim, brooding philosopher living an ivory-tower existence far from the madding crowd.

FRENCH REBEL

No, Voltaire could never forget that he was a Frenchman. Although he was at war with some of the most influential men of eighteenth century France, the French aristocracy was mad about this brilliant ugly philosopher who knew how to please pretty ladies, who could make a personal sacrifice for the sake of an epigram, who knew all that was possible for a man to know and yet was irresistably interesting. A curious blending of cupidity and generosity, of audacity and wisdom, of charity and vanity, of simplicity and astuteness, this tall sick man influenced his age as nobody did. That he was a thorough man of the world and not an impractical idealist is proved by the fact that in spite of all the vicissitudes of life, his poor health and poor parantage, he managed to live in luxury among the aristocracy and died a wealthy generous man.

William Congreve

Still, many a time he had to pay for the excesses of his audacity. In a posh dinner party when Voltaire, a young man of thirty-two, was waxing eloquent to the delight of all the dinners, the Chevalier de Rohan, a great nobleman queried who was the young man talking so loudly. Promptly came the reply from Voltaire himself, "My lord, he has no great name, but wins respect for the name he has." Events moved very rapidly after that and Voltaire was arrested and sent to the Bastille. This was, however, his second visit, his first visit to Bastille ten years ago was occasioned by some witty remarks at the expense of the regent. This time he was shortly released and exiled to England, the natural home of all rebels.

Stendhal, the great novelist, defines genius as superior energy. Voltaire certainly had a superabundance of energy which left all men of that illustrious period far behind him. Within a year of his arrival in England he was master of the best English literature of that age. He was introduced to Swift, Addison, Congreve, Pope and all the great figures of English culture could offer, although his Latin logic was uncomfortably ruffled when he found that plague had one syllable and ague two. What interested him most in the "nation of shopkeepers" was their practice of and respect for democracy, their perfect parliamentarian tradition, their intellectual independence.

Stendhal

A new Voltaire was born. The Bastille made him a rebel. The rebel found his ideal realised in England: He admired the virile strength of Swift: Newton's mechanistic interpretation of the Universe enchanted him, Locke's materialism enthralled him. He recorded his admiration for and impressions of England in his *Lettres Philosophiques sur les Anglais* and his friends read them in manuscript.

After three years he came back to France to regain fame and fortune. But a revolutionary is seldom free to enjoy liberty and security together. A publisher got hold of the manuscript of the Lettres and without the knowledge of Voltaire pub-

lished them. The French Parliament was aghast at the criticism of French tyranny and the admiration of English political liberty contained in this book: the book was ordered to be publicly burnt. Voltaire was not eager to see the inside of Bastille again. He left Paris and found refuge in the arms of Marquise du Chatelet at her chateau at Cirey. This was indeed something on the lines of grand passion. She was no ordinary romantic society butterfly. In matters scientific she even excelled Voltaire. She published an annotated French edition of Newton's *Principia* and declared Voltaire to be "the finest ornament of France". Meanwhile the chateau at Cirey became the intellectual centre of France. Like iron pieces attracted by magnet the brilliant French aristocracy gathered round Voltaire. After the exciting labour of study and scientific research throughout the day Voltaire, immense delight of the cream of Parisian society, read stories, poems or acted in his own plays. To please the corrupt aristocracy he wrote delightfully bitter pieces like *Candide* and *Zadig*. To make his mistress happy with history ("History is an old almanac"—Mme. du Chatelet) he began his work on the age of Louis XIV and with the *Essai sur Les Moeurs* ended as the greatest historian of the century. He was among the first to attempt a universal history and was the first European to include in it the history of the great peoples of Asia—Indians, Chinese and Persians. "From this picture we see," he boldly declares, "that everything belonging ultimately to human nature is alike from one end of the universe to other, while everything depending on custom is different. Custom produces variety, nature, unity. The soil is everywhere the same, and cultivation produces different fruits." He had expressed his desire to trace the history of the human mind beneath the flux of political events and the result was a marvel of stupendous research, inhuman labour of years of a first rate mind.

Isaac Newton

Along with all this exacting labour one must not forget the large number of letters he wrote to people of all nations, in all stations and on all topics. In this, as in all aspect of life, Voltaire was truly of Catholic taste and habit. The Parish priest demanded his attention no less than the Emperor of Prussia or the Empress of Russia. The Moland edition (1877-1882) of Voltaire's works gives us 9098 letters. Roger Petit, however, asserts that a new Voltaire edition must collect more than 10,000 letters (leaving aside the large number of letters buried in Government archives) and they are, perhaps, of more historic value than those of Cicero or Mme. de de Sevigne. This enormous number of letters, addressed to about 700 correspondents, testifies to his large acquaintance and his amazing grasp of diverse subject and incidents. It is an historic document of great importance and without the study of which an understanding of the European spirit of the century will be incomplete. From the marriage of Louis XV at Fontainbleau to Leibnity's monads, he wrote on everything that interested the passions of that brilliant age. In these letters the courtier and the worldly shrewd man are revealed as much as the lofty philosopher and the bold revolutionary. With all his incessant literary works and social engagements, he found time to write as much as twenty letters a day although he was always sick and unhealthy. No wonder that he was thought by many the greatest intellectual energy in history. Like Balzac he was one of nature's bulls, people with unusual capacity for work.

Balzac

Frederick the Great

Locke

But in 1748 Marquise du Chatelet fell in love with the young and handsome Marquis de Saint-Lambert. Voltaire at first raged and then forgave the erring woman like a real philosopher. In 1749 the Marquite died in childbirth. Voltaire shed tears of bereavement. He felt lonely. In 1750 Frederick the Great invited him to come to his court at Potsdam. They were long standing friends. They had addressed letters to each other since 1736. Voltaire decided for Potsdam.

Life was ideal at Potsdam. He lived in Frederick's palace and was accepted on equal terms by the most powerful Emperor of Europe. In the private suppers of the Emperor the conversation was always in French. Frederick's wit was almost as sharp as the Frenchman's and he wanted to be poet and philosopher. Voltaire tried to learn German but gave up the experiment with the characteristic comment that the language had more consonants than wit. However, royal friendship can never be relied on. There was disagreement and Voltaire's spirit revolted. When he was fleeing in great haste from Prussia, a bookseller pressed for money. Voltaire gave him a blow instead, and his Secretary hastened to comfort the bookseller: "Sir, you have received a box on the ear from one of the greatest men in Europe."

But he could not enter France either. The French authorities were too alert not to declare this dangerous rebel an exile. The old man of sixty hardly knew where to go. At last he bought an old

(Continued on page 184)

IS CHIVALRY DEAD?

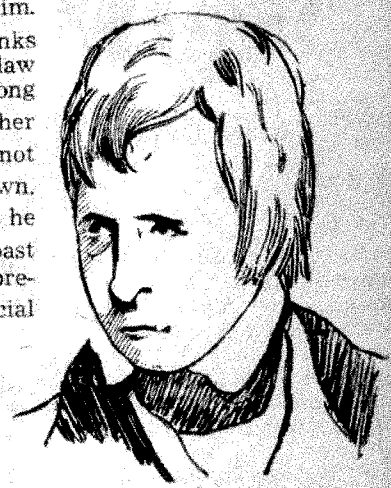
by Prof GIRIJAKANTA MAJUMDER

IN referring to the tragic fate of Mary Antoinettee, the Queen of France, Burke lamented the decay of Chivalry in the 19th century. He had thought, he said, that ten thousand swords leapt from their scabbards to avenge even a look that threatened her with insult, but not a sword stirred and she was executed with the whole populace looking on in a holiday mood. Many an Eve of today might sigh with Burke for the vanished Knighthood with its cult of gallantry, courtly love and veneration of woman. They would welcome the return of the age which saw a "queen of beauty and love" preside over the tournament and give with her fair hand awards for bravery. Even in a later age Sir Walter Raleigh threw his precious 'shawl' on the miry spot for Elizabeth to walk on "till her pleasure should be further known". Scott's romantic presentation of medieval Chivalry has captured the imagination of countless readers. But will such flattering pictures make the modern woman seriously agree to exchange places with her medieval counterpart? The realist of today will perhaps take a cynical view of the 'ardent adoration' of the Knight who knelt rarely on his personal account, and the lady in question was nearly always married to someone other than the lover and often to his overlord. A medieval damsel in her close resemblance to a deity of stone was the object of blind worship and could make no use either of her hands or of her traditional weapon, the tongue, for the purpose of defence or attack.

Marie Antoinettee

Woman's entry into history was attended with little dignity. She was just a prize worth fighting for, little better than chattels which might change hands like household effects. She was merely an attractive item of personal belongings and was claimed by the strong man for exclusive possession. But gradually the sense of woman's dignity dawned upon society and she was recognised as a person endowed with a will and a personality—however pliant—of her own. She has gained a position of legal and political equality. There is now practically no field of human endeavour which places a ban on woman. Even in the spheres of administration and diplomacy she is extending her sway. She is now solitary Portia in a lawyer's gown. She has stormed the very doors of Oxford and Cambridge. She is ousting man from soft jobs and is growingly in evidence everywhere save in the army and in the factory. She is contesting election to get herself voted in the gilded chamber of legislature. It would be too much to claim that she is leaving man behind in the race of life, nor is it perhaps in her own plans to strive to snatch the palm off his hands. But she is learning to scoff at the wifely office of keeping the house for the husband. Instead she is giving her time and talent to earn money more often to feed her sense of pride and independence than to relieve actual and acute wants with the result that the hotel is supplanting the home. She is no longer the Coy-recipient of love but is an active, and on occasions aggressive, participator in the game and the glow of romance which surrounded it in old times is making room for cold, materialistic calculations.

It is inevitable that in this changed environment man's attitude towards woman should be affected. She does no more regard herself as the weaker vessel and would not entertain an offer of protection from him. He on his part thinks that the arms of law are long and strong enough to protect her so that he need not stretch out his own. It would be absurd, he argues, to claim past chivalry in the present context of social life. Equality and privilege cannot go together. Reservation for woman in public services, in trains, trams and buses, in the office windows would be an anomalous piece of anachronism. It has the effect of killing what little chivalry yet remained in man for her. The label, "Reserved for Ladies" is a challenge and irritation to him.



Sir Walter Scott

It is interesting to watch the little comedies that are being daily enacted in a bus. If a man, after a desperate struggle for standing space, finds a place in the woman's corner invitingly vacant he

gets himself seated with the unstinted support of his conscience. But before a couple of minutes of uneasy occupation has passed, he is alarmed by an outcry "give up the lady's seat" from those others that are standing—an outcry which rings with undisguised joy as if they will be gaining what he is losing. He casts an uneasy glance towards the door. Yes, sure as death, there looms large the advancing figure of a lady. He becomes at once the villain and the victim of the drama. The sword of Damocles which was hanging above is now down upon his shoulders. He goes through all the twists and turns of reluctant rising while she, armed with the invisible authority of law, throws herself on the cushioned chair with the queenly ease and pride of possession. The eyes of the whole bus are upon these two moving figures—one retreating; the other going triumphant. He bitterly reflects that he was thereby the right of priority and under a greater stress of necessity than a woman who in the confident expectation of finding a seat does not always travel by compulsion; and yet dispossessed and discomfited, he stands as a sorry spectacle. As he is painfully toiling for a foothold; his eyes kindle with baffled anger, and could he but summon a little fire in them he would have burnt her out. Unfortunately, the two pairs of eyes rarely meet through the thick intervening walls of human beings.

Could any one after this fail to agree with Burke that Chivalry is no longer alive? No male passenger thinks of giving up his seat in favour of the fair sex. "Why, has she not her preferential rights allowed and does she not enjoy them unrelentingly ?—he would say. What makes him particularly furious is the convention that while she will find free and unrestricted entry in man's territory her own domain remians a close preserve for herself only. Then again the most arduous ordeal for a passenger is to push and squeeze himself in and wriggle himself out within the shortest possible time, for before his legs are steady on the floor of the bus or firm on the street the bus starts leaving him to be crushed either by human feet or by its unfeeling wheels. The entry and exit of a woman is impressively announced on every occasion and the bus is detained till she is safely in or out. While the chivalry of the bus conductor of Calcutta is welcome it is to be regretted that his sense of chivalry is not broad enough to embrace old age which calls for no less protection.

Edmund Burke

But is chivalry really dead? No, it is an instinct embedded in the mind of man. The present status of woman is not so much the result of a long and arduous struggle as a graceful recognition and gift from man. "Ladies first" is the symbol of politeness all over the civilized world. In times of trouble and accident women and children are the primary objects of concern. Prize giving is still woman's prerogative, and if a bachelor or a widower happens to preside over the function, a lady is specially invited for the purpose. There was a time when it was extremely bad manners to smoke before a lady. Her presence is still believed to have a salutary and restraining influence on male conduct. If woman does not in these days receive ceremonious courtesy of old it is partly due to herself. She does not conduct herself with the same dignity and grace nor inspires acts of heroism as her sisters did in by-gone times. If she treats man as a rival and not as a fellow-traveller in life, if she scorns to use her silent persuasive force, if she seeks domestic harmony and happiness not by service and sweet surrender of love, but by legislation, if she fails to play her distinctive role as "a ministering angel", it is no wonder that she should forfeit the spontaneous adoration which has been hers through ages. Even today if she is in distress, relief is swift to come. The following incident reported in the press is one of the many interesting examples:—

"A woman gave birth to a child inside a State bus in Calcutta on Thursday (14.8.66) afternoon. The bus was travelling along Tollygunge Circular Road when the moment arrived. Other passengers quickly got off and the driver sped on to Bangur Hospital while the two conductors took care of the mother and the child".

"Chivalry is dead". But

"Long live chivalry".

VOLTAIRE

(Continued from page 182)

estate in the neighbourhood of Geneva called *Les D'elices* as an "agreeable tomb". Here he struggled with his most ambitious enterprise *Essai sur les Moeurs*, the work that laid the basis of modern historical science. Here also he regained his health. But *Les D'elices* was only a temporary home. In 1758 at Ferney in Switzerland he found his last refuge.

Soon he became a legend. All Europe knew the lean old man whose pen was mightier than the swords of Kings, whose reputation for courage and humanity was as great as that of his intellect. From Ferney a torrent of pamphlets, tracts and monographs poured over Europe attacking abuses, ridiculing injustice and defending innocent victims. He was as eager to cultivate his garden as to compose tragedies. As he was planting trees in his garden ("for posterity I have planted 4000 trees") Ferney became the intellectual capital of Europe. Liberal aristocrats and great ladies, learned men and enlightened rulers came to pay their homage to the noble personage. The large number of visitors proved too much even for the generosity of Voltaire and he said that he was the hotel-keeper for Europe. "God preserve me from my friends," he cried in despair, "I will take care of my enemies myself." These social distractions apart, he had time to finish here the stupendous *Dictionnaire Philosophique*. Here Voltaire proves that he is a laughing philosopher. Clear and witty, it is a monument of amazing scholarship yet one of the most readable of his ninety-nine volumes.

Meanwhile years passed on as water passes under the bridge. Voltaire was eighty-three. The grand old man wanted to see Paris before his death. Doctors were against the hazardous journey. But Voltaire could not be discouraged. Miles and miles and then the Paris of his dream. Citizens gave him a royal welcome. When he went to the Academic Francaise it was an historic event of the century. The old man of eighty-three proposed there a revision of the French dictionary, offering to undertake all work that would come under the letter "A"!!

But death conquers even Voltaire. He used to the full the magnificent energy Nature gave him and he accepted death calmly. He had a fruitful life and a triumphant end. He died on May 30, 1778.

MODEL DEMAGOGUERY MADE EASY

By Prof. S. K. Ray.

S down-to-earth shoppers with sky-high dreams, they thought of boosting up their shoe-shop. As a means to that end, they decided to observe the 5th anniversary of the shop—with fanfare. They boldly approached a VIP with the request to preside over the proposed function. On the appointed day, but not at the appointed time, the big-wig came to the decorated shop. He was given a rousing reception with banners, drums and the blowing of conch-shells.

The ceremonies over, the great man rose to speak:— 'It is indeed a great pleasure for me to address you at the fifth anniversary of this famous shop. We are spending now ten times more on education than in 1951-52. But in spite of our best efforts to educate the people, many have not yet learnt how to do the right thing at the right time. However, my young friends here know their job well enough. They are observing this function in right royal style — I beg your pardon, in right democratic style—and on the eve of the Puja season which is happily, the greatest shopping season. Well begun is half done — that is a truism'.

The great man rose to speak.

Then warning up, the speaker continued:— The age of bare-footed folly is gone; that of wise slippers, shoes, and boots has succeeded. Millions used to wake up every morning with cold in the head, cough in the chest, laryngitis in the throat, pleurisy in the lungs. Why? Just because they did not know the use of shoes. Take care of your precious feet and even your dull head, fatty heart, your puffy throat, your stuffy nose will take care of themselves. Even for the pre-historic cave man, leather was a necessity. But with the time the necessity increased and man made everything he could with leather. So came leather shoes. Now shoes are seen from Pole to Pole. And youth must put them on while wooing and soldiers on the field march to death undaunted with shoes as their shield. Sweet are the uses of shoes. With new shoes on, and the best girl-friend beside him, a boy finds songs in trees, rhythm in the running brooks, and dreams in stones. All the world's a stage and no make-up is complete without shoes. However, gorgeous the sari, glorious the coiffure, however glamorous the girl, all effects would be simply spoilt without shoes to match the dress.

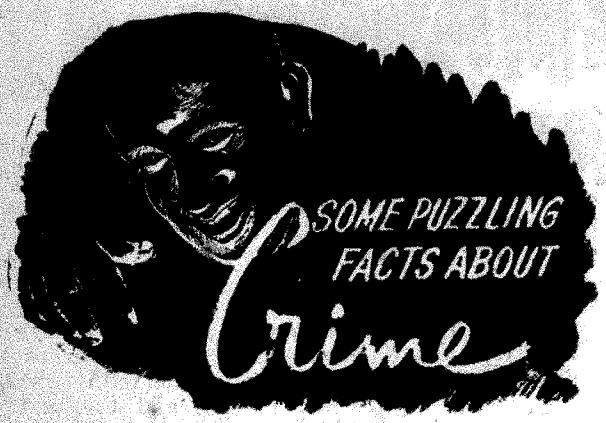
...with shoes as their shields.

I take it that some of you have read the humorous story, "THE INVENTION OF SHOES" by Tagore. Well, there are still many Habu and Gabu Chandras who have not yet discovered the use of shoes and are grouping, bleeding and torn, in the dark, but the invention of space shoes gave astronauts legs up to the stars.

My young friends here, the organisers of this function, are working today for tomorrow. They have a faith in the living future, faith that makes man aspire, strive, faith that melts rock, shapes granite, transforms still waters to surging power and leather to shoes. It is not a shame to make shoes, but it is a shame to make bad shoes. These are shoes of the people, for the people and by the people, ordinary shoes of extraordinary qualities. Buy them and save money. Eat the cake—sandesh is banned — eat the cake and have it too. Moreover you get the extra safety when you fit in these shoes, a great boon in the mon-

(Continued on page 189)

Hammering at heaven with impotent appeals.



By N. C. PAL, I.P.S.

EVEN in India we get about five thousand cases of dacoity, one lakh fifty thousand cases of burglary, nine thousand cases of robbery, five thousand cases of kidnapping, ten thousand cases of murder, as many cases of cheating, two and a half lakh cases of theft, besides another lakh cases of miscellaneous types every year.

This statement is based on the statistics compiled by police. I must, however, make it clear that this does not give a complete picture of the crime situation in the country. Many cases are not reported to police because of indifference or ignorance on the part of the public. Crime of the upper world, I mean white colour crime, is not also detected as frequently as the crime of the under world. Yet crime of the upper world would far outweigh crime of the under world. It is anybodys' guess what would be the volume of crime in case all cases are reported to police and recorded by them. In some of the advanced countries of the world the figures of crime run into millions and billions. If crime is a social disease, as many pundits would say, it is undoubtedly the most dreadful one. No other ill, released from Pandora's box, takes so much tolls of human life as the dreadful disease of crime. Men and money lost through crime are indeed staggering. Lives lost through traffic accidents alone throughout the world in any single year would far outnumber the casualties of a big-scale war. The most puzzling thing about crime is that we are not as conscious of this disease as of any other. At least our efforts do not approve this awareness. We shudder at the name of war and famine; we become restive when epidemics of cholera, influenza or typhoid break out. But we do not show the same feeling though the effects of crime are far more pervasive and destructive and demoralising for everybody involved in the crime. Probably, we have developed some sort of immunity to this disease which is as old as mankind.

All our hopes for the future of mankind vanish when we find that juvenile delinquence is, by all calculations, increasing by leaps and bounds. The modern civilization has resulted in the general break up of the family control. We are having not only more and more problem children but problem parents also. No wonder, therefore, that a high percentage of criminals arrested by police are now found to be children near 18 years of age.

Another puzzling thing is that in spite of so much of human progress in all spheres, crime is looking up. The latest U.S. crime statistics compiled by the F.B.I. show not merely an absolute six per cent during the last year but the rate of growth four times that of population. In the "land of the free" there is now on the average a murder every hour, a rape every thirtytwo minutes, an assault every four minutes and a car theft every ninety seconds; three quarters of the serious offences—which have now passed the two million mark—do not even lead to an arrest. Nor, unfortunately, is U.S. experience unique despite that land's popular reputation for gangsterism. In the London Metropolitan Police area during 1962 indictable offences show even more shocking rise of nearly nine per cent, the total being more than double that for 1939." No wonder, therefore, that in spite of a better standard of living, better education facilities, and improvements in almost all directions, it is not surprising that crime should look up. Are we to throw in our lot with Havelock Ellis who wondered if crime is an index of social progress? It is indeed very unfortunate if we are to accept this thesis.

One would feel all the more puzzled that this dreadful disease as yet remains undiagnosed. The pundits who have made systematic studies have frankly admitted their failure, although some of them have vainly asserted their own views. Some have tried to locate the germs of the disease in the birth, body or mind of the criminal himself; some have found fault with the environment in which the criminal lives, moves and has his being. The physical, the psychological, geographical, ecological, economic, social, environmental—none of these theories have explained crime to the satisfaction of everybody. Even combined together, they have not satisfied the enquiring mind. If correct diagnosis is not possible you cannot prescribe the right type of medicine. Criminologists are looking around with baffled bewilderment.

It is very disconcerting that not only have we failed to locate the roots of crime, the system that we have developed through the ages to arrest their growth has been already found wanting. Our faith in the efficacy of punishment, though on the wane, still lingers.

We have set up an agency called police and tried to perfect it from time to time, to find out the criminal. We have evolved a system of judiciary to try the offender when detected, we have evolved a system of jail to keep the convicts in detention to keep him out of harms way. But as a result of all this what have we achieved? Are we not making the criminals more criminal by putting them in police hazat and in jail where the atmosphere is very unwholesome? Many of the methods employed by police are open to criticism. Their biggest handicap is that they do not anywhere in the world enjoy the confidence of the public to an extent desirable for their success. Police is failing to catch up with the new-fangled techniques of crime. Lack of trained personnel, lack of equipment and communication are also big clogs on their wheels. The judiciary also cannot do justice to each individual cases as the discretion of the judges is fettered by antiquated laws and procedure. The atmosphere in

(Continued on page 192)

The Basic Problem

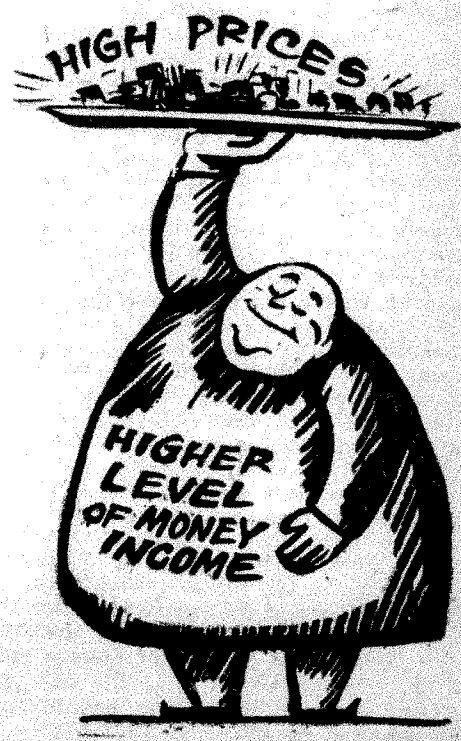
By J. N. MAHALANOBIS

THERE is a feeling among a large section of the people that our method of planning is wrong; the fifteen years of plan development has greatly increased the suffering of the common man; except extension of the public sector and provision of more employment opportunities, the plans have not been able to achieve much success.

The above is, however, a very extreme and narrow view. But it cannot be denied that the plans have failed to achieve many of the results it professed to realise when they were formulated: the present technique of planning and plan allocation have some inherent weakness and there is probably no full comprehension of the problems in all their facets.

From the beginning of the First Plan there seemed to be an under-current of optimism in our plan formulation; planning technique was merely conceived as programming for financial allocation as though the realisation of the targets would depend merely on stepping up of money expenditure. Again we could not correctly anticipate in what way the additional money income generated by plan expenditure would stimulate the demand pressure; consumption in a developing economy depends not merely on growth of population. Any estimate of consumption on the basis of population increase would hardly be a guide for estimating the increase in the rate of consumption when the volume of expenditure is suddenly stepped up. In a depressed economy, a large part of the population is forced to live in state of acute under-consumption; even though the supply may be plentiful in open market many people may not have any money to buy, they may be forced even to partly starve and lead sub-human existence.

When investment is stepped up for rapid growth of industrial sector, the extra money income generated in the process of production spread out in different sectors of the economy, the velocity of money circulation goes up rapidly; and the extra-money income abruptly increases the consumption demand at a much higher rate than the population-consumption ratio which prevailed before the development started. And with the increase in demand, the prices also move up rapidly and the high price is sustained by higher level of money income. Take for example the case of food production. In 1950-51 we probably had a total food production of 50 million tonnes. Between 1950-51 and 1965-66, the population increased probably at the rate of 1.8 to 2.5%. If we assume our population in 1950-51 as 330 million, the present population can be slightly above 400 million, which means an increase of less than 25%. Whereas during the same period our food production, even by moderate estimate, has gone up by 60%. The present trend of high prices and scarcity can only be explained by a substantial increase of consumption both by a section of producers and the consumers. Now high price is not always an indicator of scarcity or shortage. In a developing economy when the money expenditure is stepped up a rapid rate, price is no indicator of supply position. It may be argued that even in 1950-51 we were not surplus in food and had to de-



pend on imports, but on the basis of increase of population we should have become self-sufficient in food now ; whereas our shortage at the current level of consumption, is more than 10 million tonnes.

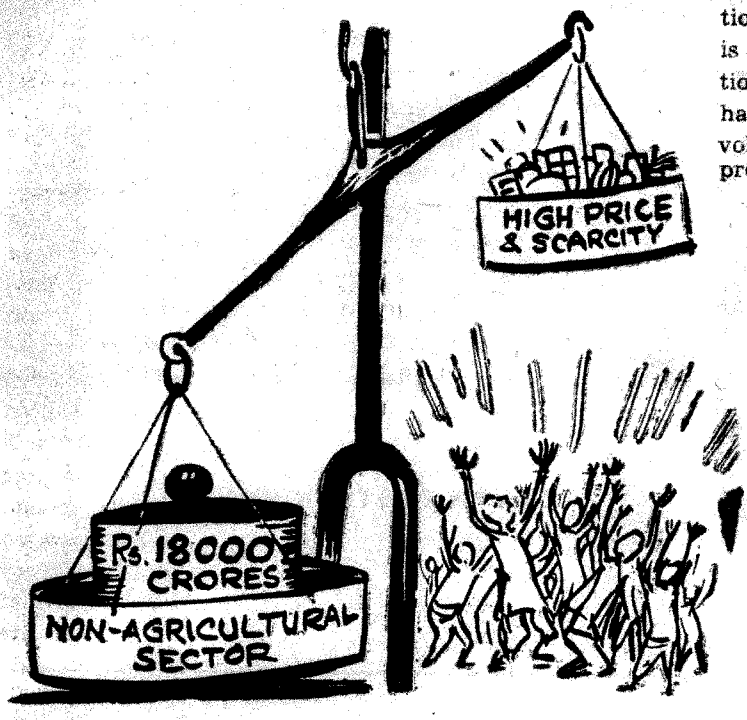
The only conclusion seems logical, therefore, is that the level of consumption has gone up in many sectors of the economy. During the last few years, the volume of industrial employment has gone up significantly. Growth of industries open up vast opportunities to earn money in various ways. Rapid industrial development immediately reacts on the whole infra-structure of the economy and the growth of money income only in the industrial sector would not give us a correct estimate of the total money income generated by the industrial units. We have to take into consideration multiplier effects of money income generated in each new plan investment. It will thus appear that our plans failed to correctly anticipate the rapid change in the consumption pattern which the increased money investment would generate.

There is a facile assumption that the present problem of shortage and high prices of essential consumption goods could be stepped up by more investment. This is not wholly correct. A mere increase in the level of investment will have no significant impact on the level of prices till the plan allocations are made at a certain ratio in different sector. In our plans we estimated certain rate of growth of agriculture and consumption goods merely on the basis of some assumed input-output ratio and, on the assumed rate of increased production of these goods, We have stepped up the investment in heavy basic industries and in other sectors. But it appears now that this method of allocation was wrong. First, because the assumed rate of increased production of food and other consumption goods has not materialised and secondly, the increased production was only available at higher and higher level of prices, because the demand pressure generated by other sectors, was excessive which has caused acute hardship for the common man. It is therefore evident that the ratio of allocation in different sectors of the economy require drastic change. And here there seems to be a complete lack of appreciation of the problems in their proper perspective. We, however, do not share the view that the problem of acute poverty, shortage and employment could be solved merely by allowing the development of the private sector. Economic growth, in view of the pressing social and economic problems, could not be left to chance and uncertainty. Planned development was, therefore, the correct approach to the problem; but it is the technique of planning and ratio of allocation resources which seem to lack the realistic approach vitally necessary to achieve growth with stability. It is true that the method of plan implementation in a democratic society, where the state controls only a small sector of production, distribution and consumption has some inherent weakness and limitations. But even in our existing method of plan implementation with all its limitation, there was probably some scope for allocation of expenditure in different sectors having regard to the basic objective. The basic objective is to feed the people, to give them jobs and if possible to make a significant development of the industrial structure so that, we could, gradually, become self-reliant, and ultimately reach a stage of self-sustaining growth when development will take place by economic forces generated in the economy itself. But we cannot proceed faster than our rate of savings; and thereby defeat the objective we seek to attain. We should not merely create industrial capacity but utilise it to the full; we must not set up projects which we cannot complete within a specified period.

If we plan to step up agricultural production at a certain rate, we must provide the necessary input for it and also create the necessary condition for realisation of the target. For example, in the third plan the target of food production was 100 million tonnes but we were not able to step up production even upto 90 million tonnes. Apart from the vagaries of weather which might have caused the shortfall, the stagnation in this sector can be largely explained in terms of shortage of input. Agricultural sector has now almost reached a point of in-elasticity. We have utilised all the available lands and the local resources. Any substantial increase of output can be achieved only by increasing input but we have failed to do so though the plan expenditure target was fulfilled. We have now, in the economy, too much money which is putting terrific pressure on the level of consumption and pushing up the prices. In the Fourth Plan, agricultural sector has been allotted about Rs. 3,000 crores, and the target is to achieve 120 million tonnes of food grains at the end of the plan which means that within the remaining four years, the production has to be increased by 30 million tonnes. But the achievement of the target will depend on the availability of inputs which seems to be very much in short supply at the present. It is true that in the plan period, several Fertilizer factories are proposed to be set up, and the production of agricultural implements and other agro-industries will get more priority but the progress will depend largely on the availability of necessary foreign exchange that may be obtained as aid as our exports earnings may be inadequate even though rupee has been devalued by nearly 37%. Export is not boosted merely by manipulating the money value, it depends on the availability of exportable goods. We at present do not have any surplus of jute, tea, oilseeds. All these seem to be in short supply even at the current level of export and internal consumption. If we do not have surplus what shall we export? It is, therefore, not unlikely that many of the projects, even agroindustrial projects may remain incomplete for lack of machines and other input and these will be a drag on growth ; the money supply will go up whereas the production will remain stagnant and the price will go up at a much more rapid rate ; the cost of each project will go up much beyond its original estimate and we will have a vicious circle of rising prices and rising cost.

Even with slightly higher allocation in the agricultural sector we cannot say that the Fourth Plan has a definite agricultural bias. A mere look at the plan allocation will show that the organised industry will have larger share of the plan resources, and a large volume of expenditure will be made on a number of other sectors which will not help in increasing the level of output but will create demand for it. Even if we assume that the net investment in agricultural sector, including irriga-

tion and other agroindustries is about Rs. 6,000 crores, the net demand pressure that will come from non-agricultural sector is about Rs. 18,000 crores and such massive outlay will put terrific pressure on food and create condition of highprices and scarcity. It has been argued that a large part of the industrial production will be utilise for supply of agricultural input but it is doubtful whether in the



Plan period we will be able to get the flow of goods from the sector in sufficient quantity to boost agricultural growth at the target rate. Many of the projects may remain incomplete and halfcomplete as the resources insight appear to be very meagre. Now what is the significance of this plan development ? This type of expenditure has a great deal of significance as it will intensify demand pressure and push up the prices. In Planning it is essential that the rate of growth of different sectors must proceed in such a way that the supply of consumption goods goes up above the demand pressure.

In the Third Plan, for example, we have achieved the expenditure target but not the growth rate and thereby exposed the economy to high demand pressure. If, in the Third Plan, the investment in the non-agricultural sector was drastically reduced, the demand pressure in the economy would have been much less than what we are having now. This demand pressure is not to be measured in terms of population growth ; mere increase of population could not have boosted the prices in the absence of money income to support it. It is not possible to keep the prices stable merely by increasing production in the industrial sector ; industrial production is a money creating process ; in industrial production almost eighty per cent of the cost of the output has to be paid in money, which increased the volume of money circulation and create demand pressure for food. Whereas agricultural production does not require such a high percentage of financial outlay. Since we have reached almost a point of in-elasticity in agricultural sector, the Fourth Plan outlay in non-agricultural sectors should have been much less. The pattern of growth indicated in the Fourth Plan is more or less the same that is being followed from the Second Plan. The Second Plan approach was basically sound; we must have basic and heavy industries to accelerate the process of growth. But since the economy in the agricultural sector cannot expand according to target we must slow down our expenditure in other sectors, if we are to avoid the terrific demand pressure which large investment in industrial and others will bring about; and that is the lesson we have derived from the Third Plan but it seems that in the Fourth Plan also the same error is likely to be committed.

In view of the high price of food, unutilized capacity in the industrial sector and rapidly advancing prices it is probably necessary to do some rethinking about the plan allocation shown in the draft Fourth Plan. There is no point in creating extra-industrial capacity, when a large part of our existing capacity has remained unutilised; there is probably no need to increase investments in capital intensive industries, when we are not in a position to keep the prices of essential consumption goods stable. The prime need is to feed the existing industries, and increase food production at a much higher rate. Both growth and stability are important now, if we are to avert the forces of inflation, which have already assumed considerable strength and likely to be boosted, if the plan investment is stepped up to Rs. 23,750 crores in the manner indicated in the draft plan.

MODEL DEMAGOGUERY MADE EASY

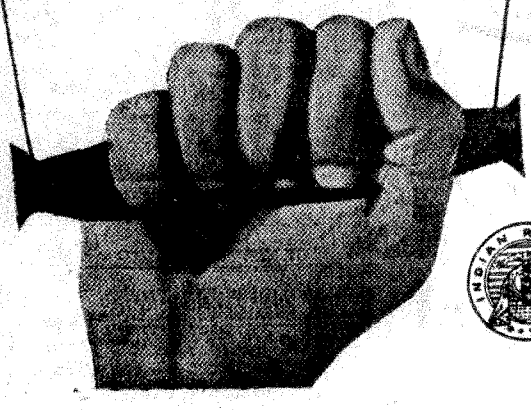
(Continued from page 185)

soon. But remember, you can make your fields and factories yield more only by voting solidly for our party at the coming election. You can not gain mother Durga's mercy by hammering at heaven with importunate appeals. Awake, arise and vote for us. Return us to power and the Almighty Goddess would bless you. Her blessing is the choicest prize of life, adding glow, meaning and purpose to our living.

A Welfare state with a socialistic pattern of society is the ideal which we have placed before us. And in this Welfare State of ours, the prosperity of the common man is decidedly assured when the quality of shoes is assured. For quality shoes would help you to put your best foot forward. Despite consecutive droughts, and external and internal disorders, we are building up our country by our hard and steady effort. In this all-out effort of ours to build and enduring edifice every citizen has a part to play and to vote for the party which alone can deliver the shoes, I mean, the goods. All will be well in the next five years.....

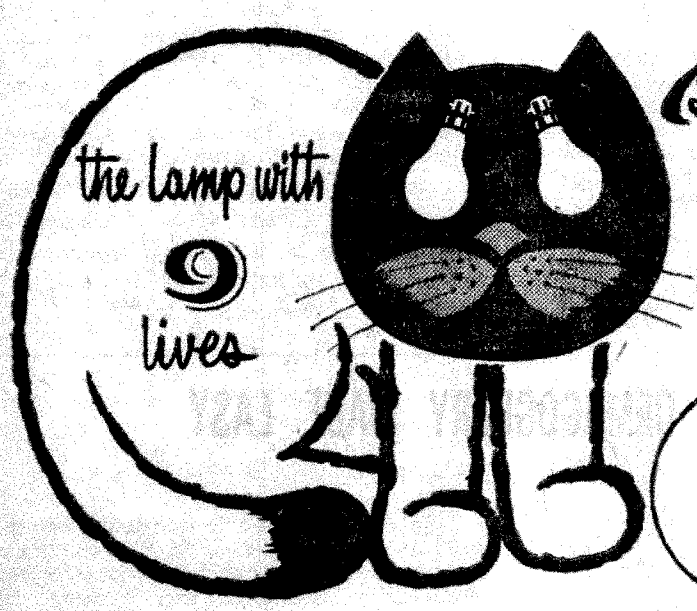
At this moment electric currents failed. And the audience dispersed, pell-mell, as if a bomb was dropped then and there.

BRINGING CHAOS OUT OF ORDER



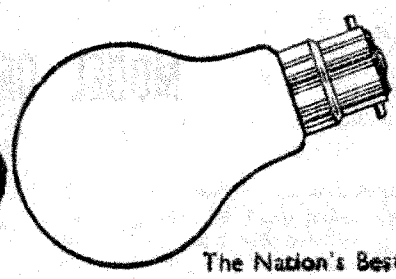
The alarm chain is an emergency device not to be used thoughtlessly. Misuse of this apparatus disorganises the strict time-schedules of the Railways causing great inconvenience and suffering to thousands of passengers travelling both by the train which has been immobilised and the trains that are following. Prevent its misuse and help the Railways to serve you better.

SOUTH EASTERN RAILWAY



Bengal LAMP

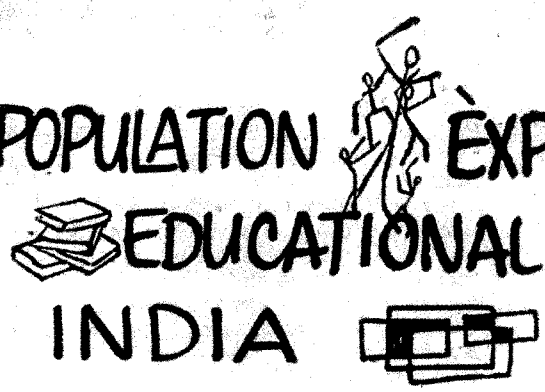
For lasting performance none is **better** than BENGAL LAMP. It assures brighter light with economy.



The Nation's Best

THE BENGAL ELECTRIC LAMP WORKS LIMITED
7, OLD COURT HOUSE STREET ● CALCUTTA-1

the POPULATION EXPLOSION and EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS in INDIA



by K K·GHOSH

THE population of the world reached 3,308 million by the middle of last year. The Population Reference Bureau reported recently that if the present growth trend continues, the global population will exceed 7,000 million by the year 2000. From the report of the Bureau, it appears that Latin America leads the world in the rate of population increase, with Africa and Asia not far behind. None of the developing countries has yet achieved an effective reduction in traditionally high fertility. Statistics revealed that in 1965 there were about 125 million births in the world and 60 million deaths; death rates have been declining everywhere since the end of the Second World War.

It can therefore be very easily concluded that in the not long distance, there is an apprehension of a population explosion in the whole World,—a revolution, which we must be prepared to face. In order to solve the problem, family planning training is being imparted in the developing countries, and in India, to educate the people in family planning, educational centres, seminars and adult education centres are being organised. But as earlier indicated, all these training is proving ineffective in reducing the traditionally high fertility.

This kind of attitude can really never solve the problem, unless we remodel our educational system just to face the challenge and not just take a negative outlook. If instead of preparing our future generation to face the fair fact of increase of population as a "must" course of event to come, we still go on teaching them with a system of education contradictory in itself, consoling all the time against the inevitable, then perhaps there is not a greater snob than us. And in truth our present educational structure is nothing better than snobbery. On the one hand, we, while admitting the fact of a population explosion to come, impart an education for job security in the modern age of cybernatics, resulting in nothing but creating confusion and ultimate frustration.

It is therefore high time, that we should cry hoares against the existing system of education, which appears to be redundant at the present moment, standing as we do on the edge of a great catastrophe of a possible collision between human beings for existence and a breathing space. Such an education should have as its motto, "preparation for complete living". It must teach how to depend on one's own self and not on others for providing with jobs. It must teach self-confidence and not dependance.

In order to achieve such an education, the extent of knowledge must have world-wide scope, so that one may not feel like a fish out of water in whatever circumstance he might be placed. He cannot afford to limit his education within any national bound neither in any classroom competition through the so-called examination system. The existing educational system which teaches both these, make the learners too much conscious of their own heritage by study of sentimental courses of history and literature eulogising the nation in contrast to other nations as much as to become jealous of their own classmates in competition at examination. But the real principles of infusing self-confidence within the learners, respect for others, mannerism and non-antagonism ultimately leading to a world of peace, are never taught.

In the present context of world happenings, we must religiously make our universities free from any snobbery, and must not under any circumstance, teach things which we ourselves do not believe. We know, we have to admit the stern fact of population increase and advancement of the sciences robbing men of their work. Could we keep these two factors in the progress of civilisation in abeyance with iron curtains? Could we just keep our own people,—or say the small unit in the family, aloof from the global epidemic, by teaching nationalism and protectivity? Such attempts are anachronic and must ultimately be blasting. To avoid this, our universities should really be seats of learning and not centres of national/political propaganda. As such where is the scope in these universities for the teaching of nation's political history or even economy.

If to-day, the world is a unit, and man cannot afford to isolate himself from world happenings and must combine as a whole to meet and face the challenges of the age, where is the scope in university curriculum for study of national (or even regional) language, culture, economy, history and so on. Everything should have a world basis, so that man as a unit may combine together to face the world challenge. National knowledge is good and study of family activities is necessary but that should form the basis of pre-university education and universities must confine themselves to universal education, —an education which prepares for adaptability, adequacy and unity to live in abundance in the world at large.

Let us take example from Indian condition. There are 62 universities in India, and each university teaches its own regional language. India has so

(Continued on next page)

Some puzzling facts about crime

(Continued from page 186)

jail has been very aptly described by Oscar Wilde as follows :

"The vilest deeds like poison weeds
Bloom well in prison air
It is only what is good in man
That wastes and withers there."

The movement for probation and reformation of criminals is recent. No adequate set up has as yet been organised in any country of the world, far less in India.

The puzzles posed before you will undoubtedly tickle your mind. There is obviously scope for much thought. We cannot allow our society to be increasingly pestered by crime when we are boasting of achievements in so many other fields. Obviously, there is need for extensive and intensive research about crime, their causes and remedies. Obviously, there is need to pause and ponder if we have so far invested much too much in machines and much too little in human material.

POPULATION EXPLOSION

(Continued from previous page)

many languages, and people from one region are not understood by people from the other. The result has been that the universities are so separative from one another, that within the country, a student from one university cannot go and take admission in another without a definite handicap and adverse provincial feeling quite uncongenial to his smooth educational career.

To study this from a different angle, India is a poor country and most of the people live in the villages, away from all modern facilities. Let us take medical and our health problems. Our people cannot afford to purchase medicines based on allopathic system of the west. We require training in treatment by natural processes, from indigenous herbs or by such system which might be economic

(Continued on next col.)

This is an age of inter-dependence

(Continued from page 180)

more active in their favour. He, therefore, sent in some money on behalf of his Ashram, as a token of sympathy with the Allied cause. He was a great man and had a universal outlook.

What was the reaction of the leaders like Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel? They had declared: "If England gave independence to India, we will help her in every possible way in the war effort." They had also the universality of outlook, they were also patriots and of a saintly nature.

And what did Mahatma Gandhi say? He had said that if India did not get Swaraj, we would not render any help except give moral support. Soldiers, he had said, would not be raised in India. India believed in non-violence and needed no army to defend herself.

When big problems crop up, divergence of opinion does take place. A democratic course of deciding issues has, therefore, been evolved instead of depending solely on the insights of thinkers and leaders. The democratic course is to abide by the opinion of the majority.

Let us have a closer look at it. It is but natural that opinions should differ when grave and complicated issues arise. No two men may exactly think alike.

I want to say emphatically that the world cannot exist without love, mutual trust and inter-dependence. Human unity is an imperative of the age. Gurudev's call for a World Assembly springs from this reality. Let there be a Tribunal of Nations, to which will be referred all disputes, and issues of contention. Let all nations abide by its decisions.

(Continued from previous col.)

and at the same awakening consciousness in the ailing about his own "vital force" which is the essence of all human happiness. And yet in our universities, the only system taught is allopathy. How long would the human race be dictated like this? We must have a prestige education and not an education of the slave, ending in frustration and leading us nowhere.

SACRIFICE

By JATISH BOSE

THE sun set in the distant horizon leaving a golden hue all around. In an instant the magic walls of beauty opened up stepping on the circles of light and shadow — more light than shadow for a while. Soon a new moon was born and the light of its slender crescent fell on Sabita standing vacantly in the courtyard of her house with fragrance-emitting flowers crowding round her.

Every time a new moon was born, Sabita became frenzied, impulsive, coursing her thoughts into distant past. She stood there silently —the cool evening breeze blowing across her face—thinking painfully of the past that had gone never to return.

It was more than two years Sabita had been married to Atul, the elder of the two brothers. Bipul, the younger one, the sturdy, dare-devil spirit, was an antithesis to what his elder brother stood for; sobriety and a firm determination. These are paternal legacy. Atul a prototype of mother and Bipul inherited the restless spirit of his father. Both of them were no more in this world.

Their village Swarupnagar, not far away from a big city, was Brahmin-dominated. Of them the Banerjees were most influential. Anupam, a scion of this family and only son of Raghab Banerji, the ruling 'deity' vied with Atul, the elder son of Kamal Mukherji, in the sphere of education. Their preceptors had admiration for both of them. Fair in their looks, clean in their character, moderate in their habits, they grew up before the wonderful eyes of their teachers and class-mates to be a pair of 'jewels.' They flashed in competition, sometimes Atul and sometimes Anupam toppling the other in educational race.

Bipul glowed in the sunshine of his brother's success, he never cared to follow his golden path. Dauntless, he flung himself headlong into what his heart ached for—body-building and social work, in both of which he achieved a fair measure of returns. The two brothers, it appeared to even a casual observer, contrasted to one another in sharply poignant fashion.

✱

Morning streaks of sunlight saw Bipul still sound asleep in his cot. It was a big day for him. It was the day when the biggest long-distance swimming race of the area was to be held at nine in the morning in the Kohat village about four miles from Bipul's house.

— Bipul, Bipul,—Matangini Thakurani, his aunt, cried aloud.

Now Matangini Thakurani needs introduction. She became a widow before she could blossom forth in her husband's house. As is often the case, she promptly transferred her allegiance to her brother (her father left the land of the mortals before her marriage) and became a permanent member of the family.

Past middle age, her sturdy bones helped her overcome the scars that age usually leaves upon

the body. Besides her physical prowess she had a great gift of the gab. The controlled life that child widows in orthodox Hindu houses used to live may have something to do with this trait of her character.

Bipul got upon his feet with a sharp jump and anxious looks on his face.

He atonce enquired: Has Nabin come to call me?

— Yes, he is waiting in the parlour, Matangini Thakuarni replied.

She beckoned hen nephew to get himself prepared in a hurry and busied herself with his breakfast and sundry little things that needed her attention at this time.

— Bipul, his aunt cautioned him,—do not lose yourself in such ecstacy. If you can calm yourself and proceed along your path in a determined manner, your goal then will lie at your mercy and cannot elude your grasp.

Matangini was always apprehensive lest boisterousness in Bipul got the upper hand and he be embroiled in knotty problems as was the case sometimes.

Bipul got himself ready in a matter of moments and was rushing to the village railway station with Nabin. His close associate, Nabin was made of the same stuff as his friend and both of them glowed in extra curricular activities.

It was a glorious morning. Nature wore her best attire; the green sheafs of corn, the rich jute plants, the chirping birds leaving their nests—all lent a colour of cheerfulness.

Bipul and Nabin were hustling forward through the meandering roads across the fields when they heard a sharp yell at a distance. It was the piteous cry of a woman in distress.

— Nabin, thundered Bipul, — follow me at once.

Both of them began to run at their fastest through paddy fields and jute plants. The sun was then eclipsed by the whims of autumnal weather and a slight drizzle set in.

Not very far away they saw a girl being accosted by two men.

— Be careful, shouted Bipul from a distance and Nabin followed it up with a loud shriek.

A few folk were then nearabout as harvesting was some weeks away. They heard the challenging voice of the two friends and all were hastening to the spot. A few yards away, they saw a girl in shivers and the two ruffians taking to their heels.

— You vicious scoundrels,—Bipul yelled,—why are you running away like hounded hares?

But the 'scoundrels' paid no heed to this new kind of 'address' apprehensive of the gathering storm as they saw some more men rushing towards the spot.

As is, always the case with the 'hounded hare', they gathered more speed and disappeared among the growing jute plants.

Bipul and Nabin saw it would yield no results to pursue the riff-raffs through the flourishing jute plants and gave up the attempt.

They now turned their attention to the girl. A few people had reached there by then.

— Oh it is Sabita! Sabita was in sobs all the time, her books lay scattered all around.

Sabita, a degree course student, was a picture of health and beauty. A co-villager of Bipul and a daughter of the late Harish Chatterji, she was the cynosure of neighbouring eyes. Though in her twenties, and senior to Bipul by about two years, her childlike face belied her age.

—Sabita, Bipul consoled her,—why is it that you stir out alone while going to the college?

Sabita calmed herself, wiped out the shreds of tears from her face and her version of the day's story might be summed up thus:

She was always escorted in the early morning by her younger brother Asit (a classmate of Bipul) to the nearnest railway station, but as ill luck would have it, he had been a victim of fever since yesterday. She had to sit for an examination today and hence there was no alternative.

— But who were these bullies? Can Sabita guess?

— Oh yes, Sabita replied,—she had the nagging suspicion that they were the agents of Sachin Choudhury, a mugwump of a neighbouring village. She saw the same bullies roaming about in the railway station a few days ago. Of course they were on the look-out for an opportunity and it occurred today.

Bipul refreshed his memory. Sachin Choudhury, a young man without culture, boasted of his riches. He heard from his aunt, not long ago, that a rich young man from a neighbouring village had sent a proposal to marry Sabita. But he was loose in morals and a man without culture and refinement. Sabita's mother stoutly rejected the offer, knowing full well that her daughter could roll in riches. They themselves were not well-to-do. But unlike many others of this materialistic age she placed culture and character much above wealth.

She had set her eyes on Anupam. Was Sabita with her beauty and gentleness an uneven match for Anupam?

All these thoughts flash-

Matangini Thakurani, his aunt, cried aloud.....

"Wiped out the tears from her face & her version of the day's story might be summed up thus.....

ed back to Bipul's memory. A score of men who gathered around cursed the times and the effervescence of youth.

Bipul and Nabin escorted Sabita back to the village and then hurried back like a race horse to the arena of swimming competition.

But evidently the morning incident haunted him. How could these pests of society be wiped out?

✱

Bipul returned that day with a crown on his head. He had beaten hollow all the competitors in the swimming race and the District Magistrate who presided over the function and the other elites were all praise for him.

Matangini Debi awaited his return with more than usual interest. She was in the know of things of the morning incident concerning Sabita. More than that...it was reported to her that Bipul was involved in a clash. She had heard of the rich youngman of a nearby village and the evil spell of magic that his money had been casting for some time.

— Bipul, his aunt pleaded with him,—I am very much anxious for the morning incident. Did I not advise you to avoid clashes and turmoils and to follow the path trailed by your elder brother?

Bipul laughed a hearty laugh.—Aunt, he said. —I have done nothing wrong to cause trepidation of your heart. None, unless he be a coward, could shirk what we had to do in the morning. As for my way of life, it has no meaning if I give up all these works and follow in the footsteps of my brother.

Bipul then narrated the morning drama to console his aunt.

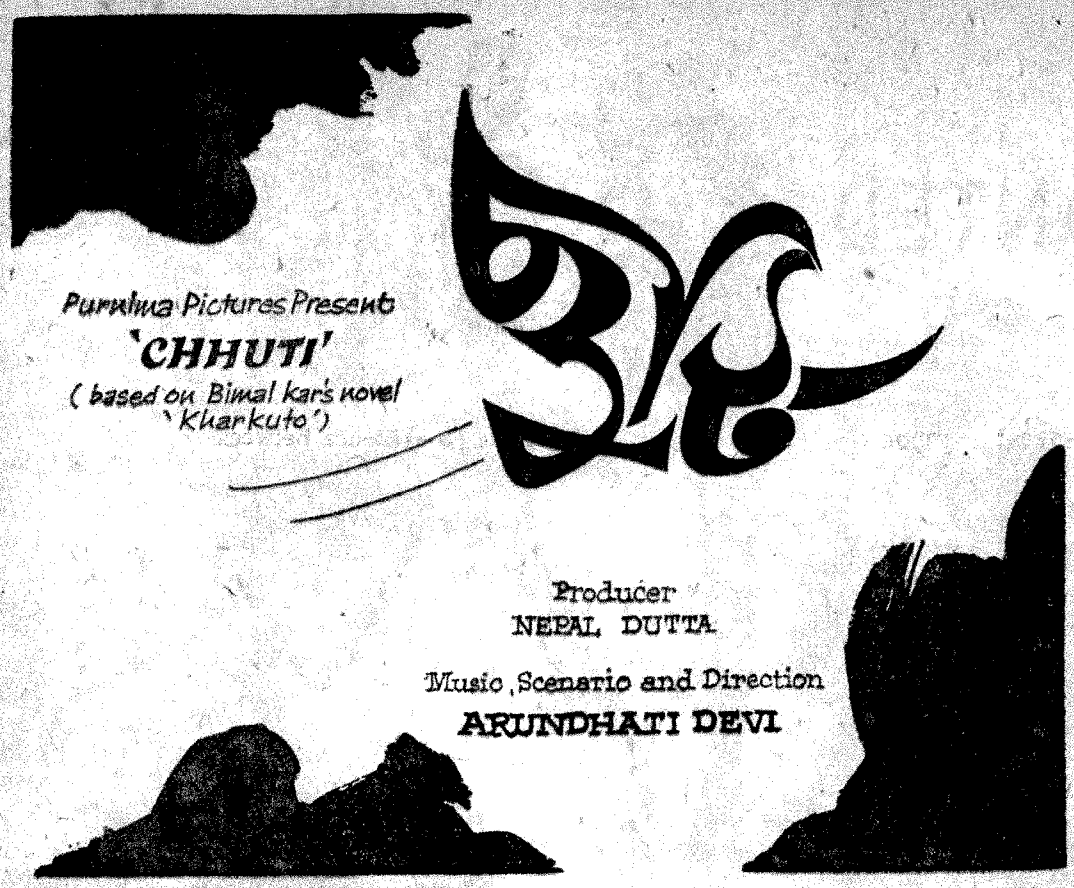
— I would like you, he told his aunt with a grim face,—to convey to her mother that it would not be safe for Sabita in her best interests to stir out of the house without a proper chaperon. I do not know how far the designs of that man would carry him to lay his hands on her. When he has set his eyes on her, as I got a hint from her this morning, he will try all means, foul and nauseating.....

Matangini Thakurani shuddered at the thought. Sabita—the cream of the girl population of the village—deserves a fair deal from the Almighty. Should that be otherwise?

Bipul did not allow the matter to rest there. The village resistance party organised by the elders a few years ago was in a moribund state. Every village, hamlet, Swarupnagar not excepted, adjacent to a city, saw vast changes brought about in its face. If there were anti-social acts, they were dealt with in a different way and the punishments meted out to the perpetrators of a crime were such as to put them into shame.

The rich (mugwumps among them) have migrated to the cities to satisfy their carnal desires. The cities now afford them better opportunities. Bipul thought here was a 'big tiger' who must be resisted on the level of the village resistance party.

Continued *on page 213*



your lovely hair needs care and nourishment

BENGAL CHEMICAL'S

cantharidine
hair oil

helps to promote growth of long lustrous silken-soft tresses. Extract of Cantharides contained in it prevents falling of hair.

BENGAL CHEMICAL
CALCUTTA · BOMBAY
KANPUR

WANTED FILMS OF THE SOIL

by N·K·G

AFTER nearly half a century of journey the Bengali film has reached a stage when it should pause and make some heart-searching. While going ahead it had no leisure to ask itself if it was guiding itself rightly. May be the present country-wide economic malaise which has made inroads into every sector of national life has hastened, if not caused, this self-questioning.

Even after a good deal of looking at the vastly changing face of western films by some of the bold experimenters with the content and style of Bengali films, I do not think we have essentially broken with the past. The majority of films are yet made in glorification of the past and of time-honoured social values. There is sometimes just a posture of the 'new wave' woven into the making but it is no more than a posture. The few who utterly dislike the old stylized and conventionally sentimental films, of course, pursue the progressive mode in film-making. In the ultimate analysis the present mood of self-questioning among film-makers of Bengal has been generated by the operation of sheer economic pressure. Yet the thoughtful section among the film-makers find themselves so much in the midst of new local and imported trends that they are compelled to weigh conventional norms against daring ones and are tempted to prefer the latter to the former. Such inner dictates have seen quite a number of new-look films during the past four or five years.

RAY THE PACE-SETTER

Ray films, of course, stand in the fore of the new-look films. It started with "Pather Panchali" and the style was repeated in his last product, "Nayak". Ray was almost contemporaneously followed by a few films which had an impact on audience sensibility though not on a massive scale. "Ajantrik", "Baishe Sravan" and "Subarnarekha" are some of the productions of cognate style but not enriched by Ray's finish and depth of treatment. Yet these films have a claim to recognition because without being any imitation of Ray's technique they shunned the beaten track and offered new vistas of film thinking. Although the cynic would suggest that 'nouvelle vogue' never cut deeper than the surface in our films, it would be unfair to assume that the new-wave film is permanently discredited. The look-ahead director will not disabuse his mind of the novel and the unconventional so easily.

The Bengali film has thus arrived at the real cross-road. Normally, it has to either choose between two kinds of films—the smart intellectual film and the one with old-world virtues extolled in the routine melodramatic way. But actually there is co-existence between the two classes and styles. The film producer in Bengal today has to assure and be assured of this co-existence because of the sharp division in the minds of the audience.

The college-bred urbanized section of the population do not hide their liking to the intellectual, west-oriented film of the type of "Roman Holiday" or "Wild Strawberry" or "Miracle in Milan". Their education and day-to-day life with its inevitable Western associations take their demand for a good film higher than the conventional indigenous level. The film director, particularly if he is young, tends to discover film values in Western norms and standards and almost without exception goes in for

SANDHYA ROY, charming romantic sweetheart of the Bengali films who seems to be steadily gaining in her popular appeal. This sweet star is seen here in the make-up of the heroine of the forthcoming film of light romance, HATHAT DEKHA', directed by Nityananda Dutta, ...

a theme that is more possible to happen in the lives of Europeans and Americans than Indians.

The emphasis on divorce-based film stories may be cited as an instance of the Western bias that is characteristic of a good many of our film plays. Some directors may tomorrow make his hero an aviator or a high—fighter or a sleuth in the Hollywood style. Perhaps want of opportunities is holding them back—not the knowledge that our audiences are very likey to remain cold at the exploits of such heroes. The expanding horizon of our literature is going to make films of this type a near-future possibility. If only Authority would allow us to make films of the heroism of our boys in the last Indo-Pakistani conflict, a glut of rousing films could be made. But that is not going to be and our films will have to move in their restricted sphere of happening.

Now the question arises as to how our future programme will be shaped in relation to the realities of the moment. One cannot go on making films of the same texture and colour. Why not films, then, which would "tell our saddest thoughts" of today ? But while literature has started giving expression to our massive sorrows and wants, films can do so only at the risk of being condemned as politically motivated. The rich may go on being called blood-suckers and the poor their eternal victim. But in terms of picture and against the backdrop of today such may smack of leftism. So the film-maker can move only in the groove of "Ah ! that was Bengal " or "O, if life could be that paradise !"

MEETING GROUND

It is therefore difficult to select a theme that would simultaneously please the intellectual section and the rural population with their bias for religious, mythological and family pictures. The task for the film-maker of today and tomorrow is to discover the meeting ground between the two sharply divided likings and make a picture on it.

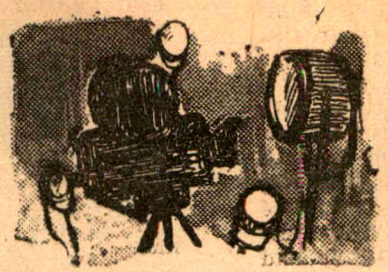
Of course it is wrong to assert that educated people are averse to home-based, straight themes. The manner in which all sections of the audience reacted to "Mejdidi", "Ramer Sumati", "Pather Panchali", "Kabuliwallah" and "Chandranath" proved and proves that if the theme is penetrating and pervasive in the beauty of its core, all classes of people forget their individual likes and dislikes and are merged in the current of the moving story. The class division I have mentioned above refers only to the average case. But it is so difficult to find themes of such surpassing beauty as in the above films. That is why the difference between one section of the audience and another is so pronounced. And that is why selection of the film story remains such a sticky problem in Bengal at least.

MODELS

If importance could be attached to the fact that in overseas film festivals only Indian films that are true to the soil have been eulogised and awarded prizes, the craze for competing in such festivals could be curbed by the Government. It is a pity the authorities have never advised or encouraged producers to make films with a strong indigenous appeal. Perhaps they want to appear perfectly non-interfering. That is certainly desirable. But the impact of award-winning films should not be lost on the authorities. They can at least recommend films of the soil as models before producers who might itch for an overseas award. That would never be interference by any standard.

At the same time it would be bad if preference is always shown to films with a nationalistic background to a picture with exquisite human appeal although it may not be political. The film of tomorrow may occasionally mirror the suffering through which freedom has been won. But it has got to be more than that.

MADHABI MUKHERJEE has within the course of a surprisingly short period of time climbed to the peak of a romantic-cum-dramatic star's career. Sky-rocketed to fame in Satyajit Ray's 'Mahanagar' and 'Charulata', she is now the most sought for leading lady by the topmost directors. Here she is seen in the costume of the leading lady of 'JORA DIGHIR CHOUDHURY PARIBAR',

HIT OR  GET OUT

by TAPAN SINHA

IT is peculiar of the film director's avocation, specially in West Bengal, with its go-ahead thinking on sociological facts, that he cannot hold fast to any norm in human relationship and build his film house on that foundation.

He has to be painfully observant of what is submerging what in the scene around him, what is getting devalued and what is gathering extra value as social habit or practice or outlook.

It seems as easy as adding two and two together from the surface. But if one cared to peep into the realities of contradictions with which life is bristling today one would be astounded by their many-hued character. You can laud up one thing at your own risk. Or you may cry down another at your own risk again.

MIDDLE PATH

Perhaps this consciousness makes the average film director tread the middle path in matters entailing debate and in respect of themes that are just not as uncontradictable as Yudhisthir's passion for truth or Shri Ramkrishna's entranced meeting with the Mother Supreme. Even when dealing with things like then in his film the director of today who hears and sees so much of 'nouvelle vogue' or dedramatized movies feels tempted to inject the fluid of 'scientific' interpretation.

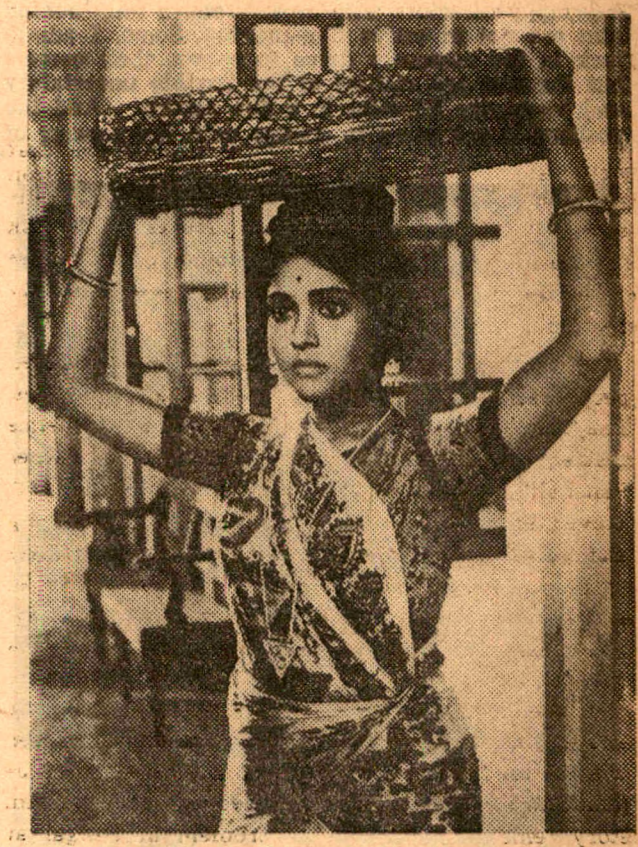
TWO GROUPS

But there are exceptions. It is my decision that in selecting their opus film directors almost always tend to show that they belong to two broad groups. The first section puts implicit reliance on the goodness and completeness of the printed novel generally from the pens of proved adepts in the art of story-telling. They are content to have their thinking seventy per cent done by thoughtful authors and by reason of that their task resolves itself to faultless mechanical rendering of the novel into a film.

The second group are the dare-all type. They will never allow their stylized and individual movie thinking overlorded by any literary giant. "Let the story keep to itself," they seem to say, "and let us subject it to our technical handling and lard it with our "specialized" thinking. No disparagement is intended in these lines. They are even at their worst a courageous and look-ahead brotherhood and deserve the commendation of all for their bold individualism. And let it be remembered creative movie geniuses have sprung in most countries from such material.

But what I have hitherto tried to say does not wholly put the current position of the film director of Bengal in proper perspective. His problem continues to rob him of a good night's rest by its increasing intensity.

And what is this problem exactly? In what way



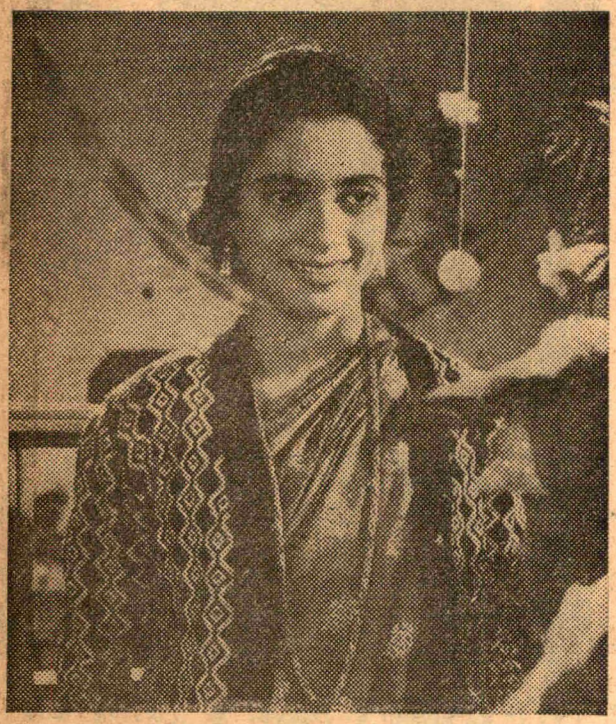
When a versatile dancer-actress of top calibre like VYJAYANTIMALA chooses to take a holiday from her crowded programme in Hindi films to do her first-ever role in a Bengali film under the stewardship of a celebrated director like Tapan Sinha, it becomes frontline film news. The charming star will be seen as 'Chhipli' in Sinha's under-production film 'HATEY BAJARE' from a Bonophul story in the tragic role of an ill-starred girl who was outraged. Bengali fans in their multitude look forward to the film in almost bated breath.

is it different from that of the free-lance earner of precarious money?

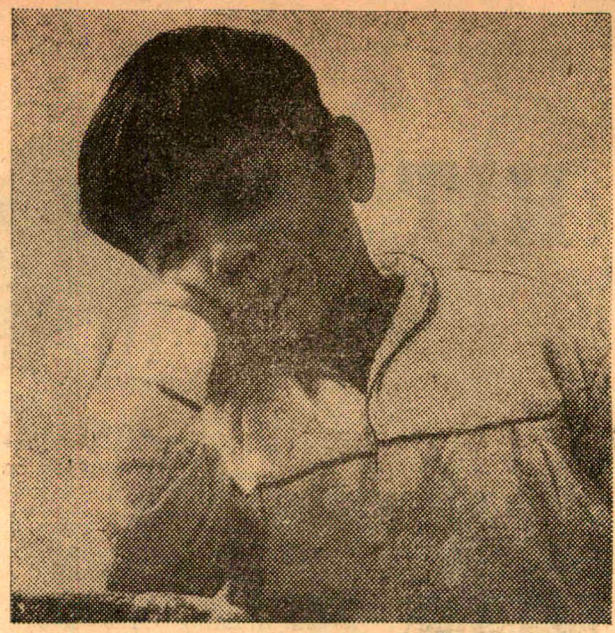
To my thinking and I hope most in my profession will agree with me, the problem comes to, firstly, to keep himself engaged in active film-making at least for some months of the year and, secondly, to please his audience with his finished ware. The ordinary man or woman who buys his ticket for a week-end's movie show is never able to size up the magnitude of this twin problem because he or she can hardly associate such financial uncertainty with a dazzling stuff like the film. Naturally there is a tendency to consider that these so-called problems are either the victim's own creation or, at least, an exaggeration. Let me have a close look at the problems.

VICTIM OF INSECURITY

Firstly, to keep himself constantly engaged in film-making is a strenuous job. If a director's last picture is a box-office success his commissions are full. He is a much-sought-after fellow supposed to know the open-seasame of the box-office puzzle. No matter if he has made half a dozen sizeable hits, if the last film has failed to click no producer will choose to be aware of his existence. There is nothing like accidental or miscalculated unsuccess in films for the director. He must know and assure his assigner of the secret of making hits or he is a nobody in the scheme of film-making. That is why today many directors with an impressive tally behind him are not in active film-making. Some, I admit, lack in the necessary drive to pursue their careers but the rest are victims of the terrible uncertainty and insecurity inherent in a film career. And the position is not going to change with the passage of time because there is no good angel of mercy lurking behind the clouds to come to the aid of the demobilized film director. Not certainly the State with its period statements of good intentions.



Newcomer Nandini in 'CHHUTI', which is being directed by the celebrated dramatic star Arundhati Devi as her maiden directional work. Nandini handles the tenderly sentimental role of an incurably suffering girl whose life is ebbing away. The capable woman-director is expected to bring out in all its poignant charm the depth of a young girl's psychology with delicate womanly touches. 'Chhuti' is produced by Nepal Dutta.



Biswajeet presents his winsome Kidson, Prasenjeet, in Trio Films "CHHOTTO JIGYASHA".

FACTUAL PORTRAIT

To please the audience, without a break that is, is a harder nut to crack because in this case mere good intentions and|or efficiency is not enough. One must have the fool-proof story as the primary thing in film-making. Without its help no director, being human, is good enough to deliver the goods. And, ironically, it is in respect of choosing his theme that the average director is apt to miscalculate its potency. What reads well—a sparkling story in a nice set-up and told in smart language—is not necessarily material for a box-office hit. A box-office hit is fifty per cent good story plus fifty per cent good luck, the seasoned film-maker will tell you with decision in his voice.

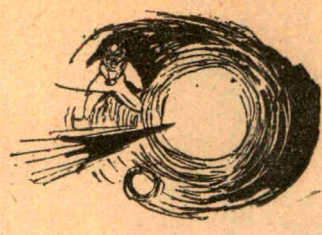
After writing such a cheerless account of the film director and where and how he stands today I run the risk of being dubbed a pessimist. That I am certainly not. I have drawn a factual portrait of the director's profession and placed it against the light of current reality. It does not mean that the gloom will not be relieved tomorrow although the chances are slight.

CRUEL MISTRESS

I think—and I state this with no touch of egoism—the film director's profession fits the bold, the men who would not flinch to take chances with the cruel mistress that is human life. For him the path is strewn not with roses or even marigolds but with thorns and stone chips with sharp edges. When he chooses to foot this path he invites the disapproval and wrath of his near and dear ones who go on warning him against the 'badness' of films meaning moral slips and monetary insecurity.

But he has chosen to suffer and fight and wrest success from the unwilling hands of Fate. Who can desist him? Not until he has reached the optimum of disappointment he goes on trying and searching for that elusive quantity—Success!

A LOOK AT SCIENCE-FICTION FILMS



by SATYAJIT ROY

SCIENCE-FICTION and espionage stories are said to be gradually displacing the thriller and the Whodunit from their position of eminence in the field of light reading. I don't know what has caused the Spy - Boom — probably James Bond—but science-fiction was bound to come into its own in an era of rapid technological advance, when even the layman's imagination is being tickled by close-up photos of the surface of the moon, and of astronauts floating weightlessly in space.

In itself, science-fiction is not a new thing. In the form in which we know it today, it has existed for at least a century, ever since Jules Verne wrote *Five Weeks in a Balloon.* Verne remained a lone practitioner until H. G. Wells came out with *The Time Machine* and followed it up with a dozen or so of his celebrated imaginary adventures.

By the end of the first decade of the present century, the new genre may be said to have taken roots, and ever since then, it has continued to be enriched sporadically. The present state of luxurious growth is a post-World War II phenomenon, with U.S.A., Britain, France, Soviet Russia and Czechoslovakia, all contributing to the mainstream.

The cinema has reflected a similar growth in science-fiction ever since George Melics of France made *A Trip to the Moon* and other similar fantasies way back in the primitive days of the silent cinema.

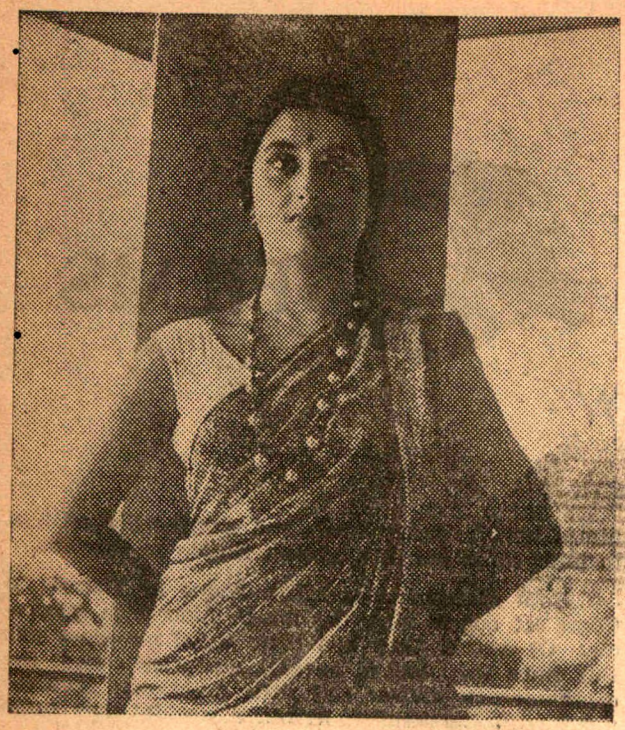
Melies was primarily out to entertain his simple audience with 'special effects'. This is not surprising, since the illusionist possibilities of the motion picture was bound to strike the more inventive and frolicsome of the pioneers. And we should remember that Melies was a fellow countryman of Verne.

But Melies's scale was small, as it had to be in those days. The big fantasies had to wait until the 1920's, when Germany came out triumphantly with Fritz Lang's ambitious *Metropolis.* This was a futurist fantasy which triumphed by virtue of its designing and execution: no one excelled the Germans in craftsmanship in those days. The subject of the film was the human situation in a world dominated by machines. This had been a favourite theme of the science-fiction writers, and H. G. Wells himself was to write a similar prophetic story called *The Shape of Things to Come.* This was filmed by Alexander Korda and was the biggest film to have come out of a British Studio in the '30s.

Both *Metropolis* and *The Shape of Things To Come* set out to stun the imagination with spectacle. Of course, they had their social messages too. But since they looked several centuries ahead, the contemporary viewer felt little emotional involvement with the issues. In other worlds, they were cold looks into the future.

This particular preoccupation is not very much in vogue these days—at least not in films. Now

Moushumi Chatterjee, a fresh new 'find', as she will be seen in Chitradeep's "BALIKA BODHU", directed by TARUN MAJUMDAR, a film projecting a story of early marriage tuned to yesterday's Bengali society. The teen-aged 'star', judging by early reports of her work, radiates a lot of unsophisticated charm as the 'Balika Bodhu' which should bring her overnight stellar recognition.



Aparna Das Gupta is a leading artiste of the younger generation who despite her tender years has carved out a position of eminence among the leading ladies of our screen, such is the cultured grace and deep understanding she brings to bear on her roles. An overnight success in Ray's SAMAPTI in Teen Kanya, she was last seen in Akash Kusum and her next appearance will be in the film under production HANSA MITHUN, directed by Partha Pratim Choudhury.

there are new themes and new categories—so many of them, in fact, that it is no longer possible to lump together all science-fiction films, as it was even 20 years ago.

For instance, there is one category—rather low in the scale—which deals with 'monsters'—which are usually known or unknown species of pre-historic animals which may emerge from the depths of the ocean, or be freed by some explosion—atomic or otherwise—from a state of refrigeration somewhere in the polar regions.

Another category, slightly higher up, takes ordinary, harmless, creatures like ants or flies or spiders, and has then undergo mutation to monstrous proportions through some accident of science or nature.

A third category pits man against the forces of alien planets. This one has sub-divisions, because you can have man going out to other planets, or you can have aliens descending on earth. You can even have aliens exerting influence by remote control, so that man is faced with the menace in a disembodied form, so to say.

The fourth and the last category finds man menaced by his own technology. This is, of course, the classical Frankenstein situation, but the variations it has brought forth are numerous. The Robot, which takes the place of the monster in the Frankenstein story, has been featured both wittily and terrifyingly in a number of science-fiction films, the best of which is perhaps *Forbidden Planet*. But Robot is not the only man-made thing that provides a source of peril. Even Giant Computer Machines ('Giant Brains'—as they are called) have been pictured as developing a will of their own and turning against their creators.

These categories have existed almost ever since science-fiction attained sophistication, around the early 40's. But this genre of films has never been widely popular, except when done on a big scale with considerable fanfare—as with *War of the Worlds, Forbidden Planet* and Disney's *20 thousand leagues under the Sea*. Modest, imaginative films have been made alongside with these, but their very scale has suggested that the makers had been aware of the risks involved.

It seems, however, that a time has come at last when science-fiction films will be looked upon as no bigger risks than, say, a 'thriller'. Not only that, the genre has started attracting directors who could hardly be associated with frivolous pursuits. Truffaut and Godard in France, Joseph Losey and Stanley Kubrick in the U.S.A., are either making or have already made their first science-fiction films. Kubrick's film, called *2001 : A Space Odyssey*, is being shot in a British studio. I was able to watch a day's work on it last July in the company of Arthur Clarke, astronomer, Kalinga Price Winner and science-fiction writer, who is the co-author of *A Space Odyssey* with Kubrick.

The amount of research that has gone into the film is fantastic. Clarke has made sure that nothing goes into the film that is not scientifically accurate. Thousands of sketches, plans and diagrams of space suits, rockets, moon buses and satellite stations fill the shelves and drawers and strew the floors of the dozen or so offices of the MGM studio where the film is being shot. One large room is given over to models—of space ships, landing stations, and satellites. The systematic thoroughness of the whole undertaking has to be seen to be believed. Since the story involves a trip to the moon, a rocket constitutes one of its most important elements. I met the designer of the rocket. He turned out to be one of the top men in the field of *actual* rocket designing. In other words, the rocket used in the film was theoretically capable of making actual space flights, although it never had to leave the studio floor.

When I arrived on the set, a shot was being taken of the control panel of the rocket. For this purpose, *sixteen* 16 mm cameras had been set up behind the control board, and were simultaneously projecting sixteen animated charts in colour are to sixteen viewing panels on the board. And these are the panels which the 70 mm camera was photographing. Clarke said that all those charts would make sense to a scientist.

Both the meticulousness and the scale seemed to uphold the claim of the makers of *A Space Odyssey*: That this was going to be the biggest film ever made. And biggest naturally also means the costliest.

As I left the studio that evening, I really had the feeling that science-fiction was coming into its own at last ; and that whatever else the future may hold for mankind, it certainly holds the promise of better and more serious science-fiction films.

ANJANA BHOWMIK is one of the young 'Eves' of the Bengali screen who has, through her consistently capable work in a number of films beginning with Anushtup Chhanda, earned her way to the first line of our new stellar hopes. Her newest work is in the romantic feminine lead in B. K. Productions' 'NAYIKA SANBAD', directed by 'Agradoot', opposite the Bengali screen's matinee idol.

CAMERA BEHAVIOUR in Ray's Films

HEMANTA BOSE and KINGSUK DEB

WHILE in painting the strokes of brush, in music the distribution of sounds, in poetry the distribution of words are the valid causes for the creation of great art in respective media, in film, camera serves as the greatest source of inspiration and technique for raising its level to that of an art. Here camera's viewpoint is obviously the view point of the director. Camera does not of its own accord record the images—its movement, its angle and even its position are all determined by the dictates of the director's intuition and instinct. One has to wonder as to how in the hands of different directors, this instrument behaves so differently and so peculiarly. It is due mainly to this reason that we get an Antonioni, a Kurosawa, or a Ray—each one a master yet so much different from the other.

Camera in Ray's films behaves as adversely in 'Pather Panchali' as in 'Charulata'. While in some films it watches the scenes from a depth, in others, it plays and runs on the surface. In his first film 'Pather Panchali' and in two other films of his famous trilogy camera is mostly steady and watches from a distance. It catches the characters from an oblique angle and always through some obstacles in the foreground resulting in producing the documentary flavour. The lyrical behaviour of camera specially in 'Pather Panchali' reminds one of Flaherty. This behaviour of camera tempted London-Papers to comment it as hidden and characters just behaving in front of it as in life. Ray's camera does not unfold the characters all on a sudden, it does it gradually and it proceeds with the same tempo as that of the theme. As a result, it is slow and lyrical when the theme is such, and is unsteady when the theme is rough and violent (although not so violent as that of Kurosawa or Bergman).

DIRECT APPEAL

Camera in Ray's films seems to be busier in revealing the atmosphere and locales than the characters. It records the image so unconsciously that one hardly feels its presence. The position, the angle and the frame for a shot are so chosen by him that they create a synthetic psychological impact on the audience with a direct appeal first to the emotion and then to the intellect. His choice out of many possible angles and frames therefore seems to us perfect and successful. If there be any cinematic principle any time lying behind the choice of such angle—we think it has been thoroughly grasped by this master mind. However, one is reminded here that in an interview, Ray had very modestly said that no one in this world knows the process of chosing an angle so as to create the maximum effect upon the audience. Had that been possible, no film would be a flop. In his book 'Film Till Now' Paul Rotha writes, that for any single shot there are one thousand and one possible angles, out of which one and only one angle is to be chosen so as to be the most powerful one. So it is quite evident how difficult it is to decide on an angle and how really surprising it is to note any one's achievement in doing that.

CAMERA MOVEMENT

Next comes the movement. Most of Ray's lyricism depends upon the resultant movement created by the movement of camera as well as of characters. It is these movements,—horizontal, vertical, diagonal and parallel, which are responsible for the nuances of orchestration through out his creation. These movements are not perceptible but felt. As the audience view them, they enter into a world of pleasant feeling through a unique aesthetic experience. This is perhaps the best moment in the observation of any part.

VARYING STYLES

We have noticed with care and interest how gradually Ray's camera is changing from one film to another merely for the sake of style. Style in film depends largely upon total structure of the screenplay and the movements of camera. In 'Pather Panchali' his camera was mostly lyrical, where as in 'Jalsaghar' and 'Charulata' the long static shots as contrasted to the movements have created classical style. In 'Kanchanjungha' it is the camera movement although which is responsible for creating a symphony and ballet structure. In some films like 'Abhijan' and 'Devi' camera has replaced the characters. One can hardly forget the moments when in the last sequence of 'Abhijan' camera runs on the hilly surface, and searches through the bushes in the last sequence of 'Devi'.

UNAFFECTED

The realistic atmosphere in 'Aparajita' and 'Mahanagar' is due to the realistic behaviour of camera which has its source of inspiration from De Sica's 'Bicycle Thief' (so it appeared to us). The natural lighting in almost all of his films is no less important in creating what is called the mood photography. This is conspicuous in the film 'Teen Kanya'. Whether in artificial or in natural light Ray's camera catches the true glimpses of inner as well as outer life. The growth of science and technique has least affected Ray's camera except a few touches here and there through lenses. Still then, his films are perhaps the richest to-day, both technically and thematically, in form and in content.

The Screenplay as LITERATURE

By CHIDANANDA DAS GUPTA

A FILM is primarily something to see, not to read about. No description of a film can take the place of seeing it. Except to the cineaste, long descriptions of film sequences are more than boring; they are strenuous, because they force us to conjure up the visual images and sounds in our minds. Seeing is a simpler, more passive activity to most people than reading. When the average film-goer settles down in his seat in the cinema, he says to the screen: 'Come, entertain me! I have paid for it.'

Yet in the nearly seventy years of the cinema (how it creeps on towards a century! It seems only the other day that we used to talk of 'half-a-century of the cinema'), a considerable amount has been written about it. Even descriptions, for one of the commonest forms of film literature to-day is the scenario, published in a readable form, like plays. With the increasing recognition of the film as an art and the sophistication of its forms, its audience has also widened from the 'Nickelodeon' days to take in the most cultivated minds used to the mental exercise of imagining the sights and sounds of a film from the written word. Literature has already demanded this ability of us for a long time; novels have always abounded in long passages of visual and aural evocation not very different from film scripts. Film societies, festivals, art houses, institutes, books and journals on the cinema have given rise to a film culture among the sophisticated—in the West anyway—which makes it still easier for them to enjoy reading scenarios. And the great film makers whose films and filmscripts are worth the study, have been almost without exception, men of high general culture, able to express themselves forcefully through the written word.

CULTIVATED CLOWN

Chaplin, once the idol of the mass audience, is one of the most cultivated clowns the world has ever produced. Ingmar Bergman has been a famous director of plays; Jean Cocteau was a notable designer, poet, and painter; Jean Renoir has written a fine biography of his father, and his latest novel, 'Les Cahiers du Capitaine Georges' (now being translated into other languages) has been considered remarkable in France. (We have had fine writers turning to the cinema but unfortunately they have not made equally fine film makers.) Eisenstein was a genius of a teacher and writer who drew upon the history of diverse cultures of the world in his lectures and essays to produce some of the best theoretical writing of our times.

This is indeed inevitable to the cinema, because it demands a complex understanding of all the previous arts from which it distils its own. Its dimensions of image, natural sounds, music, words and their infinite combinations reach out into the history and texture of painting, sculpture, architecture, music, drama and literature to fashion them into an art for this age of science. The orchestration of all these diverse elements requires the word-symbol as much as a symphony requires its notation. But words, unlike notations, can have a life of their own, and a scenario can become literature when it is the product of creative talent. Eisenstein's script for *Que Viva Mexico* has become one of the classics of film literature. His treatment for Theodore Dreiser's 'An American Tragedy' is an even better example, because it was never made into a film. To those whose sensibilities have been trained in the language of the cinema, its evocation is perfect. The enjoyment of such a screenplay has itself become an important sign of the interaction of the arts within the wide range of the cultivated mind in our times. Here is a passage from the treatment for 'An American Tragedy' a little before Clyde kills Roberta (Reel 10):

> "The surface of Big Bittern lake.
>
> "Pools of the inky black surface of the silent water. The dark reflection of the pines.
>
> "Boats trembling on the motionless surface of the silent water. Their gunwales against a rude landing stage at the footsteps rising to a small hotel. The beautiful panorama of the lake.
>
> "Standing by the landing stage are Clyde and Roberta. They have just descended from the autobus.
>
> " 'How pretty—how beautiful it is!' exclaims Roberta."

Eisenstein ignores the notational aspect of the scenario, and expresses the emotional quality of a scene in the free description of a writer who does not confine himself to what can be seen or heard. The result is the evocative quality of literary writing which helps the film maker to capture the mood

RATNA GHOSAL, a juvenile find, and LILY CHAKRAVARTY, in a scene from Jhindol Films' forthcoming offering, K E D A R R A J A, now being sped to finish by director Bolai Sen.

SUCHITRA SEN. glamorous dramatic queen of the Indian screen whose rise to the position of the 'First Lady' of the Bengali screen from the scratch was fabulous. Her recent work in Mamta in a mother & daughter twin role brought her into limelight on Hindi screen as an artiste of a rare calibre. Fresh from her success there, she will next be seen, in the remake of Sarat Chandra's famous work GRIHADAHA, under Subodh Mitra's direction, as 'Achala'. the tragic heroine of the piece.

of a scene when it comes to filming, and makes good reading as literature. As notation, it is complete; it indicates not only what is to be seen and heard, but what is to be felt. Thus after Roberta's murder, he describes not only Clyde's actions, but the feelings conveyed by them, indicating what is to be achieved by the actors, the director, the cameraman's treatment of the location, the work of the unit as a whole:

> "The sun vanishes behind the hills, behind the forest. The reflection vanishes from the lake, all becomes darker and darker.
>
> "Through the increasing dread of the darkling forest, Clyde is making his way, his grip in his hand. He starts, alarmed by every noise, he is frightened by the cries of the night birds, he fears the moonlight penetrating between the thick branches of the trees, he fears his own shadows and the shadows of the fantastic forest.
>
> "He desires to see the time on his watch in the moonlight, but when the lid is opened, water falls from it and he finds out that it has stopped . . . . ."

A STEP FURTHER

This is carried a step further by Antonioni; in his psychological cinema, 'the whole of reality is identified with the content of consciousness, and things acquire meaning only insofar as they form part of a psychic experience (Guido Aristarco).' The meaning of things is indicated in the script, as otherwise some of the actions would not make any sense. Thus in *La Notte*, in the last scene between the husband and wife:

> "Lidia stops for a moment, struck once again by the spectacle of the cat motionlessly staring at the statue of a child overturned on the field. Something about the animal's fixedness troubles her."

The last sentence of this excerpt is a perfect illustration of what Aristarco means. In this 'cinema of interiority', the indication of inner meaning becomes more necessary than in Eisenstein; Clyde's actions, and the emotions indicated by them are on a single, clear, anticipatable track; if Eisenstein had made the film it would have been remarkable not so much for the psychological insight as for the ability to make a social analysis spectacular and dramatic. The horse in *Strike*, the child in *Potemkin* are symbols rather than entities in themselves; there is no feeling expressed for the child rolling down the steps in its perambulator, perhaps towards its death. Eisenstein shocks us by the idea rather than the fate of the individual child; as always, he is concerned with what somebody called 'ideatic emotion', and not with Antonioni's 'content of the consciousness' or 'interiority'. His scripts reflect this attitude as much as Antonioni's reflect his concern for the individual. I find the Antonioni manner much nearer to modern literature. Eisenstein's style, it may be argued, is of the epic; but it acquires this character more in the film than in the writing (although every film is more complete than its script). Thus the pleasure of reading the film script is much greater when it is written not only around the action, but the inner thoughts and feelings of its characters, as in literature. This trend towards interiority has become so marked in to-day's cinema—even in the work of directors as different as Satyajit Ray and Jean-Luc Godard—that it holds out great promise for the scenario as literature.

Although Ray's work is descriptive and what one might call linear in development, events of the mind are of great concern to him, as in the trilogy and *Charulata* in particular. We know that Apu (*Pather Panchali*) is thinking of his dead sister as he stands before the pond cleaning his teeth, his fingers slowing down as the thought forms in his mind; we know that Charu is beginning to realise the nature of her love for her husband's brother in the swing scene in *Charulata*. In writing a literary scenario—and this may not be a contradiction in terms—all these unspoken thoughts may take shape. The more these unseen and unheard elements, the thoughts and feelings underlying the physical action, are brought out in the literary scenario, the closer it will get to the form of the novel, and become 'literature.'

CLOSE-TO-NOVEL SCENARIO

But what about a scenario thus written of a film based on a novel anyway? Will it merely become a paraphrasing of the original novel? I suspect not. If a close-to-novel-form scenario were to be written back from the film trilogy, a subtle transformation would take place, because it would contain something of the chemistry of the mind of the film-maker. Not only some aspects of incidents and characters, but the very composition of the elements, the molecular structure if you like, would undergo a transmutation. In the first place a film-maker is attracted to a novel because he feels an identity of thought with the writer and the content of his particular work. But given this common ground, the film-maker then proceeds to pour himself, and not the writer, into the vessel provided. Ray removes much of the dream element from Bibhuti Bhusan Banerjee's two-part novel ; his Apu is a more real person than the writer's wonder child (who turns slowly into an actual angel in 'Debajan'). This happens because the creator of the films has an outlook on life, a set of mental relationships with the contemporary world, which are different from the writer's. Antonioni wrote the stories of all his films except one, *Le Amiche;* talking about his affinities and differences with Cesare Pavese, the writer, he says; Pavese committed suicide and I am still alive. Pavese killed himself when he was at the height of his fame, because he felt he had come to the end of what he could accomplish. Commenting on this, Pierre Leprohn says: 'All the love Antonioni bears towards women, all the happiness he offers them is —by contrast—demanded of them by Pavese. The writer's bitterness lies in the impossibility of ever *obtaining* such happiness; for the director it seems to be the impossibility of *giving* a woman happiness.' Thus the content of a film and the novel on which it is based, although outwardly the same, become inwardly transformed.

REAL TEST

The novel written back from the film, were such a thing to be considered, would thus become something different from the original (from which it is thrice removed any way). But however interesting such speculation may be, we are concerned here with the screenplay as literature and not the re-writing of a novel after the film. The question is: can screenplays be enjoyed as literature? I feel that it is in its distinctive form that the screenplay offers scope for a new type of literature. That form must, I think, be more than notation; it would be a completely enjoyable entity in itself, like a play read in the seclusion of the study. The problem is more difficult, in a way, in the case of those who write their own stories, as Antonioni, because the pleasure derived from them is not merely in the form; much of it must ensue from the original situations, relationships and the structure brought out by the writer-half of the film-maker who creates the story. The real test lies in the case of the sce-

Continued on page 210

LET ME Confess

By TARUN MAZUMDAR

WARE of the limitation of my capacity for writing, naturally the first interrogation that I had to face from within was, 'what to write about?',—and, the answer came as spontaneously,—why not attempt a self analysis of the contradictions that have been boiling within me since I made my first movie?

So, you know, I am man of the movies. I direct films. Not very good films, if you really ask me. I know they could have been better even by my own standard. The reason why they are not is not beyond me and I am not ashamed either to confess that I suffer from certain inner contradictions. Unless I can iron them out, I am afraid, it will not be easy for me to make really good movies.

The first question that confronts me in this context is, for whom should I make my films? For myself, or for my audience? I raise this point purposely, only to bring it to the fore that I and my audience do not always see eye to eye in respect of our likes and dislikes on so many points. Sitting through a show of my own picture in a packed house, often have I wondered, why, indeed why on earth, are they applauding a particular point, which, according to me, has reached nowhere near its goal. Often have I suffered when a particular touch, so dear to my heart, has either been completely missed or cold-shouldered. True, I make my films, among other reasons, to gain commercial success as well (or to put it less crudely, to make them such as may get the approval of the majority of the cinema-going public). And, thank God, they have been successful more often than not. But, I knew then, as I know till this day that my language is not fully understood by the public the way I mean.

NEW MEANING!

May be, they like the phoneticism and construe a new meaning out of my clumsy words. And, in the light of the new interpretations, they start liking the picture with the result that the picture becomes a success, although for reasons, never, never intended by me. But, who will pay heed to that? The only option I am left with is to pretend that I intended them. That is the beginning of the end of my mental peace. For immediately I can smell that I and my audience are almost like two lunatics, sailing in the same boat and grinning at each other in a friendly way, without knowing when, or why, or how the one will betray the other. This is a feeling sufficient to put one on the edge of one's nerves, as it does to me. And, it is then that as if to recompense the tension, I broaden my grin and try to be friendlier with them, even at the cost of forgetting my own language, my own interpretations and accepting theirs as my own. That may prove alright for the time being. But, in the moments of my solitude, my heart is filled with disgust, more for myself than for anybody else, and I start hating my ability for being so helpless.

It is not a question of confidence, or lack of it, that plays any important part in my problems of movie-making. I am positive about my confidence. But, that does not help me much. What I am not sure about is whether I should use my confidence to make a film that may eventually please none but myself.

In our country, or at least in Bengal, a director is given money to make a picture by a Producer or a Financier, on this clear, though unwritten, understanding that he will try his level best to make it a Box-office success. Although the term 'level best' is vague and relative, it is sufficiently clear to make a director consider more of the public taste, and less of his own, while he chooses a story, writes his script and executes it on celluloid. Now, if a director conveniently chooses to forget all that, takes the advantage of the vagueness of the term and decides to make a picture absolutely to his own liking, not caring whether his audience's pulse will also beat at the same speed as his, he violates his own commitment and, thus, runs the risk of being called an insincere person. That, incidentally, gives rise to my second question.

AT THE SAME TIME.....

Whether it is possible to be a sincere artist and an insincere person, both at the same time? Cheating a financier and serving the cause of Cinema (with a capital C) may be wonderful, provided one finds oneself in a position to produce an explanation for it. Unfortunately, I can't, knowing it fully well that it exposes me all the more to the criticism of my friends, who say that to an artist nothing matters as much as the cause of Art. They will cite, perhaps the cases of so many films where pictures became masterpieces while their Producers were sent to the burial ground. Others, more academic and less practical, may think it necessary to remind me that famous quote: 'Life is short, but Art is.....' etc. etc. How can I convince them that cinema is not an Art in the same sense that a piece of Jamini Roy or a work of Rabindranath is. Because, over and above those lowest common denominators of any genuine piece of art,—viz., novelty and depth of imagination, mastery of execution, time and energy,,—films require a lot of money for their making, and others' money at that, and that places the entire case on a completely different footing. How can I convince them that I find it impossible to make myself a living epitome of coexistence of two contradictory, and absolutely incompatible ideas of being a cheat on the one hand and an artist on the other? I believe that sincerity is part and parcel of one's integrity, and since integrity is one and indivisible, I just cannot channelise my sincerity compartmentally to the cause of Art, and deprive the poor Producer of it.

LAST QUESTION

The last question: Then why do I continue making pictures? Surprisingly, this time the answer is ready at hand. Simply because I have a feeling that it is probably the only medium through which I can express myself. Not very clearly, I know, and not very elegantly, at the present moment. But, it matters little. So long as I continue my struggle to get an answer to all my uncomfortable questions, questions that are fettering my feet, I do not mind toppling and tumbling here and there. It is a struggle, indeed. You may as well call it a struggle for my freedom.

YOUNG MOVIE MAKERS OF AMERICA

By MYRON PRINF

FOR roughly 40 years until the early 1950's, the American movie meant Hollywood, and Hollywood meant the studio system. Then suddenly things began to fall apart.

Westerns, musicals, gangster and detective films—Hollywood's stock-in-trade—drew smaller audiences. The industry felt compelled to look for new themes, subjects, and formats. One result was a variety of technical innovations including wide screens and stereophonic sound systems. But Hollywood's audience continued to dwindle.

Television became nationwide, which eventually cut the average movie audience in half, from 90 million after World War II to 45 million ten years later. The old studio system, operating on mass production principles, was no longer viable.

Arising from the changed conditions, the most important development was the appearance of pictures created not by studios but by individual directors. Among the younger directors whose work has contributed to this development, four deserve special mention. Arthur Penn, a former television and stage director, brought his noncinematic experience to give a heightened sensitivity to the possibilities of the film medium.

His first picture, *The Left-Handed Gun* (1958), retold the story of Billy the Kid, the famous young outlaw of the 19th century American West, but this time with the emphasis on the nature of his behaviour and its significance. This very impressive film had two major themes : Billy as an individual with the impulses of a child but the power of an adult, and the distorted values of those who regarded him as a hero.

STORY IN THE ROUND

Penn's second picture, *The Miracle Worker* (1962), describes the childhood of Helen Keller, the deaf and blind American who became one of the most distinguished women of her time. The film has a carefully studied beauty—Penn has an elegant eye—and it demonstrates his ability to present a story in the round as if he were displaying a piece of a sculpture from all sides, and to evoke brilliant individual performances within the framework of ensemble acting. Penn's recent film *Mickey One* is the story of a contemporary man who is trying to find his true place in the modern world.

By far the best known of the younger American directors—and the most brilliant as well as the most complex—is Stanley Kubrick. His career has followed a pattern characteristic of many film makers. His first picture—financed with funds he raised himself—was *Fear and Desire* (1953), a bitter study of war, which used avant-garde techniques. His early work won him enough attention to gain the support of an established studio.

All of Kubrick's later films offer political or social protest. *Paths of Glory* (1957), set in World War I, is partly an anti-war film and *Dr. Strangelove* (1964) is a satirical attack on nuclear warfare. Yet Kubrick's sensibility seems less held by particular causes than by the sheer perversity in men and the extremities toward which their beliefs and desires carry them.

Irvin Kershner is currently in the process of passing from the direction of standard genre material to more personal films. In the late 1950's, Kershner directed several visually exciting, skilfully constructed, but conventionally written pictures. Then in 1961, he made *The Hoodlum Preist*, a film clearly closer to his interests.

HALFWAY HOUSE

Based on fact, the picture describes the efforts of a Catholic priest to establish a halfway house where young delinquents can live for a while after leaving jail. Kershner avoided all bland cliches of a social work perspective to reveal his characters whole and as individual personalities.

His latest film, *The Luck of Ginger Coffey*, is about an ordinary family man, but Kershner is so observant of nuances of character and setting that he points out the elements of uniqueness in everyday situations.

The fourth young director is Denis Sanders. With his brother Terry as producer, he has made two pictures, each concerned with a young man

reaching his way to a moral commitment. *Crime and Punishment, U.S.A.* (1959) attempted to transplant the feverish emotions of Dostoevski's novel to sunny California. *War Hunt* (1962), set in Korea, has a quiet respect for the details of both people and places, and at its best renders the experiences of its characters with crystalline objectivity.

Since 1958 a scattered but populous community of "noncommercial" independent movie makers has cropped up. Mostly young, these film makers—several hundred at least—have turned to movies as naturally as earlier generations turned to novels or poetry. They are "noncommercial" in the sense that they finance and distribute their films by using their own slender savings and borrowing from family and friends.

Essentially, the independents are out to overturn the existing rules of standard movie technique, in a serious attempt to extend the "grammar" of film. In seeking to extend the formal and technical range of film, they are trying at the same time to imbue movies with their particular sense of the world, to take a mode of the imagination that has given them enormous pleasure and use it to serve their own imaginations.

BLENDED STYLE

In the blending of documentary and fictional reality many of the independents have found a style to suit their interests. One of the first such couplings was Sidney Meyers' *The Quiet One* (1952). Regarded as a documentary because it was built around a core of fact, it might better be considered a "reconstruction." Considerably aided by novelist James Agee's delicate and compassionate script, it sensitively re-enacts the life and emotional rehabilitation of an introverted Negro boy.

PLAIN-STYLE POET

The most important figure among the initial practitioners of this style of "fictional documentary' is Morris Engel. Engel is a plain-style poet of the urban neighbourhood. Mixing professional with non-professional actors, he tells his almost plotless stories about ordinary New Yorkers against the background of the daily life of the city.

His first film, *The Little Fugitive* (1953), typically "stars" the beach amusement areas of Coney Island, a neighbourhood of residential brownstones, and a small boy who runs away from his home in one of those brownstone apartments. Engel's later films are similarly wrapped around other New York amusements—in *Lovers and Lollipops* (1957), a trip to the Statue of Liberty ; in *Weddings and Babies* (1960), an Italian-American street festival.

It is precisely this emphasis on the average and routine that distinguishes Engel from most of the independents who followed him. Where he accepted society as given, they disdained it. Where he emphasized the typical and the modest, they focussed on the marginal and the rebellious. This cinematic "underground" bursting into view at the end of the 1950's spoke with the voice of the dissatisfied young.

NEW COMING

The film that did the most to herald the new coming was John Cassavetes' *Shadows*, made in 1958 but not distributed commercially until two years later. This film proved that an integral movie with dramatic force could be made for the phenomenally small sum of $15,000 (part of it collected from the listeners of a New York radio programme, a typical example of the unorthodox methods by which the independents manage to finance themselves). Particularly striking was Cassavetes' use of loose improvisation.

The comparative success of *Shadows* catapulted Cassavetes, a former movie actor, back into Hollywood. There he directed two films, *Too Late Blues* (1961), and *A Child is Waiting* (1963), both uneven attempts to weave various kinds of spontaneous and documentary-like reality into extremely theatrical plots.

FANTASIES

With the "fantasies" of some new film makers, one moves to a different realm where the air is headier and scenes of contemporary life give way to filigree imaginings. The general mode is the same, improvisational and plotless, but the texture is quite different.

The best of the "fantasies" is *Pull My Daisy* (1959), a half-hour short by Robert Frank and Alfred Leslie. Narrated more or less spontaneously by "beat" novelist Jack Kerouse, the film is a boisterous, good-humoured homage to the natural man, "beat" variety—and entirely lovely. Few pictures have rendered light with such frothy delicacy or discovered beauty in everyday objects so unselfconsciously.

The independents are now a permanent part of the American cultural landscape. This means that there is a good deal more room than formerly for youth, experiment and dissent in movie-making. And behind the high-spirited adventurousness of young directors and film writers is a growing audience in all parts of the United States willing to sample the work of new artists, attitudes and styles.

The Screenplay as literature

Continued from page 207

narist who adapts from a novel or a play; if he can an original work in the reading itself, then the impart to it the formal qualities, and the values of scenario can indeed become a new form of literature. In its intimacy as well as sweep of the camera's observation, its inseparable audio-visual complex and inexpressible evocations arising from a thousand details, today's art cinema in its many forms—which include such things as "cinema verite"—offers a challenge to literature. The films of Jean-Luc Godard many of which are from original screenplays, present fresh problems of resolving a highly cinematic form with intricate textural qualities into a literary screenplay. Some of these problems are even more difficult than dealing with the on-the-spot newsreel — in-depth realism of cinema verite; it would be almost as difficult as describing abstract art. But the possibilities are fascinating and the challenge undeniable. Already there is a fair body of scenarios published for the reader who is familiar with film form (even if he has not seen the particular film concerned); with the growth of film appreciation, the day may not be far off when scenarios will indeed be read as widely as plays.

This is not a light matter

By TARINI SANKAR CHAKRAVORTY

WHY should "Osculatory scenes" (kissing) be allowed by the Film Censor Board in Western films screened in India when they are taboo for Indian pictures? This question was raised by Mr. Hem Barua in the monsoon session of the Lok Sabha this year. He held that "emotional exuberance between young men and women were only simple scenes."

According to him one reason why Western pictures drew full houses was that the Indian cine-goer was curious to know "the prerogative enjoyed by the Western lovers on the celuloid."

Denying that the Board adopted "double standards" in judging films, Mr. Raj Bahadur said that films should reflect essentially the culture of the countries concerned. "What obtains in the West does not obtain here", he said. "And Indian films should not be expected to reflect what is not our own way of life."

The controversy over whether kissing should be allowed in Indian film has been going on for a long time. The protagonists of kissing are trying to convince the conservative school of thoughts that it is nothing but "a caress given with lips" according to the definition of Oxford concise dictionary. This definition like most others is too superficial and i discriminate to be illuminating. In actual fact, there are all sorts and varieties of kisses and many of these it would be absurd to write off as only 'innocent caress'.

KISSING VARIETIES

There is for instance, the kiss of peace 'osculum pacis'—formerly a part of the celebration of the mass, and there is the 'sisterly salute' which according to Thomas Hood, is "an insipid thing—like sandwich of veal. "There are again the kiss upon the Bible in oath taking, the kiss upon the dust of the ground expected from slaves, the kiss that ratifies promises, the kiss with which, according to Oscar Wilde, the coward destroys the thing he loves, and more notorious than every other, the traitor's kiss of Judas that sealed death.

Even of kisses that signify affection, there are all kinds and degrees. It would take the major part of a lifetime to examine and classify all the various genera and species ; and any one who might undertake the study would, at the end of it, be wholly unable to enlighten the world, for then he would be too old to know what he was talking about. It is difficult to analyse a kiss as to analyse the shades of a word's meaning. A hurried brushing of the lips says something entirely different from "a clinging kiss" ; and neither of them has the same significance as the one described in Tennysons' —the "long kiss" that "draws the whole soul through the lips, as sunlight drinketh dew." This is perhaps the ideal kiss. It is an external act that expresses a spiritual reality.

But there are other important categories There is the farewell kiss blown from the finger tips, the family kiss, on one cheek and then on the other, the courtly kiss upon the hand, the kiss "left but in the cup" with which the Ben Johnson professed to be satisfied, the stolen kiss which is proverbially sweet, the diplomatic kiss given, for example, to the babe for the nurses sake, and the treacherous kiss given by the villain" to the hand he wishes to cut off."

It is also not possible to forget either the kiss of Othello that preceded the strangling of the innocent wife, or the divine compassion which wreathed in smiles "the lips that are carved with pain." Finally there is the kiss of the desperation and disgust of which Hartley Coleridge provided a spectacular example when, having been utterly bored by a glum dinner party to which he had been invited, he suddenly jumped up from his seat, kissed the clergyman's daughter and bolted from the house.

DIVIDED OPINION

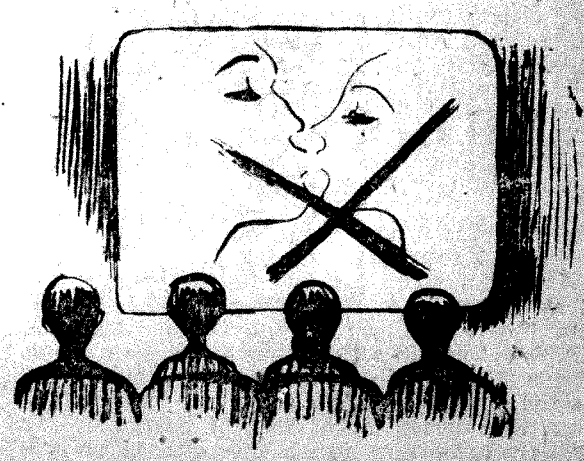
The opinion of the judiciary is divided on the issue of kissing. In a large number of cases which were produced before the court of law during the last one century on charge of kissing, the judges gave different verdicts.

According to a Reuter's report from Buenos Aires "a lover's kiss in the dark softened the heart of an Argentine judge who—on appeal—ruled that their tender outbursts constituted no offence." The defendants two young students, were spotted in a public park by a constable who took them to court where they were fined about 13 shillings.

Fighting for the universal right to kiss the lovers appealed, and judge Carlos Lope Leoube held that "kissing is no obscene action to be repressed by the authorities."

But a young couple in Krishnagore sometimes back was in trouble when they publicly kissed each other while enjoying their swing in the merry-go-round. The constable who arrested them said that their acts were liable to vitiate the atmosphere at the fair. The magistrate sent them to jail for six weeks, finding them guilty of obscene acts in the open.

But a Bombay High Court judgment sometimes back set aside the sentence on a boy and a girl



Films not to reflect what is not our own way of life

The courtly kiss

for kissing in public garden, holding that "theirs was not an obscene act."

The Supreme Court of Italy has ruled, however, that a stolen kiss even if planted only on a girl's arm, is a crime. In a judgment it said "a kiss was normally a manifestation of sexual instinct."

The Court overruled a judgment by a lower court which had acquitted, for a lack of proof a man charged with "lustful acts."

The Supreme Court ruled as a penal offence the behaviour of a man who, "after having gone on his knees, implored a kiss which was not granted, but then succeeded in giving one on an "arm of the woman, which he held tightly in his hands." This episode was sufficient to condemn the man concerned, the Court said. The published sentence, restricting itself to the points of law involved, did not give the names of those concerned in the case.

In Italy kissing in public is a crime.

The Vatican official newspaper in an editorial remarked, "the court's decision expressed a principle against force which should be upheld by everyone. Citizens had the right to be protected from "effusions which do not respect tranquility and privacy," 'Observatore Romano' concluded.

Many have paid the price for having kissed a maiden in public. Take the case of a smart shopkeeper in Australia. A blonde came to his shop one day as a customer and he was tempted to snatch a peck of happiness. So he leaned over his counter and boldly kissed the damsel.

Of course, the act was shocking to the onlookers and the protectors of law were soon at work. The shopkeeper was fined. But it appears the lady appreciated the bold action of the Romeo of the counter for she left £20,000 to him in her will.

The good King Charlemagne was very angry with his daughter when he found her in the arms of an ardent lover, and enjoying the kiss planted on her lips by the arrogant young man. He sentenced the man to marry his daughter much to the surprise and satisfaction of both.

A Korean youngman had to pay heavily when he tried to steal a kiss a farm girl and lost nearly onethird of his tongue. Judge Li Chin-sung said the girl's act was in self-defence but was excessive." He gave the girl, ten months prison term, suspended it and put her on probation for two years.

A New Jersey court sentenced one man to kiss only his wife because he was an habit of stealing kisses from passersby.

According to a judgment of an English judge, a girl can bite the nose of any young man if he tries to kiss without her consent. The case arose when a young man sued a girl of compensation because he lost the tips of his nose when he tried to steel a kiss. The judgment was given against the young man.

The story of German girls in Rihneland are stranger than fiction. Once a year they are given "licence to kiss" in a carnival religious in origin, that goes back into the Middle Ages. For four days and nights, almost the whole population and many hundreds of thousands of overseas visitors go on a spree which involves swapping husbands and boy friends in a kissing spree for four nights running.

LICENCE TO KISS

The "licence to kiss" is a broad and powerful one, taken in all seriousness by the girl and women. Some of the most amazing scenes in a recent kissing carnival took place in the German capital city of Bonn where thousands of attractive girls—clerks, secretaries and workers employed in Government departments forced their way into the men's offices including ministers to take full advantage of their rights. They carried bottles of wine, brandy and Vodka. The girls were dressed nylon tights and gay coloured costumes and grabbed hold of every man in sight and covered their faces with lipstick until they literally screamed for mercy.

Once the men had been thoroughly kissed, the girls pulled out pairs of scissors and cut off men's neckties just below the knot—another age-old custom to prove the women held the whip in hand. But this was just the beginning of the carnival.

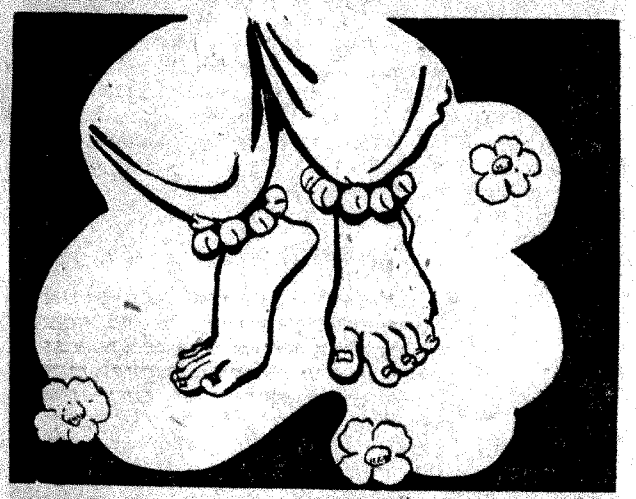
In Cologne, the carnival reaches as even higher pitch of excitement and there is kissing everywhere —in the streets, in bars, beer-cellars, dance halls and clubs. Not infrequently, crowds of screaming women are seen chasing men down a street, shouting that he should stop and be kissed or take the consequences.

The consequences are quite serious. If the bands of women who are on their man hunt find a man who refuses to be kissed,, he is stripped—and it matters little whether he is in the middle of street and the temperature is anything upto 20 degrees below freezing.

Even the police have a pleasant sorts of trouble from the kiss-happy girls. Whenever they try to restore order some sort, they are surrounded by girls with flaming lips and bottles of wine, for they

Continued on page 224

The man who refuses to be kissed



DANCE

TECHNIQUE of SHANKAR-COUPLE

By SANDHYA SEN

"SHANKAR is the spiritual leader of modern dance" observed Miss Bertonoff, a noted dancer of Israil who had been in Calcutta, on a short visit. I was curious to know about Miss Deborah's conception of dance before she had met Udayshankar & Amala. She replied instantly "formerly dance was merely a medium of expression to me, but Shankars taught me that dance is a religion by itself. I remember still the memory of his performance in the first night. I went like praying"—

Wonder-struck I asked Mr. & Mrs. Shankar—about the secret of their dance-technique which could kindle the love of dance in the heart of an Western artist and made her convinced that dance is the illuminating passing of the spirit. "Originally you were a Painter, but how were you inspired to leave your art of Painting and take up dancing?"

"It is difficult to explain"—replied Mr. Shankar zestingly 'how can I satisfy you? Shall I say that Lord Shiva appeared to me in dream and bade 'Oh Shankar—reveal yourself in wonderful dance to announce my sublime message to the world' and I am a dancer thenceforth"—Shankar couple burst out in laughter.

"Not at all. I have no such childish hunger for those fairy tales. I want to know just the message and philosophy of your unique dance-technique."

"I dance from my childhood and was in the habit of imitating whatever I saw around me. My mother and other members of the family encouraged by enthusiasm in dance. When I was only 14 or 15 years of age, I saw some Court dancer in the Darwar of the Maharaja of Jhalwar State and I imitated them without knowing A, B, C, D of dance. As I was interested in drawing and painting my father insisted on my taking diploma course in arts and sent me to J. J. School of Arts in Bombay in 1919. From the very beginning I was allowed to start in the first year with scholarship without having gone through the elementary and intermediate classes. I also joined Vishnu Digambar School of Music for sometime and though not very well, I used to play Veena, Sitar, Surbahar, Tabla and flute.

BEFORE KING GEORGE V

In the year 1919, on receipt of a telegram from my father in London, I had to leave Bombay for London on August 23rd. My father was a Minister of the Maharaja of Jalwar State and he was well acquainted with Lords and Ladies, Counts and Countesses, Earls and Knights in London. Whenever my father had been invited to big functions, he used to take me with him and asked me to dance or play on some musical instrument. It happened that I had to dance before King George the Fifth at a garden party given by the League of Mercy at Regent Park, London on 30th June, 1922 where I performed Sword dance. The performance was appreciated by the King—he shook my hands and paid compliments—Press Photographer took photographs. I imitated this sword dance from the people who used to play with sword, sticks, daggers, etc. in sports and reproduced this sport in the form of dance with rhythm.

On my arrival in London, my father got me admitted into the Royal College of Arts with Scholarship. I finished the five years course in three years and got A.R.C.A. (London) diploma prizes, one in "Self Portrait" and the other in figure composition. The Daily Mail, London commented "For the first time in the history of Art Sketch Club at South Kensington an Indian student has won the Spencer Prize, awarded for a piece of imaginative painting, and also the George Clausen Prize, for Self-Portraiture." Shankar stopped for a few seconds—and resumed "And it was evident I was destined to be a Painter. But the aim of my creator was different—I realised this when I met the turning-point of my career."

I was a favourite student of Sir William Rothenstein, Principal, Royal College of Arts, London. It was due to him that I met Gurudev Tagore for the first time in London. Sir Rothenstein opened my eyes and made me realise how rich India was in art and culture. He once told me "Since India has enough of resources in the field of Art & culture why should you imitate ours—Why are you carrying our diseases to your country?" He made this comment because I was interested in patchwork painting. He stopped attending my classes for a month and advised me to study the books on Indian art and culture that he arranged for me in the British Museum Library.

ATTRACTED

In course of my study, some sculptures of Indian gods and goddesses in various dance-forms tremendously attracted me. They possessed as it were great communicative power. The characteristic delicacy, poetry and epical beauty haunted me throughout the day and night. A queer urge tormented me like anything—on one of such sleepless nights I suddenly rose up from bed and began to

imitate the sculptures in various beautiful posture. I did not know the technique of dance nor had I any knowledge of music. Those marvellous figures inspired me to make rhythmic movements.

I was a changed person and could realise my goal.

After having the diploma from the Royal College of Arts, Shankar happened to meet the great Anna Pavlova who had just returned from a tour of India. Shankar's dance greatly impressed Pavlova. On her earnest request Shankar composed two ballets for her troupe, "Hindu-Wedding" and 'Radha-Krishna' and taught Anna Pavlova and other boys and girls of the Company, the movements required for these two ballets.

Sir William Rothenstein became terribly shocked to learn about Shankar's joining Anna Pavlova because he had already arranged a British scholarship "Pre-de-Rome"—and wanted him to leave for Rome. This is the highest honour (Degree) a student could achieve in paintings. There was a long argument among his father, Pavlova and Sir William Rothenstein as to what would be better for him either to take up painting or dance. They could not come to any decision and it was left to Shankar to choose who in his turn decided to take up dancing. He went on working on these ballets and prepared costumes. He was excited, at the same time nervous to dance as a partner of Pavlova, the greatest dancer of the world, who was to play the role of Radha and Shankar as Krishna. The ballet in the Convent Garden Royal Opera House elicited the highest compliments from the critic, and was described as one of the most colourful and beautiful ballets Pavlova had ever produced. Naturally Shankar was overwhelmed with joy and travelled continuously for 9 months all over Europe during 1922-23.

PAVLOVA'S ADVICE

"Once I expressed my desire to learn European dance and in reply, Anna Pavlova said "I have great regard for you. That is why I advise you not to learn our dances, because India is the source of wonders." On her suggestion Shankar left her troupe—she wanted him to bring an Indian troupe to Europe and to provide them the golden opportunity to learn more and know about the highly developed Indian culture which cannot be compared with any other countries of the world."

After leaving Pavlova, Shankar had to struggle for existence, for some time. However, he managed to present some programmes in small caberwra and gradually he won name and fame and the honoured privilege to perform in best theatres and music halls all over Europe.

During his tour of Switzerland he met a painter and sculpture Miss Alice Bonner from a great family of Switzerland, who got interested in Shanker and requested him to accompany her to India. After his long stay for 11 years in Europe he returned to India with Miss Bonner and travelled all over India to see the temples and caves, dances, etc. and to know about the cultural heritage of India, about which he came to know for the first time from the books in the British Museum Library. On this tour Shankar saw "Kathakali" and realised it as the best dance-dramas existing in India. Unfortunately no one knew about it outside Malabar. "It was myself who told the Press in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras about Kathakali for the first time."

"I never learnt any kind of European dance, not even Ball-room and never used any kind of Western technique of dance—such as Classical, Folk or character in any of my works. But I must say that I have learnt from West to believe in work,

discipline and organisation or in other word showmanship. I never learnt dances of any kind and of any part of the Orient, although I had been over Malaya, Rangoon, Indonesia and Ceylon.

Whatever I did, was creative without following any technique or any School of Dancing of my country though whatever I did was always Indian. I simply used to create from the dances I saw during the years before I left India. As for the music I used to give melody and rhythm to the European musicians and they composed it for full Orchestra in European notation and this went up to the time till I took my troupe of musicians and dancers from India for the first time. This is the long and short of my dance technique." Shankar stopped.

"But is it possible to learn without a "Guru" as Indian art is "Gurumukhi-biddya" I asked reluctantly.

GURU

"Once I was invited by the Maharaja of Travancore" to witness "Kathakali" in his Palace. There I met a god-like person named Shankaram-Namboodripad who became my guru and I learnt from him for sometime. He composed a dance for me called Kartikeya, the first and the only dance that I learnt from him and still I perform this particular dance."

"Which among the four Schools of Dance appeals most to you?" "Kathakali definitely, for its vast histrionic scope. I did not like to limit myself within the strict rigidity of Bharatnatyam though

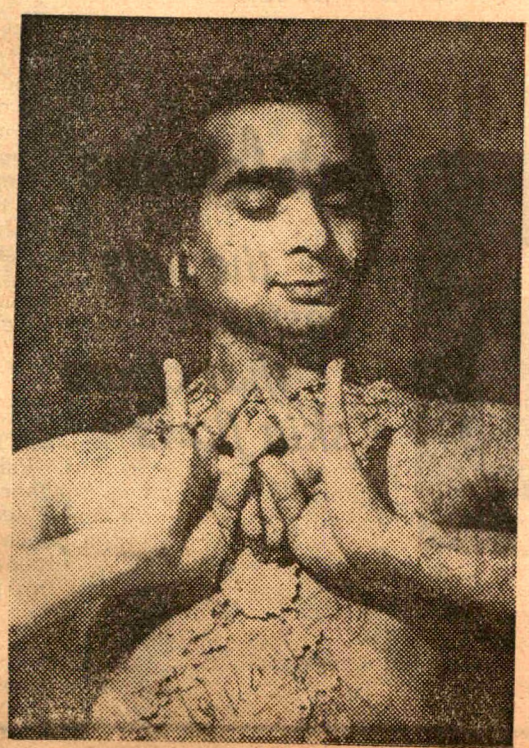
Bharatnatyam is also subtle, lyrical and highly rhythmic. 'Kathakali' literally means story-telling. Here the gestures and techniques of Bharatnatyam have taken a more masculine vitality. It is a fine complex art consisting of 3 fine arts of Abhinaya, Nrittya and Geetha—a pantomine in which the actor does not speak or sing but interprets their gesture with picturesque vividity. Most of my ballads are re-based on Kathakali blended with the eloquent charm of Manipuri."

"Though not consciously" said Mrs. Amala-shankar, "the greatest interpreter of Shankar's dance. "Shankar is a born performer—he performed what he felt—only—when the expression was analysed after performance—it was found to belong to Kathakali or Manipuri etc." If you could turn up to Rabindra-Sarobar—on some day and observe my classes there you will have an idea of his art of choreography."

I went and experienced how the spell of dance was being breathed into the marrow of her students.

"I never tell my students to dance unless and until their spirit is inspired. Before the class I do not know what I am going to teach. They also do not know what they are going to learn. But at the end we are thrilled to find that the design of their work unfolds the subtle harmonic emphasis and impressive rhythmic beats" said Amalashankar. She gave sparkling illustration also.

She asked her students to walk simply with the power of youth and jovial mood. Gradually their walk was adjusted with rhythm which emerged spontaneously from their heart. Their hands were lifted and transformed into flowery enchanting movements. Their eyes sparkled with subtle and suggestive expressions. Nothing was left to chance. Vigour and sweep gave way to the most limpid phrase at the flick of an eylash. Their tempos were unfailingly correct and brought many fine points to light. There were no costumes or stage make-up. Only genuine beauty and executional charm captured our attention.



The musicians without overpersonalising music drew forth incredible amount of nuance and colour from the dance movement in their composition.

Amala's forte is like her husband Udayshankar the "Peace of dancing". She does not follow the line of the great professionals who confine themselves mostly to the intellectual section of dance and devote very little attention to the 'Sahitya'. She makes her students dance, only what they themselves understand, appreciate, feel and express.

"Each dancer should find out his or her own interpretation of symbols. They are not to follow the teachers blindly." Amala concluded "Spirituality and not physicality is the basis of Shankar's dance."

SACRIFICE

Continued from page 195

He infused life into it and along with his associate Nabin became its nerve-centre.

Bipul's approach work was flawless, it can be compared favourably with a mature brain. For more than a fortnight Sachin Choudhury and his agents were nowhere on the scene.

The cycle moved on and again the full moon sent in a plethora of delight to all its admirers, save of course, the crime-hunter. The nocturnal criminals find in moon a witness to their shady deals and so they try to keep themselves away from their criminal propensities. But the full moon makes room for the black fortnight and gradually withers away.

It was a black night and its hideousness had all the more heightened by non-stop drizzles since the the day-break. Almost wintry conditions had set in in the autumn.

The whole of the village lay fast asleep under such conditions. But this opened up opportunities for the criminals.

As the night advanced its eerie silence and stillness portended an evil omen.

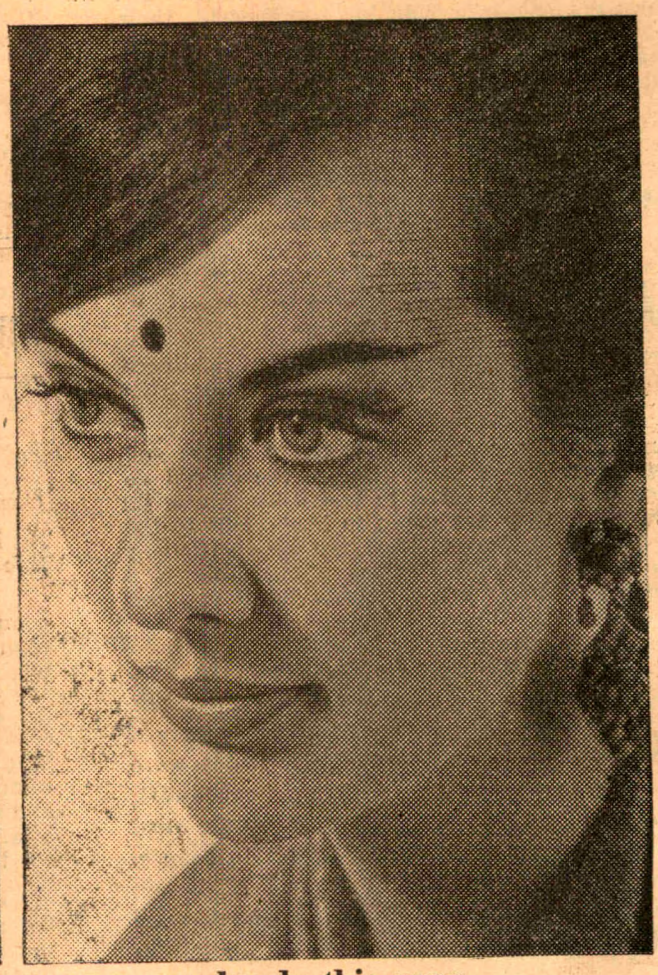
Suddenly there was a loud roar to break this dead silence. In a few minutes it was clear that an armed gang of dacoits attacked Harish Chatterji's house and the village resistance party was giving them a good fight. The resistance party under Bipul's guidance scented the danger and lay in hiding nearabout, as Bipul was apprehensive that there might be an attempt to kidnap Sabita that night.

Within half an hour the fight was over. Four of the dacoits were killed, some captured and the rest took to their heels. Casualties among the resistance party were not many but Bipul could not survive a hard blow on his head and succumbed to his injuries the next day, Sabita's honour was saved.

The whole village was in mourning. Piteous were the cries of Matangini Thakurani but time is the best healer. Sachin Choudhury and his associates were sentenced to different terms of imprisonment on the confession of those arrested.

—And Sabita wept in secret. She preferred marrying Atul to Anupam and thus repay part of the debt she owed to his protector.

lovely from afar...



lovely this near

when you use

Be lovely now—Lacto-Calamine is an ideal make-up. It clears skin flaws smoothly, gently. Be lovely always—Lacto-Calamine contains calamine and witch hazel—so good for your skin... leaves it clear, radiant.

Look your loveliest with Lacto-Calamine

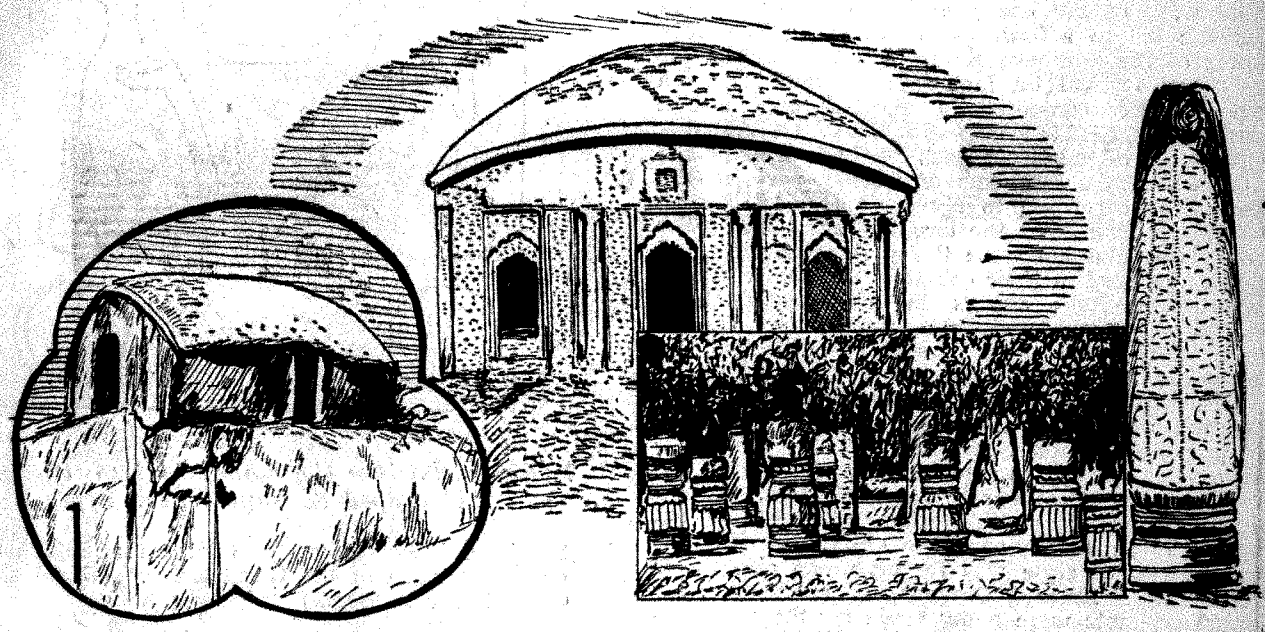
Now available in pilfer-proof bottle with carton

Also available in the Lacto-Calamine range: Cream *and* Talc

Lacto-Calamine

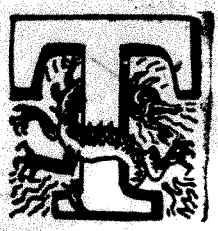
the only cosmetic that clears skin flaws

Bensons/1-CIL-9



THE SOUTHERN KACHARI RENAISSANCE : OF THE BARMANS AND DIMACHAS

By
AMIT KUMAR NAG



HE Bodo-Kacharis once ruled over the whole of Assam. And it was during their centuries-old rule that liberal patronage was given to art, culture and literature. The Ramayana epic was first translated under the aegis of a powerful Kachari potentate. Besides, numerous Vaishnava religious cum-literary works saw the light of the day due to similar encouragement from them.

It can also be said without fear of contradiction that later literature of Buddhist faith received liberal patronage from the then rulers of Assam—most of whom came of Bodo-Kachari families.

Like their brethren of the Brahmaputra Valley, the Southern Kacharis of the Kopili and the Dhansiri valleys also contributed to the mainstream of the history and civilization of Assam. The Meches of Dimapur, the Dimachas of North Cachar and the Kachari-Barmans of Cachar originated from the Southern Kacharis whose ancient capital, Dimapur, bears testimony to the marvellous fusion of tribal and proto-Hindu cults.

Dr. P. C. Choudhury in his HISTORY OF CIVILISATION OF THE PEOPLE OF ASSAM describes Dimapur as "one of the important sites of megalithic culture". "Most of the remains, "he observes, "appear contemporaneous with the Kachari civilisation, established before the Ahom invasion in the 13th century A.D.....We have evidence of a touch of Hindu influence on most of them, though these are predominantly non-Aryan and associated, like the present Naga megaliths, with elaborate rituals and the cult of fertility, as is indicated by their phallic shapes.....T. Bloch classifies the monoliths into Chessman, Y shaped and buffalo horn types. The ornamentations of the former type are floral and geometrical, and sometimes the ornamental bands hanging down the columns have the carvings of swords or daggers. The most striking feature, apart from the hemispheral capital, is the band, carved round the neck of the columns. On the latter type there are animal designs, carved between the three resettes, which have divided each half into separate fields of ornamentations. The figures are those of peacocks, elephants, deer, tigers, etc. The third type, resembling buffalo horns, contain resettes and animal carvings.....The phallic megaliths of Dimapur have close link with the Naga practices.....They show a close affinity between the Kachari and Naga culture and indicate their belief in the cult of fertility and animism."

The royal palace in ruin, the massive Chessman monoliths, the triumphal pillars and sculpted images at Dimapur still command the appreciation of the sophisticated even.

The contribution of the Southern Kacharis to Bengali language and culture deserves special mention. The Barman rulers of Cachar (then known as the Hairimba Kingdom) were not only patrons of Bengali literature but some of them earned fame by composing poems and ballads. Dowager Queen Chandraprabha (mother of Raja Suradarpa) of Maibang the then capital of the Southern Kacharis, in present North Cachar Hills, offered liberal patronage to a Sylhet Brahmin, Bhubaneswar Bachaspaty to translate 'Shri Naradiya Rasamrita' in Bengali 'payar' in 1730 A.D. Maharaja Krishnachandra who ruled over Cachar from 1780 to 1813 A.D. and his brother and successor, Maharaja Govindachandra, the last king of the Southern

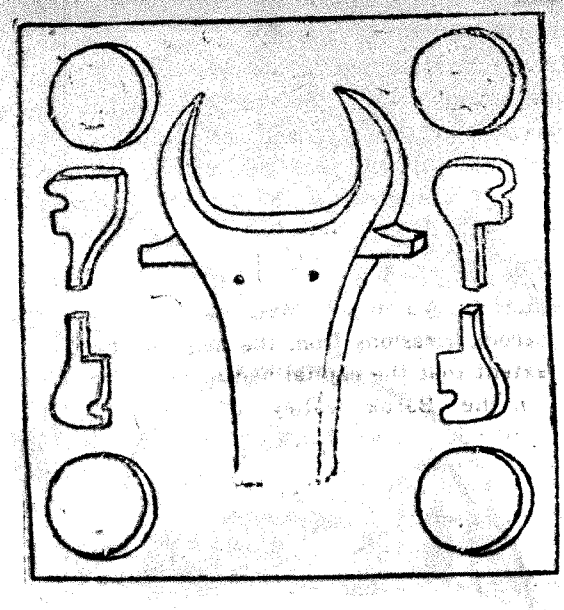
Kacharis, made valuable contributions to Bengali literature. A contemporary Southern Kachari poet, Chandra Kumar Barman, who was considered to be the most outstanding Bodo poet of his time, also composed several poems and ballads in Bengali.

Introduction of Vaishnava ideas into the proto-tribal ways of life and yearnings of the Southern Kacharis led to a flowering of culture. The folk dances of the Southern Kacharis were adapted for the 'Raas' festival by Maharaja Govinda Chandra who himself composed a Bengali-cum-Sanskrit lyrical work, SHRI MAHARASOTSAV GITAMALA —the Songs of the Great Raas Festival. During the raas festival the Barmans of Cachar perform the Maha Raas according to Maharaja Govinda Chandra's instructions. At the circular 'kunj' inside the village Nat Mandap some thirty Barman girls and one boy, dressed in their colourful national costume, perform the Raas dances in accompaniment of Bengali songs and melodious music, for several hours. The dances they present are considered to be the best items of folk dances in Eastern India.

The raas festival was revived in recent years after the lapse of about a century. But it is yet to get proper recognition. Because not only the establishment of the British rule was followed by the fall of Kachari political power but their art, culture and every other manifestation of centuries-old supremacy sank into complete oblivion. Many a beautiful dance style was forgotten—so also melodious songs. Since Independence, however, haphazard attempts were being made for their revival. A former Governor of Assam, Shri Jairamdas Daulatram evinced personal interest in the move during his tenure of office and gave a tremendous fillip to the revival movement initiated by the Nikhil Cachar Heramba Barman Samity, the premier cultural platform of the Southern Kacharis.

The Kacharis belong to the Bodo sub-group of the Tibeto-Burman ethic family. The Southern Kacharis claim relationship with the great Pandava warrior, Bhima, through his Rakshasha wife, Hidimba. This is why they describe themselves as Hairimbas or Herambas.

Etymologically the word Heramba is probably derived from HE DIMA or Herima. Because the



T. Bloch classifies the monoliths into chessman, 'Y' shaped & Buffalo horn Types.

Southern Kacharis are also known as DIMA-CHA or the children of the Great River. (DIMA means Great River in Bodo.)

The legend about their origin says :

"We lived in a land called Ilasaw Kamruli in the very high mountains of dazzling brightness. We lived in big villages of stone. Not far away was a river in a great valley which flowed from the west. We were driven out and got across on a raft fixed to a rope which ran from side to side. We got to a place called Khundilo where the river comes out of the mountains into a sandy plain. Here we settled at a place named after a big tree. We were driven from that place by the Shengphongsarao who had long swords in wooden sheaths."

The Bodos, some historians say, originally inhabited the country north of the Himalayas and west of China. In religion they were worshippers of the symbol of vegetation sprouting or growth in the form of a fertical mound of stone or mud, or in the form of a twig of 'Manasa' or 'Siju' plant that grows naturally with all its stems sprouting pertically upwards with five ribs and five depressions.

In art they were experts in a songs and dances and music and fond of bronze gongs, cymbals and big drums. Sericulture and weaving constituted their home industries the fine products of which used to get easy market all over eastern India and even in far off places.

A section of the Bodos settled at the foot of the Naga Hills on the bank of the Dhansiri river — which they named 'Dima' that is the Big River, and established their capital, Dimapur. A powerful kingdom grow up here in course of time. Till the later half of the sixteenth century the Dimapur kingdom held sway over neighbouring tribal chiefs. However, due to the pressure of the Ahom invaders, the Southern Kacharis were forced to shift their settlement further south-west and established themselves

A Bodo-Kachari dance

in present North Cachar Hills. A new capital was built in the Mahur valley at Maibong by King Meghanarain. Several generations reigned peacefully in this area and the capital was adorned with built-up and rock-cut temples in which the gods and goddesses of the Hindu pantheon were enshrined.

In the close of the seventeenth century the Kachari kingdom of Maibang was subjected to numerous invasions from the neighbourhood to such an extent that the capital had to be shifted to Khaspur in the Barak valley of Cachar. Here the proto-Hindu tribal rulers and their Southern Kachari subjects were completely Hinduised by some illustrious Brahmins of neighbouring Sylhet who declared the Kachari ruler to be a Hindu Kshatriya by making him take a new ceremonial birth from the womb of a golden cow specially made for the purpose, which, of course, was subsequently apportioned amongst the Brahmin priests.

The form of a twig of 'Manasa' or 'Siju' plant that grows naturally with all its stems.

The Southern Kachari rule ended in 1832 when the last king, Govinda Chandra died without leaving behind legitimate children and the kingdom was annexed to the British dominion.

Amongst the Southern Kacharis the Dimachas of North Cachar Hills appear to have kept many of their original customs and practices in more or less pure form. The Bodos of the Brahmaputra Valley and the Barmans of Cachar, on the other hand, have become assimilated to some extent into the fold of their neighbouring plains folk.

The Dimachas have even retained their tribal organisation. In the past the organisation of the tribe used to be autocratic but nowadays it is more or less democratic. There is a headman to give the final orders; a minister for land to advise the headman on all matters concerning lands and cattle; a head-boy to keep the youngsters in order; and a head-girl for girls. None of these is a hereditary office.

According to their custom, the marriage price is required to be paid to the parents of the prospective bride. In case the bridegroom and his parents are unable to pay the price demanded by the bride's parents it is usual for the bridegroom to give the equivalent in personal service in the house of the bride's parents.

Actual marriage is celebrated with sacrifices and feasts. Their priests or 'Jontai' perform all the religious ceremonies.

The Bodo-Kacharis have intrinsically beautiful folk songs some of which are sung on occasion of 'Bihu' and other agricultural festivities. The Bihu songs are a call to the indomitable spirit of youth to revel in the resurgence of life which is the Bihu.

The spirit of Bihu is invoked with appropriate dances and songs. In the dances it is usual for the young men and women to group separately, both the parties carrying on a contest of songs. It turns out to be the prototype of a drama, the motif being the coming of the rains, the sprouting of vegetation, the propensity for fertilization in human beings as in the earth.

Apart from the Bihu songs, the Kacharis have preserved the wealth of oral literature. There is a long semi-historical ballad of Kamaladevi Mahadevi, the valiant Kachari queen who led her people against Ahom inroads. It describes the grief of the queen when the Ahoms attacked her people.

There is also a rain-making ballad which describes the creation of the universe with its various elements. The recitation of this ballad is supposed to cause rain.

Although the present Kachari society is patrilineal, traces of matriarchy still survive along with a substratum of megalithic culture.

Like all tribals women the Kachari woman has a good deal of hard work to perform. Apart from participating in agricultural operations, she keeps the home industries going. Both ordinary cotton and silk yield to her spinning wheel and hand loom exquisite products of such rare excellence that Mahatma Gandhi once remarked, "they weave poems on the loom".

Social relations between the sexes are easy and natural, men and women meeting freely on an equal footing. The household labours, whether in the fields or in the home, are very fairly divided between men and women. The married women are very far from being mere household drudges—a married woman has a clearly defined position, and inside the house she is supreme.

The development of Southern Kachari architecture also deserves special mention. Besides the monoliths, the mediaeval Southern Kachari capital Dimapur contains other ruins of temples and buildings, embankments and tanks. The entrance gateway was beautifully executed and the palatial building of the capital was in good preservation till recent times. There are also numerous scattered blocks of stone and brick pieces with various designs.

The Southern Kacharis like their brethren inhabiting the North were successful in building up a civilization of rare excellence. But the decline of political supremacy was followed by a decadence in all spheres. Rather it will not be wrong to say that decadence which set in led to complete political eclipse. For hundreds of years they remained in a deep slumber which sapped much of their vitality. It is only recently that they have been trying to cast off the cultural lethargy. How far they succeed remains to be seen. But if the revival of the 'Barman Raas' festival is any pointer, all their earnest endeavours will not go in vain. They are undoubtedly assured of a glorious place on the cultural map of new India in making.

Just a face in the Puja crowd,

or a face in a million?

Femila SNOW

guarantees a beautiful complexion,

gives confidence, generates charm.

A must for Puja grooming.

BOROLINE HOUSE • CALCUTTA-3

FACTS and FIGURES 'from the MOON

by SANAT BISWAS

OUR SCIENCE CONTRIBUTOR

MAN'S achievements in space since the first satellites were launched only a few years ago have been tremendous, but they pale to feeble ventures in contemplation to recent achievements towards attaining man-flight to the moon. The number of artificial satellites, space observatories, and spacecraft, annually launched in the United States and in the Soviet Union runs into three digit figures. The design of rockets, satellites, and spacecraft have become highly sophisticated. Their launching, control, and recovery systems have become much more dependable than before. The payloads, range, and flight duration have increased many times. One rocket is now used to launch several satellites at once. High standards have been achieved by radio, telemetric, television and other electronic equipment. The credit obviously goes for attaining such perfection to the distinguished scientists and engineers of the United States of America and the Soviet Union.

However, from the scientific point of view, exploration of the moon is of great significance. Having neither wind nor rain nor significant mountain building activity, the moon's surface is almost changeless. Therefore, moon offers an opportunity to study the matter of the solar system practically as it was billions of years ago.

Such study may help to answer some of the key questions of science, for instance, how did it develop? How did life originate? etc. In order to find answer to these questions, scientists have evolved step-by-step approach to obtain information of outer space and environment of moon prior to man begins his journey to the moon without endangering his life. The investigation carried out in each space probe is of multifarious type involving complicated problems which man may have to face during the journey to the moon.

However, the journey to the moon involves a complex and difficult problem, the total velocity required for a successful manned journey to the moon and back is very high, around 70,000 miles per hour though not at one burst. The distance between the earth and the moon is 240,000 miles. So-called hypothetical neutral point (which is constantly shifting) between the earth's and the moon's gravitational pulls is at 216,000 miles from earth. Therefore, in order to escape the earth's gravitational pull a spacecraft must have a minimum velocity of 25,000 miles per hour. The journey to the moon from the earth may, however, be compared almost exactly to climbing to the summit of a mountain which is say, 216,000 miles high and then falling on the other side of the mountain towards the moon, but for which we will have to descend only 24,000 miles.

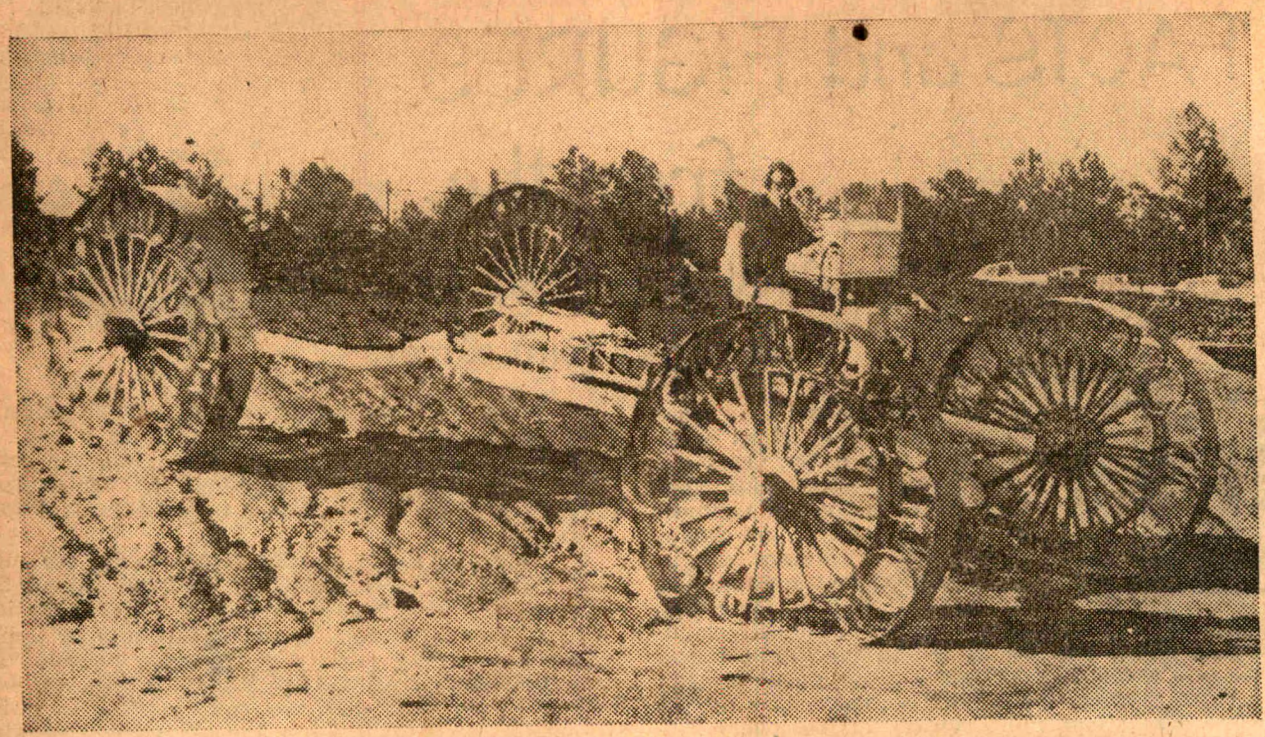
One could do theoretically with 24,000 miles per hour for this, but it is dangerous as it may just miss the summit then, and fall back on the earth. That is why, to get correct velocity for a spacecraft is of prime importance to the successful spaceflight.

Now, as the spacecraft falls towards the moon, its velocity increases till it reaches around 5,250 mph., this being the measure of moon's gravitational pull. This latter velocity is checked only by imparting a retarding velocity of the same amount which is provided by retrorocket. The retrorocket or breaking engine must start and end operating at strictly definite time, otherwise entire system will go wrong and the craft will crash on the surface of the moon. If however, the retro-engine operates a shorter time than required, the speed of the space vehicle will not be lowered to the required value. On the other hand, if the retrorocket operates for a longer period than required, the speed will be reversed and the engine will ultimately hurl the spacecraft away from the moon. Therefore, it is very important to choose the distant from the moon's surface for the retrorocket unit to cease functioning. If this distance is too short, the jet of gases escaping from the engine may make crater on the moon's surface and the spacecraft may fall into it.

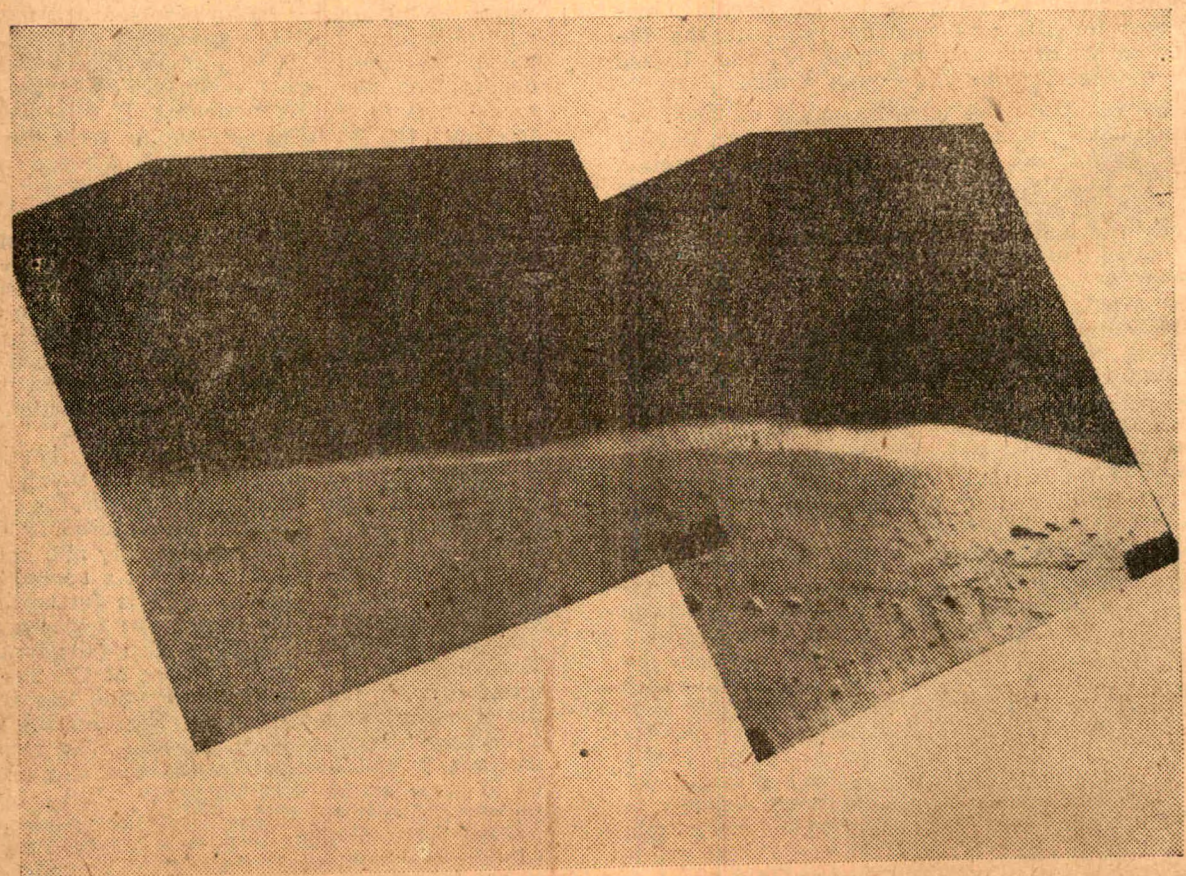
From the successful performance of Luna-9 and U.S. Surveyor, it is quite clear that the duration of operation of the retro-rockets of the above mooncrafts and the altitude at which it ceased working had been calculated very precisely and correctly. The next difficult problem of manoeuvering spacecraft during trajectory to the moon which needs frequent correction from the earth control in order to land the spacecraft on the desired location on the surface of the moon.

The trajectory is also influenced by landing site selection. This selection is based on several conditions, one of them is that the spacecraft's angle of approach to the moon must not exceed 20 degrees off vertical. There is essentially only one point on the moon for each launch day that a spacecraft can land vertically. The landing site is further limited by the curvature of the moon. The trajectory engineer cannot pick a site, even if it falls within his 20 degrees circle, if the curvature of the moon will interfere with a direct communication line between the spacecraft and the earth. Further, the chosen trajectory must not allow the spacecraft to remain too long in the Earth's shadow. Too long a period could result in malfunctioning of electronic components. Therefore, to maintain the spacecraft in the correct trajectory, it is required to carry several hundred commands from the ground control during the flight of 65 hours or so.

The mid-course manoeuvering is far more complex and involves changes both in velocity and its direction of travel. For instance, manoeuvre of Sur-



MOON SURFACE VEHICLE — An experimental lunar roving vehicle is tested on rough terrain at the Marshall Space Flight Centre in Alabama. The vehicle is under development by the Bendix Corporation.



LUNAR MOUNTAINS — Composite of two pictures from Surveyor I shows the crest of a small mountain range about 20 kilometers northeast of the spacecraft.

LUNAR ROCKS AND CRATER — A small lunar crater, a rock six inches high and 12 inches long (15 by 30 centimeters) and smaller pebbles on the moon's surface show in this 600-line picture received June 2 from the Surveyor I spacecraft.

veyor include locking onto the Sun to draw electrical power through solar cells, locking onto the star Canopus for reference, changing course slightly 20 hrs. after launch to get on a true path to the moon, requiring the Sun and Canopus, and carrying out the crucial retro-rocket firing to a slow descend to the moon. Needless to mention here, that, the moon is devoid of atmosphere. So the mooncraft which approaches the moon for soft-landing is deprived of natural atmospheric breaking. Parachuting devices are also useless due to airless lunar atmosphere. Thus retro-rocket engines have to be developed for softlanding on the moon. But it should be remembered that the 'soft landing' method tested on the Earth is essentially different from the one used on the moon.

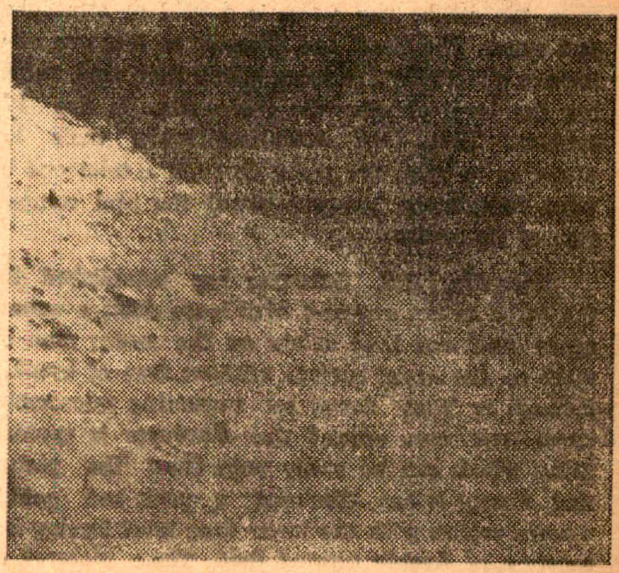
However, manoeuvering of space vehicles in vacuum space is radically different from that in atmosphere. When changing the flight direction in a vacuum additional expenditures of energy need to be supplied. Calculations however, show that for making a turn of 60 degrees, it is necessary to spend as much energy per unit of the payload of a spaceship as is spent for accelerating the spaceship to the speed it has initially. The main difference between a manned lunar mission and the landing of unmanned automatic station is that in the former case the mooncraft must return to the earth. The returns begins with a start from the lunar surface. In order to reach the earth, the mooncraft must attain speed of 2.6 km. per second. If selenographical position of the starting point is unfavourable for directly achieving an earth bound flight course, the mooncraft is first put into a low round-the-moon orbit and then at a definite point, by means of additional impulse theoretical velocity is increased to the required magnitude. Since the moon has no atmospheric envelop, the launching from the very surface may follow a very flat course. This reduces gravitational losses to the minimum where as on the earth the launching is vertical.

Nevertheless, conquest of the moon is a most important stage in scientific progress. Observations carried out by earth satellites have helped to establish a number of facts on the structure of the lunar surface and the physical conditions prevailing on our natural satellite. The lunar craters are truly circular in shape, and only those situated at the edge of the visible side of the moon appear to be elongated because of perspective. There are myriads of small craters on the moon, situated on the vast lowlands of the lunar seas and even on the slopes of the larger craters. Craters with partly destroyed walls can also be seen on the moon. Some craters seems to be submerged into the surface layer of the moon and only their summits protrude. The highest mountains on the moon rise to 9 km. The large dark blotches, called 'seas' are simply 1-2 km. deep depression. Further, the peculiarities of light reflection have enabled us to conclude that the rock forming the surface of the moon is highly porous. The surface material is on the whole uniform in composition both on mountain peaks, their slopes and in the foot hills.

However, data so far obtained, is not sufficient to enable us to decide definitely how solid is the surface of the moon and what weight it can support without caving in. Therefore, in order to get detailed information as regards to the structure, firmness and chemical composition of the surface of the moon, its temperature and other properties, direct observation from spaceship flying very close to the surface of the moon will be required. Moreover, softlanding of the automatic spacecraft on the moon will be able to determine right on the spot the physical properties of the soil and atmosphere of the moon. Luna-9 and U.S. Surveyor have however provided bags of data in this respect and they are creating artificial moon surface on the earth to develop vehicle for the movement on the surface of the moon.

Nevertheless, detailed pictures of the moon's horizon as well as detailed pictures of the surface of the moon have been recently obtained from the U.S. Surveyor and these pictures reveals that part of the lunar surface is somewhat plane and it is

(Continued on next page)



ROCKY SURFACE OF MOON'S OCEAN OF STORMS — This Surveyor I view of the rock-strewn surface of the moon's Ocean of Storms. It covers an area starting about 100 meters from the spacecraft to the outside rim of a crater, several hundred meters distant.

Facts and figures from the Moon

(Continued from previous page)

strong enough to carry load of the spacecraft. On the other hand the automatic space stations of Soviet Union Luna-9 and U.S. Surveyor have not yet explored the moon's surface in detail neither they have established the conditions prevailing on the moon. Therefore, it needs many more softlanding before man can step on the moon. Needless to say, the first manned landing on the moon will be preceded by numerous flights around the moon on orbits passing its various orbits and distances from the surface of the moon and examining very closely and in detail the entire surface of the moon.

Once the man is on the moon, he will have unusual sight. For instance, the sky will be absolutely black, because of the absence of blue background caused by the sun light shinning on the atmosphere. The sun light on the moon is extremely bright, and the red band of the Sun's chromosphere can be seen clearly as well as the red protuberances surging out of it. The silvery corona of the sun, the external part of which can be seen on the earth only during the eclipse of the sun, and the inner part of which can only be studied by special instruments. Furthermore, on the moon the position of the stars seemed to be fixed at a pin point position and does not twinkle. On the earth, in the other hand, stars seem to twinkle only because of changes in the refraction of light due to air waves passing over the surface of our planet.

The data so far received from the moon however, reveals that the moon's diameter is 3476 km. which is no more than one quarter of that of the earth. Its surface area is 14 times smaller than that of the earth and is approximately the same as Asia. The moon is 50 times smaller in volume, and its mass 81 times smaller than that of the earth. Its average density is 3.3 gr. per cc. which is 33.4 p.c. of the average density of the earth. Further, moon rotates around its axis every 27-1/3 days, and takes exactly the same time to revolve around the earth. This explains why the same face is always visible from the earth. The moon is devoid of atmosphere and water. The 'seas' and 'Oceans' as features of its surface geography are more poetic than real, reflecting the level of scientific observation in the 17th century. Then, the scientists made their first attempts to view the moon through a telescope but were completely ignorant about the real composition of its surface.

Recently, U.S. Surveyor has established that the moon is not covered with loose dust; a manned space craft can land safely on the moon; man can walk on the lunar surface without fear of breaking through or 'shot down' by impacting micrometeorites; the area around the Surveyor is typically plane which can be easily seen from the picture, and finally it has disclosed a rock and pebble-strewn region with the lunar floor level having consistency of freshly plowed field. These pictures are all received from the moon and are shown in the above sketches.

Thus, these results will no doubt contribute substantially toward successful manned flight to the moon which is expected to come sometime in 1969.

THIS IS NOT A LIGHT MATTER

Continued from page 212

too are men and whether they like it or not have to submit to being kissed.

Kissing is a happy pastime of youth, but scientists have made some amazing discoveries about what happens when a man kisses a girl. Thus in "good taste" Mr. John A. Gibbon states that in a kiss the pituitary gland produces 'adrenocorticotsophic'. It stimulates the adrenal gland that releases a number of chemicals.

The biologists maintain that with a kiss, the whole body is affected in seconds. The medical journals state that the impact of a kiss makes the blood-pressure of both parties shoot sky-high. There is a swift breakdown of the white cells, the pulse rate quickens, the circulation jumps and the heart action is speeded up. Moreover the pores of the skin open and the perspiration pours out.

Mr. Gibbon states that a girl gets a less thrill from a kiss than man ; but if she is in love the situation is reversed.

OHMS

The potency of the kiss can now be measured. Richmond University of America has a machine called "Osearlometer". It gives the power of a kiss in terms of ohms. In some girls the machine jumps from 0 to 1300 ohms, with a simple touch of the lips. On the average, however, a kiss makes a meter rise from 0 to 900 ohms in most young girls.

British scientists report that one person in 20 produces blue electric sparks when kissing. Physical research laboratory workers confirm this view, but add that only perfectly dry lips produce blue sparks.

A kiss may generate 55 volts of electricity, but the kissing couples may not experience electric shock, because no continuous electric energy is present. A cosmetic manufacturer states that a pressure of a first class kiss is 10 lb. per square inch, while that of a kiss in ecstacy is 25 lb.

Georgiana, the young Duchess of Devonshire introduced kiss into English politics as a vote-catching idea. She hoped that her kisses would help her friend, Charles Fox, to win the Covent Garden seat in the 1784 election. Even porters got their reward for Fox's Tory opponent denounced Georgiana as shameless, but ultimately he also found a rival for her in Lady Salisbury. She set up in the Covent Garden in opposition to Georgiana. Covent Gardens was packed by voters—naturally. But Lady Salisbury was no match in looks for Georgiana, and Charles James Fox won the election by a handsome margin—of kisses.

BRIGHT TIP

A bright idea for those who have a mind to contest our coming election in the year 1967.

This business of kissing, is no light matter. Some would regulate it and others would suppress it altogether as a hurtful and dangerous exercise. William Roye points out, "some women blush when they are kissed, some call for the police, some swear, some bite. But worst are those who laugh." However that may be all will agree with the poet Langland that "a kiss once given is never lost."

We may also quote Lord Byron who in an expansive moment, made bold to announce to the world the comprehensive wish :

That woman-kind had
put one rosy mouth
To kiss them all at once
from north to south.

GOOD MORNING

ANJALI DAS GU

WHY NOT ORGANISED PROFESSIONALISM

By PEARSON SURITA

INDIAN sport has arrived at one of the most important cross-roads in its path and the question of introducing organised professionalism is now to be examined at the highest levels.

Representations and complaints made recently, from several quarters, to the Education Ministry of the Government of India and to the All India Council of Sport have resulted in a trend of thinking which should have taken place a long time ago and it is to be hoped that those who will engage in the research now planned will go into even the smallest, the least important aspect of the question and not be led astray by vested and other interests which have so far done all they can to garrotte the introduction of this system.

I have, for many years, been bewailing and campaigning against the dreadful practice of sham-amateurism which has prevailed in most branches of sport in India. Underhand operations started in the middle '30s when a certain formidable Calcutta club of those days sought to break the stranglehold on Indian football which the British Regimental and other European sides had retained for many years. A number of outstanding players suddenly arrived in the city, one fine day, mainly from the North-West and Southern parts of the country.

From this the practice grew and many other clubs, mainly the larger and therefore richer ones, followed suit. Inevitably, Calcutta, during the football months, became a camping-ground for the flower of India's talent. How they came, how they subsisted, where they lived and how they afforded even the essentials of everyday life, did not appear to concern the controlling authorities at all. They were permitted—indeed encouraged—to play amateur football.

BIRDS OF PASSAGE

Slowly these methods spread to other games and as one intimately connected, in recent years, with the administration of another major sport, I can tell you that there are hardly any—I doubt if there is even one—birds of passage who come and spend several weeks in Calcutta without being remunerated in cash and/or kind. In fact, a senior Committee member of one of the more important clubs said to me some time back: "What's—his—name is refusing to come and play for us this season unless we give him one thousand more than we did last year—and he is not the player he used to be, but he will not admit that". On my remarking that the obvious thing was to forget about him, the official remarked that that was all very well but the club members would rise in a body if the player concerned was not imported.

Cricket, too, does not appear altogether without taint and the annual and swelling numbers of transfers cannot possibly be the outcome of players merely wishing to change clubs to better their prospects or play in more congenial company and so on. The really admirable thing, in sports, is to stick to your club through thick and thin; the fact that the opposite mainly holds good here seems to prove that extraneous forces and considerations are brought to bear.

And so, if we admit that most of our games-players are amateurs in name only—Lawn Tennis provides the most glaring example and principles of "amateurism are flouted openly the world over—then why not organised professionalism"?

The advantages are there for all to see, they have been pointed out again and again and I do not propose to enumerate them here. The disadvantages would be the inability to participate in certain international sporting events.

OPEN COMPETITION TREND

The trend, however, seems to be towards open competition at all levels. Golf, one game in which the rules regarding amateur status are stringent and stringently applied, has for countless years staged competitions in which amateur and professional compete together. That being so, what possible objection can there be to the introduction of similar arrangements in Athletics and Lawn Tennis for instance, and those events like the Olympic Games where amateurs meet at Hockey, Football and other team events?

With this prospect now crystallising, Indian sports bodies would be well advised to reorganise, introduce and foster the professional sportsman. If for nothing else, this would ensure that when the world organisations throw entry open to all "players" and not amateurs or professionals—there will be Indians and Indian teams worthy to take their place and, perhaps, certain honours in this advanced form of competition.

For let's face it; the day of the wealthy, the leisured amateur is gone. Except, they will try and tell you, in Calcutta and one or two other places. Sport is tougher, competition keener, standards advancing every day. Only full-time application can equip you to participate; only professionalism—or shall we call it, an honourable career in sports—can make that possible.

NEW THOUGHTS on AN OLD SUBJECT

By K. K. DAS

IT should be obvious to anyone who studies contemporary sports literature carefully and who follows with alertness the great international sporting events of today that the world of sports is standing at the threshold of an exciting new era. It is not a matter of pure accident that in our age the sciences on Man have become active, that philosophers and scientists are making attempts to conceive a new image of the world, a new ideal of education. It is significant that the modern sociologist is willing to alter the old-fashioned basic principles of his field of study, that the psychologist has begun to draw a picture of our youth which is nearer to reality.

The common factor in all these new trends is that greater and greater attention is being paid to the essentiality of physical education, of sport. I must hasten to add that it is not so much the biological side of sport which has become the hard core of the various discussions and studies as its spiritual side—the educating character of sport. We have begun to look upon sport as a cultural phenomenon. In our age, the non-physical educator, the non-athlete, the pedagogues and the sociologists, contribute a great deal to the deeper understanding and the cultural establishment of physical education and sport. This fact ought to stimulate the physical educators to study the questions and problems of sport with more accuracy in order to understand them spiritually.

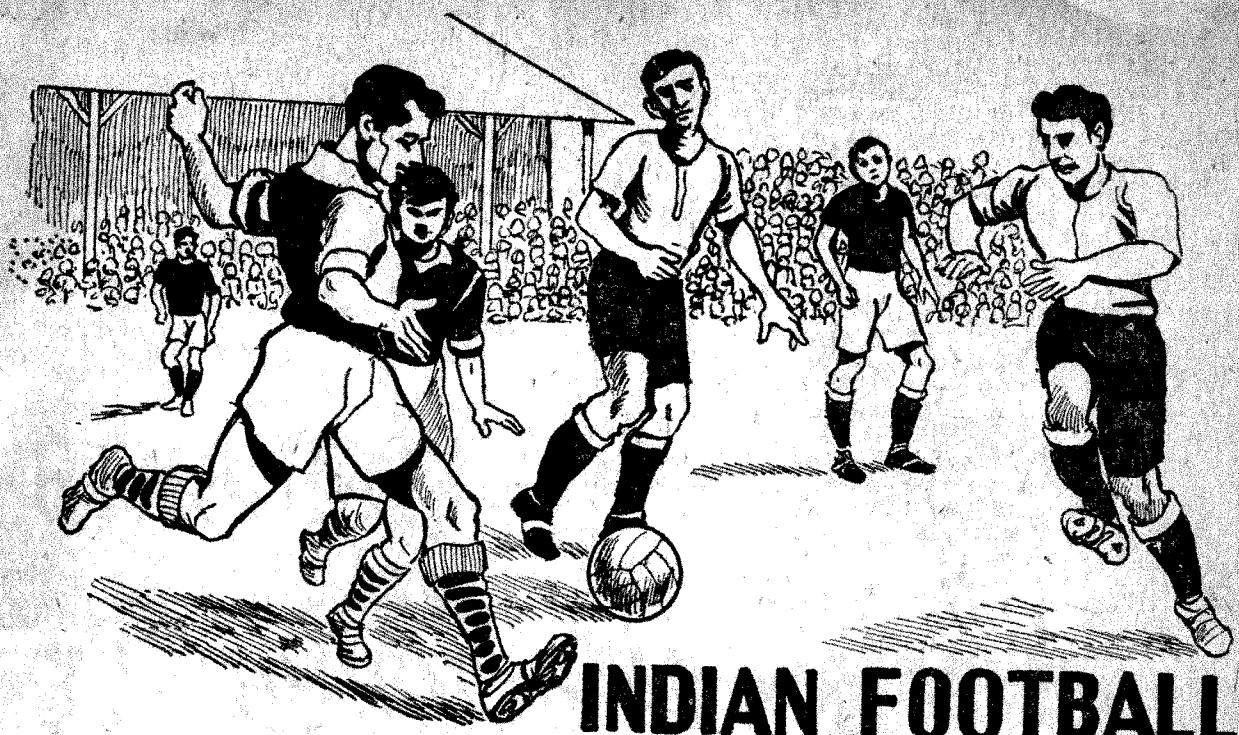
It is a generally accepted concept today that sport for biological reasons is not enough. Our endeavour should be to seize the whole man and contribute towards the development of his personality. In sport, the decisive thing should be "man". This brings forth a new, a different attitude towards sport. It is not the sports grounds nor the sports apparatuses which give final shape to sport but man himself. The leading idea of the methodology of sport no longer is, "What are we able to do with all these apparatuses?" but "What does man need ?"

A fair knowledge of the intellectual and spiritual condition of man during the different stages of the development of his personality is being attempted today by the physical educator. This has brought out a new conception of sport, which, in turn, has had some decisive effects. The sciences dealing with Man have changed their attitude towards physical education. For example, anthropology is going to form a new basis for physical education and sport. The effort now is to connect sport with the culture of our age, as was done in ancient Greece.

SELF-EDUCATION

"A mere physiological-medical determination of sport," says a German educationist, "is no longer sufficient; that would mean sport without ego, without principles, without an educational effect." A similar Russian view was expressed by Chomenkow and Stepantschonok : "We are convinced of the fact that there is never to be a coaching or training without education at the same time." It would be interesting to investigate why methodizers and practical men have begun to call for this educational attitude. The thinking today is that an education which allows everybody and everything to adopt its own course and which does not demand anything, should be left behind. On the other hand, "helping by demanding" consciously emphasises the principle of tangible achievement, which is connected with each true physical exercise. Every young man needs to draw parallels, needs victory and defeat for a balanced growth of his personality. In this way, the youth experiences his own limita-

(Continued on page 230)



INDIAN FOOTBALL in Retrospect

By KARUNA BHATTACHARJEE

IT is a well-known fact that football was introduced in our country by the men and officers of the East India Company, the British Army and the Navy and the European professors that came to India to join the Indian schools and colleges in the wake of the spread of English education in the country. The role of the I.C.S. fraternity with regard to the introduction, promotion and popularisation of this game is also not negligible.

Calcutta, being the capital, principal port of call, chief trading centre and the most important place so far as beginning of the English education in India was concerned, was lucky to see the members of the British Army and Navy and the European traders playing this game in this ancient city since about the 1850's. The game caught the imagination of the local people in no time and a few private clubs soon started playing it in private compounds and available open spaces.

But the game derived its real encouragement in the precincts of the colleges through the good offices of the European professors and a good many college football clubs came into existence in the 80's and 90's of the 19th century. The student community having taken it up, football soon became the most popular game in Bengal.

With the growth of football and formation of various clubs came the urge for testing their skill against each other and organizing the game in the proper manner. This inspiration came principally from the European community and competitive soccer, limited to bona fide clubs of Calcutta, came into existence with the birth of the Trades Cup in the year 1889. It was run by representatives of the competing clubs under the Rules of the Football Association of England.

With the institution of the Trades Cup began the first open football competition in India because the Durand tournament which started in 1888 was limited to Military teams only. Indian clubs started making their presence felt very soon thereafter. In 1892 Sova Bazar Club earned the distinction of beating a Military team for the first time in the history of Indian football. This created, it is reported, a great sensation not only within the country but in England as well. Nationals in 1900, St. Xaviers (Calcutta) in 1893, Medical College in 1894 and 1895, Shibpur College in 1896 and, of course, Mohun Bagan for three successive years from 1906 to 1908 also earned the distinction of winning this trophy from amongst a host of civil and military European teams to prove that the Indians had, within this short time, become equally adept in this game.

BIRTH OF I.F.A.

While Indian football had just about passed the adolescent stage, another important happening gave a very timely spurt to the already growing enthusiasm of the players, the spectators and the administrators alike. This was the formation of the Indian Football Association in the year 1893. This Association was initially established with the idea of starting a bigger competitive soccer tournament which would attract other strong combinations, these then being entirely military combinations, from all parts of the country. The control of the Association, which was soon affiliated to the Football Association of England, was initially in the hands of the European enthusiasts of the Calcutta Clubs.

A very eventful career, connected intimately with the growth of Indian football, began with the start of the I.F.A. shield competition in the year 1893. This was only a very natural sequence to the increase in the number of clubs (Indians and Europeans) and their demand for more competitive football. Calcutta Football League was started thereafter in the year 1898. It is well-known that this League competition, initially restricted to European

clubs only, were declared open to a limited number of Indian teams (two only) and thereafter without any limit (from 1925 onwards) as to the number of Indian clubs. This, needless to say, was due to the higher and still higher achievements of the Indian clubs in local football.

Almost simultaneously with the I.F.A. two other major football tournaments, the Durand in Simla (from 1888) and the Rovers in Bombay (from 1891), were also there. The Durand Cup however, as has already been stated, was, in those days and for a long time thereafter, restricted to Military teams only. Similarly the Rovers Cup, now run under the W.I.F.A. but then run by the Rovers Club of Bombay was a purely European affair being played only amongst the Civil and Military European teams of Bombay. The Indian clubs, it is reported, in and around Bombay had no interest in soccer then.

It can, therefore, be concluded that Indian football in its formative stage and up to about the thirties of the present century flourished only in Bengal under the very active guidance and management of the Indian Football Association which after consolidating its position at home (in Bengal) took up the noble task of popularising the game in the country. Its efforts in respect of forming a national controlling body, so prophetically foreseen by stalwarts like the Maharaja of Santosh and Shri Pankaj Gupta—since the year 1934, bore fruit at last by the formation of the A.I.F.F. in June 1937 in concurrence with Army Sports Control Board.

HISTORIC YEAR

Till, however, the formation of the A.I.F.F. it may be noted that I.F.A. (Bengal) was the only authority for controlling the game in the country and that even after the formation of the A.I.F.F., I.F.A., till to-day continues to have a very eminent position in the administration and control of the game in India. This undoubtedly is due to the fact that playing standards achieved in the fields of Calcutta have so far been the correct index of the standard of football in the country. Indian teams of Calcutta continued to show their might in their tussle with the then reputed Civil and Military European teams. The climax was reached when Mohun Bagan, a purely Bengalee team won the I.F.A. shield in the historic year 1911. Considered to be a rare feat for an Indian team in those days this unprecedented victory created a sensation not only in the country but outside as well.

The real birth of Indian Football is identified with this unique feat achieved by Mohun Bagan in the historic year 1911. The victory was the biggest ever for Indian football and was very eulogistically commented upon by well-known newspapers like *Daily Mail* and *Manchester Guardian* of England and the *Free Press* of Singapore. This lone victory over the best British regimental teams not only further consolidated the position of Indian football in the country but gave the much-needed impetus to look for higher and still higher achievements. This resulted in a few successful inroads into the finals of the three leading tournaments in the country by Indian teams following the great achievement of 1911 till such time the British Military teams left our country after achievement of independence.

Simultaneously with these achievements and with the consolidation of its rightful and hard-earned position in the country Indian football also started looking forward to venues outside the country for coming to grips with foreign teams. The first venture of such a nature and a few others thereafter showed the very keen interest of the Bengalee footballers and of the I.F.A. (Bengal) in this respect. The pioneering work was done in 1924 by a purely Indian bare-footed side known as the Bengal Gymkhana. The players were picked up from the local clubs of Calcutta such as Mohun Bagan, East Bengal, Bhowanipore, E. B. Railway, Wari, Town Club and Sporting Union. This team maintained an unbeaten record against the pick of Burma, Straits and Java including a great victory over a first-grade Dutch Football team, Hercules of Batavia (now Jakarta).

The very creditable performance of this team inspired three more visits to these South-East Asian countries in the years 1925, 1926 and 1927. The last three visits did not prove as successful as the first one but these did conclusively establish that the standard of Indian football was as high as, if not higher than, that obtaining in the South-East Asian countries. These successes prompted the I.F.A. to organise three more tours to Ceylon, South Africa and Australia in the years 1933, 1934 and 1938 respectively. Majority of the players composing these teams were Bengalees and almost all were Indians playing in Calcutta.

All these years the Indian teams played barefooted barring one or two exceptions. Not that there were no booted players in the Indian teams

of Calcutta those days but their number was very limited and when the quality of football was concerned, it was the barefooted footballers who scored. These qualities of barefooted footballers, namely jugglery and skill of the bare toes and their speed, received high praises in foreign countries. The visits to Ceylon and South Africa were crowned with phenomenal success and these created a lot of popular interest, particularly the one to South Africa where the huge Indian crowd were highly elated at our success. Indian football could feel legitimately proud that they could serve a great cause, namely the upliftment of the prestige of the oppressed Indians in South Africa, in their humble way, through football.

From 1924 to 1938 a period of good 15 years, may be very aptly called the most remarkable

period of barefooted football so far as its contact with foreign countries are concerned. During this period mastery of the bare toes over the ball and the unfettered speed of the barefooted footballers were unanimously admitted to be of the highest order by all the countries that our players visited, so much so that the exploits of these teams are fondly remembered in these countries (Straits, Burma, Ceylon, South Africa and Australia) even today.

About the impression that barefooted footballer made even in the not too successful tour of Australia the *Sydney Sun* wrote in 1938: "Of the 85 nations where soccer is played none has yet been able to produce players able to match it in pace with the barefooted Indian Team." The same paper went on: "With five exceptions the Indians, all of whom are small in stature, played without boots. Bandages only were worn over their insteps and ankles. These however proved no handicap to the visitors who were responsible for the best showing of tricky footwork ever seen in this country."

Yet another reputed newspaper, *Truth* of Sydney, wrote:

"The toe-ball of the Indians was an eye-opener. They have ball control par excellence. They waste no kicks. They flash into position like nobody's business and attack in bewildering fashion".

This is no mean achievement on the part of barefooted Indian footballers who played under difficult weather and other conditions in foreign lands. It can, therefore, be concluded that the pioneering work was well done besides gaining valuable experience.

The broken glass pieces in the playing fields of Surabaiya and Petermaritzburg, the below zero temperature in Cape town and stone-hard black clay playing grounds of Melbourne, however, made the Indian footballers conscious of the limitations of barefooted football. It was realised that without boots Indian football had no chance of successfully competing in international football as the heavier booted tackling by the opponents and unfavourable ground and weather conditions turned out to be a great handicap for barefooted footballers. Back home, the players and the administrators alike started thinking of introducing compulsory booted football without any further delay.

VITAL DECISION

Some time, naturally, was spent in taking a decision on this issue. The administrators could not be blamed either as this was a very vital decision indeed. It meant beginning the whole thing afresh by sacrificing the very hard-earned skill and speed of barefooted football. Legislation could also not be introduced at once as football with boots could not be learnt in a day. Hence barefooted football continued side by side with booted football for still some time more. Sincerity of efforts in this respect of the players was also lacking as they were more happy without boots, so much so that Indian players were seen playing barefeet even as late as 1952 in the Helsinki Olympics. Booted or barefooted Indian Football continued on its onward march by winning the Asian Games football championship in 1951 (the year of inception) and the Asian Quadrangular tournament for four years running in the years 1952, 1953, 1954 and 1955. Supremacy of Indian football was firmly established amongst the Asian countries, though internationally we remained somewhere near the bottom where unfortunately we still are. This supremacy however, received a serious setback in the next Asian Games at Manila in 1954 where Indonesia beat us squarely by four goals to nil and in our poor showing in the Olympics at Helsinki (1952) where we got a severe 10-1 drubbing at the hands of Yugoslavia.

Boots have been made compulsory since 1954 but limitation of the Indian footballers with boots was amply demonostrated firstly in the Manila games and thereafter in U.S.S.R., which country was visited by an A.I.F.F. team in the year 1955. The strong Russian combinations both in their own country and during their visit to India the same year amply

showed us that we were far from making the grade and too far below the international standard. From 1936 onwards and particularly after the second world war, i.e. 1948 onwards, Indian footballers were lucky to see a good few reputed foreign teams from England, Sweden, Germany, Australia, Russia, Czechoslovakia, China, Burma, Pakistan and Ceylon playing on our home grounds. But while doing fairly well against our closer neighbours our players were not able to do half as well, if not worse still, against the European teams.

In spite of doing not too badly in the Melbourne Olympics India was placed fourth the supremacy of Indian football in the East dwindled till the same was revived by a great victory in the Asian Games at Jakarta in 1962 against heavy odds. All these go to prove the very unsteady and ephemeral nature of the standard of Indian football. Occasional victories here and there and dismal performances on some other occasions the latest one being the thrashing Iran gave India in the Pre-Olympic games of 1964 should set us thinking as to why we are not able to build up our national side on firmer basis and to give it more solidarity and stability.

To me it appears that no proper attention has yet been given to devise practical ways and means for improving the standard of Indian football. From the various visits to foreign countries and from the games played by foreign visiting teams performing in our country we have so far only learnt that we are not able to match our footboll skill with that of the continental sides and that they are our masters. To be quite candid our best has not been able to touch the fringe even of the high standards achieved by the Germans, Swedish, Czechoslovaks, Yugoslavs and Russians and that there is very considerable scope for improvement in our play. It is a pity that the opportunities which are not quite inconsiderable, have not produced the desired result inasmuch as our players have not been able to avail of them to the desired extent.

When we come to think that from 1948 onwards till to-day, a period of good eighteen years has failed to produce the desired improvement one naturally pauses to think about the reasons why football is the most popular game in India now. The number of active footballers and important

playing centres are also quite considerable. Yet any European team is considered to be good enough to give our national side, not to speak of our State teams, a thrashing any day. The prolific practical demonstration of the visiting teams in respect of the very basic requirements of trapping, passing kicking, inter-changing of positions remain neglected and of physical fitness the less said is better. So many times we have had to witness an absolutely tired Indian combination pathetically trying to stop a foreign team making frequent inroads into our area in the second half and utterly failing to stop them from scoring goals as and when they liked.

LACK OF THOUGHT

That we have not been able to take lessons from the manly, skilful and purposeful exhibition of soccer of the foreign teams even after good 18 years of frequent contacts with them reveals an utter lack of proper thought given to the problem. Sporadic attempts have been made to coach our boys by qualified or, more correctly, half qualified coaches but no effort has so far been made by our authorities to get together youngsters with promise, collect them in the different football centres of the country and to give them proper and sustained training under qualified coaches.

Naturally the selection of our national teams are invariably made from amongst the reputed footballers with a few years of playing experience for State teams behind them principally on the recommendation of the State authorities. These ready-made players are collected at a short notice for about a month or even less at a particular place prior to any important international engagement and the selection is made on the basis of their past reputation only, ignoring their present form, physical fitness etc. The selectors cannot be blamed either as the short period for which the prospective players are placed at their disposal cannot, by any stretch of imagination, give them the correct indication as regards their form.

It is really a pity that with so many skilful players in the country we are not able to harness them and to teach them football on correct lines. All that is necessary is proper planning. There is no dearth of enthusiasm over this game in the country. Enthusiasts and lovers of this most popular game pay liberally to see the games in the different playing centres of the country. Sports Councils have been formed practically in all the States for promotion of sports. Yet all the available resources have not been channelised to devise concrete ways and means for improving the standard of this game.

The little efforts made are the result of confused thoughts and ideas. It is no use experimenting with the latest formations of the team like 4-3-3 without imparting proper lessons in strategy of the game. Similarly it is no use asking the players to play for 90 minutes without ensuring their ability or in other words making them physically fit to do so. To do this we have to progressively increase the duration of the game remembering all the time that merely increasing the duration does not help but along with it what is needed is good opposition which alone increases the stamina. It is debatable whether we should or should not shift our season from summer to winter or from day to night under floodlight avoiding the oppressive sun or to limit the number of games to be played to one or two per week.

One thing, however, is indisputable. If we aspire to compete for international honours we have to make arrangements for collecting the proper material from schools and colleges and keep them under systematic training for a number of years to teach them not only the skill but along with it the most essential of all requirements, namely, cent per cent physical fitness of every individual player.

Skill and physical fitness can be ensured only when we rear them up in the proper atmosphere from their early youth. Skill comes with practice and devotion. Physical fitness is intimately connected with moral and mental make-up and a sense of pride inherent in us: the pride to play for a reputed team, the pride to represent the State and the highest pride of representing one's country. This sense of pride once properly injected in the young minds can do wonders. With so much material in the country, why must we despair? All that is necessary is proper planning and re-orientation of the whole set-up profitably following the lines of the comparative new-comers to world football like the Russians or the Latin American countries.

New thoughts on an old subject

(Continued from page 226)

tions and learns to know himself. Contest is the most valuable means of self-education. That is why sportsmen have a remarkable trend towards simplicity, truth and naturalness. Closely connected with the idea of contest is unselfishness, the renunciation of earthly profit, guided by the purest "egos" as the inmost motive.

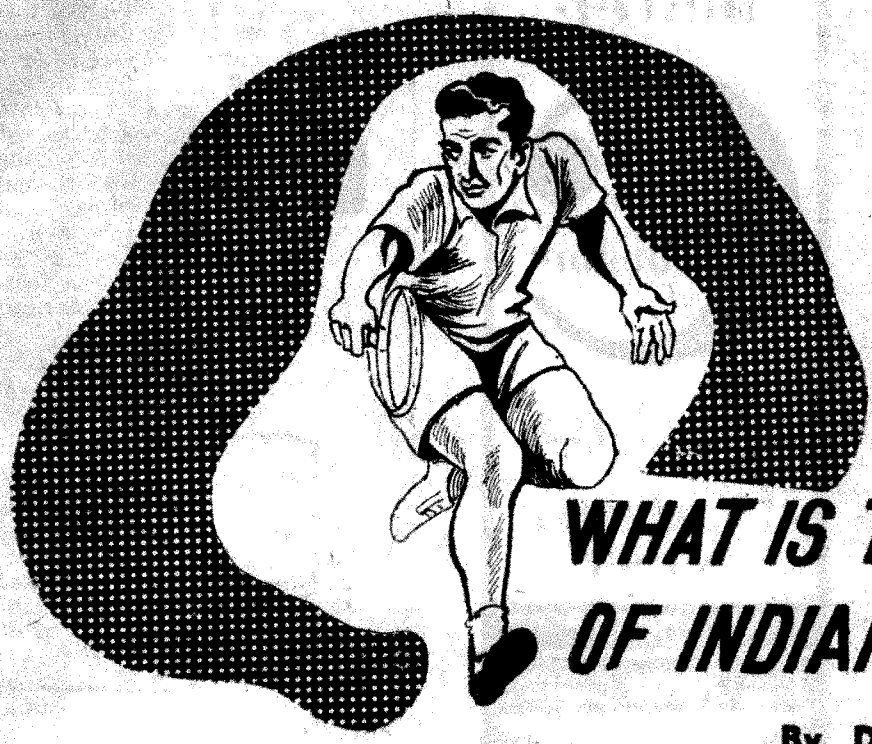
Simultaneously, it is fully appreciated that the deeper understanding as well as the dissemination of the philosophy of sport internationally is of the greatest importance for peace and amity. New ideas and different methods enrich sport in theory and in practice but, like philosophy, these are not treated as secret weapons but soon become common property. Sport, which is extremely national, belongs to the past. It was of importance in the age of the founding of States and corresponded to the national spirit of the nineteenth century. It is fully realised now that national individuality, heritage and customs are in no way in opposition to nationalism.

ORIENTATION

It is time that these new tendencies, the new orientation of sport, the spiritualisation of sport, the emphasis on the principle of unselfish achievement — all these should receive enthusiastic reception from the academic youth. These new trends, which are expanding over the whole international areas, should be led by a scientific approach towards physical education. Every subject, every movement needs science in order not to go astray. It is impossible for physical education and sport to be developed further merely by means of experience; they need more scientific guidance than any other movement of our time.

Are our physical educators convinced that physical exercises — understood and carried out rightly — can be the source of a true renovation of the outlook of the academic youth? It is about time they were, for this new ideal of education alone will give physical education its rightful place in the whole field of education. It should be accepted that there is no education possible without physical education. After all, there can be no ideal higher than that of the founders of the Olympic movement, which aims at :

an aspiration to perfection;
an effective education which begins at the body;
an active help to the individual towards the goal — the good, the true and the beautiful.



WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF INDIAN TENNIS?

By DILIP BOSE

WHEN Ramanathan Krishnan, our former National Champion was at the height of his career, mingled with our tremendous pride in Krishnan's most impressive wins and close matches with the world's top-notchers, was the sneaking fear and nagging worry "After Krishnan, who ?" For Krishnan had taken and kept Indian tennis at very nearly world class and the dim future only hazily showed two youngsters of any promise—Jaideep Mukerjea and Premjit Lall.

While Mukerjea and Lall were undoubtedly talented and promising, the void between them and Krishnan was too wide. This was later proved when Krishnan's tennis started failing. One could see his standard was not quite as good and yet he kept Mukerjea and Lall comfortably at bay.

With the end of Krishnan's career in sight we see Lall and Mukerjea have performed very creditably and fulfilled much of their earlier promise. The responsibility of upholding Indian tennis abroad rests very squarely on their shoulders. While we know they are there for the next few years let us ask ourselves now : "After Mukerjea and Lall, who ? Or even "who is our third string in the Davis Cup ?"

While we do have S. P. Misra, Vinay Dhawan and Shyam Minotra. Balram Singh etc. all of whom as youngsters have promised much, they have never quite fulfilled that promise. Moreover, the gap between their class and that of our Nos. 1 and 2 is again vast. This inevitably produces a weak link in the chain. Also Misra, Dhawan and Minotra, according to "tennis age", can no longer be considered "youngsters". They are mature now and may not go further.

To provide a third link to our Davis Cup team and perhaps, more important still, have a few more players of a good class, to step into Mukerjea and Lall's shoes when they retire, without letting the country's standard drop, the answer would be ; look among the juniors, take one or two of them, and make him the third string in the Davis Cup team. Giving a youngster, a teenager, a place in the Davis Cup team and giving him chance to "season" while we have good players to carry the main burden, is the only answer, I feel and one that ensures an investment for the future of Indian tennis.

We have quite a few promising young boys, among them Albert Sillivan. Khan, Narender Singh, Gaurav Misra, Chiradeep Mukerjea and Taher Ali. Let us pick from among them and give them a chance to face the "baptism of fire" early. Only then will they show their worth later, and ensure a string of players of good class fighting healthily for ranking instead of the foregone conclusion of almost having their positions in ranking "reserved" from well ahead and probably for years to come, as is the case now.

Only from quantity can one get quality. The search among schools must continue, children caught early, given extensive training in discipline in mind and body, physical education and the best possible scientific coaching, to remove once and for all, this nagging question "what is the future of Indian tennis ?"

OUR OFFER
IN THE
FESTIVE OCCASION

Cockatoo Brand Flour
Rose Brand Atta

MILLED BY
THE HOOGHLY FLOUR MILLS CO. LTD.,
4, Bankshall Street, Calcutta-1.

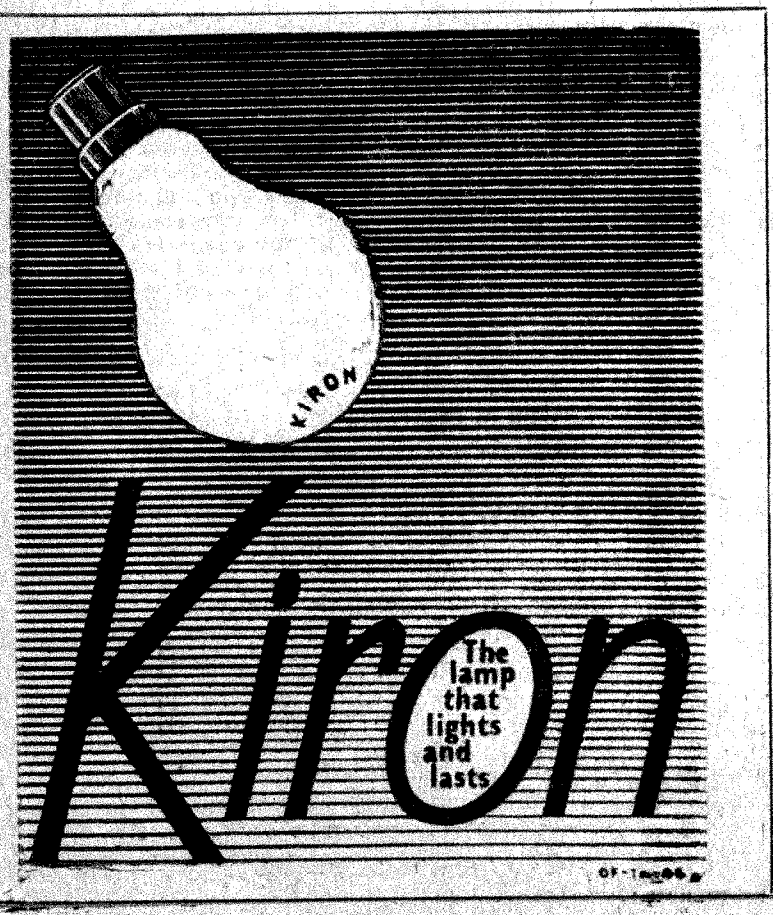
Sole Selling Agents :
CHAUDRI & COMPANY
4, BANKSHALL STREET,
CALCUTTA-1.

Lantern Brand Flour
Horse Brand Atta.

MILLED BY
THE UNITED FLOUR MILLS CO. LTD.
4, Bankshall Street, Calcutta-1.

for better
Comfort
"Sankha Padma"
VEST
ESTD 1922
D. N. BOSE'S HOSIERY FACTORY
CALCUTTA
Show Room | Hosiery House | 55-1 COLLEGE STREET, CALCUTTA

Keshut
Herbal Hair Oil
With Natural Perfume
Prepared from extracts of Kesutte Leaves.
Unfailing preventive for epilepsy, brain complaints, hair diseases and similar ailments. Sound sleep at night is a speciality.
Nirjas Calcutta-1



BOOK YOUR COPY
& SAVE Rs. 7/-

THE NEARBOOK OF INDIAN EDUCATION,
1966
Editor : *ARUN GHOSH*

Pre - Publication Price : Rs. 25/- Post Publication Price : Rs. 32/-

Indispensable companion to the teachers, Students, Educationist & Research Workers.

EDUCATIONAL ENTERPRISERS :
20A, Radhanath Mullick Lane
Calcutta-12, 34-2047.

The Interrupted Maiden Voyage

By SANTOSH SENGUPTA

O talk not to me of a name great in story :
The days of our youth are the days of our glory;

IN that higgledy-piggledy collection of shanties we delighted in calling our home town, we had enough sun to bask in, and fresh air to breathe. And when it rained you knew it rained. But for names great in story you had better look out in some other place. The two thousand souls we knew had just names to call them by. But each had his days of youth to recall, not of laurels but, perhaps, of "myrtle and ivy", and a lot of other things too. We grew up happily in that extremely circumscribed world of namelessness. We were happy being young.

Of myrtle and ivy some other time. One portrait of youth was Sunil who used to punch coconuts out of the husks with sheer unaided fists. He was admitted to my class in the pre-Matriculation year, though several years older than I. He came to live with his mother, a lady doctor who had a posting in our town. His short, stocky physique was like an ebony carving, and the bulges in his biceps and pectorals could scare stiff even the biggest bully of the school. But it was so deceptive, because at heart he was like a boy and almost as comely as a mudfence.

I didn't care that Sunil was backward in his studies, but began to admire him within weeks of our acquaintance because he could do so many things I didn't dream of ever doing. He could climb a coconut tree like a lizard, and swim across the deep and kilometer-wide river like a water snake, at right angles to the ferociously strong current and through whirlpools. At home he was farmer, gardener, dairyman, cook, architect (of thatches), carpenter, and blacksmith, all rolled in one. Out of doors he was fisherman, wood-cutter, boatman and God knows what not. How I wished I was like him. I clung to him all the time of the day to see him absorbed in his one hundred and one hobbies and interests.

"I haven't the money," said Sunil one day, "but I have an eye on the magnificent shimul tree in the land of Kesto Barik. I wish I could buy it."

"What for ?" I asked.

"I would make a dugout and launch it in the river."

He took me to the three-acre land on the outskirts of the town. There were mangoes, and jacks, neem and sessals, and undergrowths of ferns and hog-plum, but towering high above all was the shimul (silk-cotton) with a trunk circumference of about sixteen feet.

"Never seen such a gigantic shimul," said Sunil. The trunk would make an incomparable dugout, in which we could sail on an Atlantic expedition."

I kept waking nights musing on the tree, and thinking of a way. Nothing would be more wonderful if I could make a gift of it to Sunil. For me, of course, it was like asking for the moon, but I did not give up the search. Finally I called on Sunil and said, "Come on. Let us approach Kesto Barik and negotiate it."

We asked Barik if he had a mind to sell the tree. Greatly amused, Kesto winked at us without taking the hookah off his lips. "You have a customer, do you ?" he asked.

"Yes, we want to buy it," we said our voice trembling.

Kesto Barik almost let fall his hookah, we so startled him by that innocent offer.

"You mean you—you will buy it!" pointing to us both.

We could not utter another word. He said, "Yes, you may. Do you know the price?" We nodded no. "Two hundred rupees," he said. (Equivalent of two thousand rupees of today). We beat a hasty retreat, very much deflated. I could have persuaded my father to give me five rupees, and that after prolonged entreaties. But two hundred rupees !

"That bloke keeps counting his chicken since the match factory has purchase office opened in the town. They are paying any price for shimul trees," said Sunil. "And he is going to get that price."

I can't explain it now, but it happened. Three days after, the match factory wound up its purchase

office from the town, and we called a conference of class-mates at the local football grounds. I briefly outlined Sunil's plan and appealed for contributions to a fund with which to buy the tree as a joint enterprise. A total of thirty rupees was promised on the spot, and we also hoped for some donations.

We buckled up our belts and met Kesto Barik, again. Without any preamble I said, "Come, here is a clean offer of fifty rupees. Give us the tree."

"Will you boys go mind your lessons instead of thinking yourselves too smart to make bargains," he said.

But we were desperate. "You can't hope to sell it to the match factory now," said Sunil.

"I will chop it and make fuel," said Kesto Barik, "so get going, you ripe-in-the-greens."

So we got going. But the dugout and the expedition never for a moment left my dreams. But we had nothing to do, because it was after all his tree and he was free not to sell it at our price. We were very depressed indeed.

And again, I can't explain this too, but it happened. The turbulent river that washed the feet of our town had a notoriety for erosions. It was so erratic in th's propensity that even the wisest old man of the town could not predict when the river would start eating its banks, and in which area, or for how long. The monsoon set it in in about a month. After some time we had our Puja vacation. Suddenly one morning we saw the river swollen to the brim to make the other bank almost invisible. It flowed in a tremendously rapid current, roaring and foaming and washing away vast islands of floating water hyacinths.

We still had not an inkling of the godsend it was carrying for us. At night I woke up to the sound of distant booms somewhat like intermittent cannon fires. Something flashed across my mind and I jumped erect on my bed and opened a window. Which way the booms were coming from ? South-east, there was little doubt about it. That way was land of Kesto Barik and if the booms meant—Oh could it be ! It was, we knew the sound. Erosion!

I sat the rest of the night, and hardly the light of day had dawned when I opened the door, and started running. I stopped only when I reached the river bank. Our shimul tree was about half a mile from the river. In one night the river had swallowed a quarter of a mile along the entire length of the town's outskirts which was fallow, inhabited land. The tree was now a quarter of a mile from the river. Two more days at the most, and the shimul tree will be in the river.

We gathered together and met Kesto Barik at 8 a.m. "Dada, you are selling the tree, aren't you ? To us I mean," I said.

"Well, why not," said he, "but let us settle the price first. You are all educated, and sons of gentlemen—"

"That we are. Come, here is twenty rupees."

"Twenty ! You offered fifty even a month ago."

"That was before the monsoon," said Sunil. "It is different now. If you don't sell it to us, in two days' time it will be the river's."

He sucked h's hookah excitedly and thought a little. "No, I am not going to accept twenty rupees."

I remember even today, that just about that time there was a pause in the booms. Perhaps the erosion had stopped. He could wait till another monsoon. We left him and again sat in conference. We kept sending hourly messages to him to intimate to us if he had made any decision. Every time the messenger returned with a negative answer. By evening we had stopped sending messages.

Early next morning I heard my name called out near the front door. I was not sleeping at all, and all night the river had a fresh orgy of erosions. It seemed the thundering booms had never stopped for once. I was very much expecting a call, and coming out I saw someone waiting for me. "Come to the river bank. Kestoda is waiting for you". I knew he would be waiting, and hurried to meet him. There, upon the trunk of the felled shimul tree he sat, his face buried in his cupped palms. Perhaps he was weeping. He could not find a buyer for his tree, and at night when he returned to his land, the river was fifteen feet from the tree. He

With feverish preparation the ropes were tied round the enormous lumber.

had been there since then, axeing down that giant shimul with the help of his nephew.

He lifted his face and looked at me with blood shot eyes. "Now it is seven feet. By mid-day it will go to the river. I could not find anyone to buy it. All night I worked separating the trunk from the branches. Now I can't move even. Where shall I find men to remove this monster to a safe place ? So here it is, you may take care of it if you are willing." And then he really wept.

I ran to Sunil and called up the other chums. Two long extra thick ropes were procured, and carrying them on our shoulders, and hiring a few labours we returned to the river. With feverish preparation, the ropes were tied round the enormous lumber. The other ends of the ropes were carried to a safe distance, where we waited for the final chunk of earth on which the log lay, to be sucked in by the rolling, roaring, raging river.

In about an hour the crack appeared like a thin, sinuous hair, and we held the rope tightly. The crack widened slowly, till it gaped, and finally with a loud thundering crash the chunk fell with the log, leaving it floating in the water.

We let the current sweep the log away, following its course holding fast to the rope. We were taking it to a creek about a hundred yards away. We reached the creek soon and with a vigorous pull made the log veer round. With a little maneuvoring it was steered into the creek where the water was still. We dragged along up the creek till we reached the shallow part where the lumber was docked. We gasped and perspired profusely, and stretched ourselves on our backs on the lush, spongy turf on the green bank.

We were back to it in the afternoon. The job was to lift the log—sixteen feet long by sixteen feet in circumference—from water to dry land where the "ship building" operation was to go on. Two long bamboo poles were slipped under the log and placed along the slowly rising sand bank in a parallel position. Then we tugged with all our might at each rope which remained tied to the log. The incline was not very steep—it was almost level. And with a little joint effort the log slid along the smooth bamboo poles. We kept pulling till the log left the water and was sufficiently high on the bank of the creek where the water would not reach even at its maximum level. There we left it, making it over to Sunil's charge.

"Now you can start work and make us the precious craft in which to sail on our expedition, "I said. Our Atlantic was of course a natural lake —a beel, that is—into which the water of the river spilled during floods through another creek about three miles downstream. It was quite big—about six square miles of still water, with vast floating carpets of water lilies and water haycinths, and wild ducks and cormorants wheeling above. Where the water was shallow, rushes and other semi-aquatic plants like reeds and arum lilies jutted out in random strokes of brush on the blue waterscape. After the rains, when much of the water dried up, tall kash grasses grew to heights of ten feet for miles, and at flowering time the tall flower stalks resembling magnified white feathers and, growing thickly for miles, looked like a sea of cream. It was then a haunt for giant storks and countless flocks of bitterns and herons and other birds living near water.

The log achieved, Sunil sat down to work without any ceremony. It was a treat to the eye to see him at work. His tools were simple, an axe and a measuring tape. Early in the morning he started, and went on hewing and hewing, trimming of the log to shape. He stopped for lunch—it was brought to him from home which was near the creek. A rest of an hour, and he was again at it with his axe till dusk. We procured four slender bamboo poles, pitched them round the log and made a canopy of an old, torn bed linen, to protect him from sun and rain. It held the scorching rays of the mid-day sun quite all right, but was no good against a shower of any intensity. It rained quite often and he was drenched all over without minding it. He knew one thing—axeing and axeing.

The log took the shape of a boat in about seven days. It was yet a solid log. It took two weeks more to dig out the hold, and a regular boat emerged from the shimul trunk, giving concrete shape to our dreams—and more particularly Sunil's dream.

All these days we kept him in good cheer by giving him company in batches. We sat on the turf and watched live sculptured black basalt at work and told him stories. He listened and put in a word now and then, but all the time never did his axe cease in his hands. The digging over, he set to trimming and streamlining it. The rough surface was planed and sandpapered off. The boat was complete.

He made four oars and the day of its launching came. We met at the creek one morning, and there was not much of coconut-shell breaking or invoking the water god Varuna Dev. Instead we just laid our hands on the boat and pushed it with main force. It was much lighter now compared to the whole log, and slid smoothly to the water of the creek, and when it was afloat, we felt prouder than vikings.

We got aboard, six of us, and Sunil was at the helm. He slowly piloted it along the creek, as four of us played the oarsmen. Near the mouth where the creek met the river it was quite deep and broad. The sight of the river and its majestic flow so enraptured some of us that they laid the oars to rest, stood erect on the boat and danced.

The boat tilted to one side, and Sunil shouted, "Hey ! not like that." But the caution was not welltimed, and the dancing tempo rose from lago to allegro. We did no twist then. The boat had another violent tilt, and a quick swing to the opposite direction. "Hey", shouted Sunil. But his voice was drowned in a chorus of "Hurray". A third swing and the boat tilted with its brim touching the water, and splash—it drew a hundred gallons of water. In the swing back, the other side touched the water and drew another hundred gallons. And before Sunil could say another "Hey" we were going down along with the boat.

Sunil threw away the oar and jumped into the water heading straight to where I was vainly beating my hands to keep me floating, and gulping profuse quantities of water. All the other boys were swimming ashore, and I thought I was nearing my end. With a deft tug of his left hand Sunil lifted my head above the surface, and held it like that. With mighty strokes of his right hand he crawled ashore gripping my hair with the left.

I was still dazed when I was on hard and dry land dripping all over, but did not forget to say the words that I had to say : "Don't tell father, or anybody else, you see. I mean all of you. Keep it a secret just to ourselves."

I thank them even today, and most of all Sunil, that the secret was well guarded from my father till his death. As for the Atlantic expedition, it is another story. But the saddest part of it is that we did not pay Kesto Barik full twenty rupees. We paid him only fifteen.

SWEETS & TOFFEES

JAMES LORD & SONS LIMITED
CALCUTTA-1.

NATIONAL PRIDE !
HOWRAH KUSTHA - KUTIR
An Institution with Over 72 Years' Reputation for
The Successful Treatment of
LEUCODERMA
Anaesthetic Patches, Eczema, Psoriasis, Dermatitis & other obstinate skin-diseases.
Free medical advice obtainable on request.

Founder :
PT. RAMPRAN SHARMA,
1, Madhab Ghosh Lane, Khurut Howrah. 'Phone : 67-2359
Branch : 36, Mahatma Gandhi Rd., Calcutta-9.

PHILIPS complete 75 years

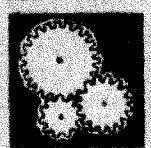
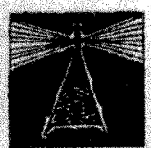
Starting out in 1891 with the manufacture of a single product—the incandescent lamp—Philips today make and sell products that find application in nearly all sectors of modern society. In its primary field the Company makes over 40,000 varieties of lamps; it makes electric irons, shavers, gramophones and records, radio and television sets, electron microscopes, X-ray equipment, computers and hundreds of other devices, simple and complex, as tiny as a transistor and as huge as a synchro-cyclotron.

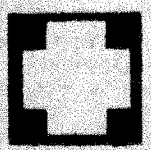
Product range and superiority, research and development, rate of growth—all these considerations make Philips outstanding in size and performance. What makes Philips unique is the Company's international character. 90% of Philips' sales, 65% of Philips' assets, 66% of Philips' employees are outside Holland.

And, everywhere, Philips operate in close integration with the economy of the country. Nowhere more so than in India where Philips seek to serve the nation's economy in many diverse ways and thereby help improve man's industry and his environment.

75 YEARS OF PROGRESS
PHILIPS
1891-1966

IN INDIA SINCE 1930



Philips are constantly working for progress in education, industrialisation, communications, entertainment, health, agriculture, research and in everyday living.

JWTP 3381

SARATCHANDRA the writer with a MAGIC TOUCH

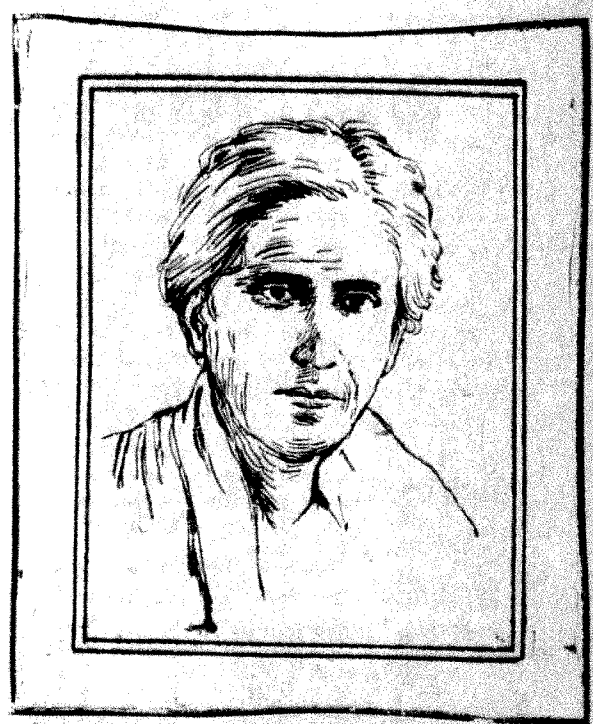
By HIRANMAY BANERJEE

WHEN Saratchandra was ready for entering the arena of Bengali Literature Rabindranath Tagore had already established himself as the master of the show. He had stormed the hearts of his readers by the high quality of his writings and had deeply entrenched himself there. His gifted pen wielding uncommon powers had built up for him a mighty empire which covered all possible fields of the literary world. There was no vacuum left where a new aspirant could look for a seat. Even the world of fiction had not been left unconquered. In the nineties of the last century he poured out dozens of short stories from his pen which established his reputation as one of the greatest short story writers. By 1903 he had produced his first mature fiction. His 'Chokerbali' created a regular sensation among the reading public by its daring plot and fine execution of the same.

No wonder, therefore, that Saratchandra hesitated to enter the arena to contest for honours even in his own special field with this giant. When he gathered enough courage to enter it, he put in a very timid appearance and then for a long period of time withdrew from the scene altogether. His first novel 'Bardidi' was published serially in 1907 in 'Bharati' the household journal of the Tagore family, but he did not allow the editor to publish the name of the author until the last instalment was out. The quality of the writing to his agreeable surprise, roused the curiousity of inquisitive readers who started speculating about who the writer might be. Some even ascribed the authorship to Tagore himself. We can very well presume that this reaction must have been a heartening experience to Saratchandra. Even so, he did not have the heart to repeat his performance and like the timid writer that he was, beat a hasty retreat from the scene.

After that it took a lot of coaxing by his friends and admirers to persuade him to get over his timidity and start publishing his writings again. It was as long after as 1913, a lapse of half a dozen years, that he agreed to contribute regularly to the Journal 'Jamuna'.

This hesitation on his part is understandable. As an aspirant to literary reputation he was fully conscious of the formidable character of his task. A writer of rare excellence was already in possession of the field and, therefore, to be able to make an impression he had to produce writing of high quality. On the other hand, he was equally conscious of his own limitations. He knew that he lacked the imagination and the ornate literary style of Tagore. In fact in the very first page of his famous book SRIKANTA (First Part) he candidly confesses to this failing. He says in a humorous style that he lacked the power of imagination to such a degree that the face of a beautiful woman never revives in his mind the image of the full-moon nor does the bounty of beautiful hair on her head remind him of the dense dark clouds of the rainy season. He, thereofre, knew in his heart that to achieve success against such handicap he had to forge a new weapon. And forge he did.



Otherwise how can we explain his dazzling success no sooner than he started writing his stories in the 'Jamuna'? From 1913 onwards his pen poured out in unceasing stream novel after novel each of which bore the impress of quality and won new admirers from amongst his readers. 'Palli Samaj', *'Srikanta'*, *'Charitraheen'*, to name only a few, were in this crop of his first harvest. He shot into the horizon with the brillance of a comet, not to run

away this time, but to stay on as a permanent luminary. He had by now shaken off his timidity after becoming conscious of the power wielded by the weapon he had forged. Recognition was not slow in coming. By 1916 he had established his reputation so well as a novelist that Gurudas Chatterjee the proprietor of the Journal 'Bharatbarsha' engaged him as a regular contributor to his paper by providing for a monthly allowance. This enabled him to give up his job in Rangoon and return to Calcutta to devote himself exclusively to the service of literature.

One naturally wonders how he achieved such grand success. There is no doubt that there is an abundance of what Tolstoy calls the infective quality of art in his writings. The emotions depicted in his stories are easily transmitted to the reader and in consequence the aesthetic emotion is easily roused. It hardly comes from his style for, he writes a very simple style indeed. It has to be sought elsewhere. It appears that it is the result of the combination of several factors, which in his own wisdom he selected and blended for his use. An attempt will be made to survey them below.

Evidently, his stories are based more on experience than imagination. There is little play of imagination in them. They are down to earth stories taken from common folk. We came across such characters in different walks of life. Perhaps here he turned his own limitation into a point of advantage. Having little capacity for imagination to draw from he depended on his wide experience to give his stories a realistic touch. Perhaps we get his own view on the subject in the advice given by Kironmoyee to her brother-in-law Divakar in his novel 'Charitraheen'. There she chastises him for his failure to write a story successfully and ascribes it to his lack of experience making him depend entirely on imagination. Evidently she reflects her creator's own views.

The second factor that operated in his favour was perhaps his sincerity. This also conforms to Tolstoy's view of what constitutes good art. According to him, one of its component elements is the sincerity of the writer. As an author Saratchandra is out and out sincere. He does not write what he does not feel or believe. He speaks from his heart so to say. That is perhaps what makes his stories so touching. We may for example, refer to the story of Mahesh the bullock whose master, the poor peasant could not save it from the inhumanity of his landlord. We may also refer to the touching appreciation of the romance that grew up between Abhaya the neglected wife and Rohini her friend in 'Srikanta'. These appreciative remarks move our hearts, because they have been sincerely felt and spoken directly from the heart.

Thirdly, to my mind he had an eye for the beauty of character. His searching eye never fails to spot it out among the common people he came across in his day to day experience. That perhaps explains the paradoxical character of his writing; namely, the common people are made the seat of uncommon virtues. Moral quality is what is conducive to the general welfare of the community. Any action which indicates the presence of other—regarding virtues, exhibits such quality. Action signifying courage, selflessness, compassion is great and charms our heart. That is why the principal characters of the Ramayana have continued to be enjoyed by the general mass from the very ancient times. Their appeal is universal and abides through ages. It is not essential that the characters of the stories should be models of virtue. On the other a mixture of vices with virtue adds to strength of its appeal.

By way of illustrat on we may take the case of Indranath who makes his appearance in the first part of 'Srikanta'. His character moves us deeply because virtue and vice blend in him. By common standard he would be called a wicked boy, but the courage that he displays in unmasking the 'Bahurupee' dressed as tiger when mighty durwans beat a hasty retreat at his mere appearance, moves us deeply. His spirit of adventure and his daring exploits to bring relief to his Annadadi will continue to charm the hearts of his numerous readers.

Above all things, Saratchandra revelled in depicting women as lovers and in the process built up one of the finest galleries of such characters. His observing mind discovered many facets of this theme and enabled him to use them as models for the different characters he introduced in his novels. The same type is seldom repeated. With delicate skill he moulded them differently. Very likely, Tagore was aware of this unique capacity of this gifted contemporary of his. What makes me speculate this way is the fact that in one of his poems Tagore makes a common Bengali girl appeal to Saratchandra to help her win an unequal contest with a very gifted uncommon girl for the heart of her lover. Was not Tagore capable enough to achieve this miracle himself? What else actuated him to assign this task to Saratchandra if not his appreciation of the special gift of Saratchandra in this particular field?

By way of developing the point we have tried to make out above, we may perhaps make an attempt to survey the different types of women lovers, who make their appearance in Saratchandra's novels. Four clear types are easily traceable. They are (1) the stead-fast lover, (2) the revengeful lover, (3) the daring lover and (4) the ambivalent lover.

Annadadi of 'Srikanta' is the example of stead-fast lover. Her story need not be repeated here. Suffice it to say that as soon she rediscovered her criminal husband in the guise of a snake charmer she deserted her family and joined him to share his miserable life. The unflickering stead-fast flame of love that she kept concealed in her heart remained unaffected by the utter misconduct of her beloved. That gave her the courage to defy all social conventions and join an outcast.

Kironmoyee in 'Charitraheen' is an example of unrequited love turned revengeful. The love she bore for Upendra who was a virtuous man to the core could not be responded to by him, but Kironmoyee's one-track mind could not appreciate that and in the fury of her hatred she took the most cruel revenge by spoiling Dibakar a ward of Upendra entrusted to her care.

Abhaya personifies the daring lover who defies all social conventions to respond to the love of Rohini and for justifiable reasons too.

But the finest creation is the character of Rajlakshmi the heroine of the first two parts of 'Srikanta'. Her childhood attachment for Srikanta had without her knowledge subsequently ripened into genuine love for him. And so, when they again met in after life they should have normally allowed their love to run its own course. But the memory of her unclean life in the intervening period had roused in her a desire to live a decent life by adopting a distant nephew and playing the role of a mother to him. This ambivalence of desires is finely depicted in her inconsistent conduct throughout the story. While her heart pined for union with her lover, her desire to look respectable before the eyes of her adopted son would draw her away from him. The lover on his part fully understood her mind and knew when to withdraw to save the situation for her. Herein lies the tragedy of their lives.

HAND TO HAND WITH A LEOPARD

By ARUNA SEN

THIS is not a bait-and-machan shikar story, although it has all the thrill of one, and perhaps something more. A young man (by profession, if it is important for the story, a pleader of a moffusil bar and a small zamindar), a woodcutter, a pair of leopards and no Mausers or Winchesters, is about all that is involved. As we listened to it, repeated almost ritually once every year, we found that it required no gift of speech or craftsmanship to hold us pinned to the tale every time it was retold. And at least grandmother had it not, the art of the story. She just narrated exactly what happened, and we were spellbound.

The time it happened was one when a man past his thirty-five was anything but young. The hero of the story was thirty-six, middle-aged by the standards of the time, a father of six children and buried up to his chin in worldly affairs. But at thirty-six nobody ceases to be young today. Or perhaps he does in the eyes of the teen-ager, just as he did then in our eyes. But we are drifting from the point, and suffice it that we call him a young man whatever the standards of the time.

The small town set in the wild, virgin landscape of North Bengal had a wide and swift-flowing river washing its feet. Beyond the river were vast, continuous stretches of forest terrain, relieved by patches of tobacco and rice plantations, and small peasant villages. A little up, were the foothills of the Himalayan range with extensions of the Terrai, at the time of the story infested with leopards and also tigers.

Every year, towards the end of February the luxuriant growths of shrubs of this region used to be fired at places to prepare cultivable land. With the hideouts burnt down, the uprooted and homeless animals, mostly leopards and tigers, roamed in search of new settlements. Some of them strayed to the fringes of human habitations, and even penetrated into the hearts of villages and small towns, and preyed on cattle and domestic animals.

The river that nearly formed a loop round our town guarded it from the predatory sojourns of these maraud'ng carnivores. But towards the end of winter it dried up flowing in a much narrower stream, and some of these animals crossed it and entered the town. Early one morning, our father, the hero of the story mentioned in the introduction, went out on his usual constitutional, with a lungi and genji on. A neighbour ran up to him, calling his name aloud. "Leopards in your vegetable garden," was all that he could utter gasping and perspiring.

Father hurried back, and when he reached the garden, there was a small excited crowd leaning against the low bamboo fence of the garden. Most of the winter crop were harvested by the time, and four-feet tall "bhang" plants growing wild in the soil made a little forest where a hundred tigers could lie in ambush without being seen at all.

"I saw it enter and hide itself," whispered one.

"It was behind our cowshed before it came here," said another. "It has pugged my uncle."

The garden was about an acre and none was sure of the exact spot where the leopard was. Some clapped their hands, and hawked their throats to scare the animal. No stir in the bush. Then one threw a stone, and there was a roar. In a twinkle it was followed by a lightning vision of an enormous leopard, leaping over the heads of the crowd and landing several yards outside the garden. A few more bounds accompanied by roars, and it was nowhere.

The commotion in the gathering of onlookers can well be imagined. There was a rush to scale the fence and reach the spot where the leopard was. With sticks in hand, they beat the shrubs to settle the question: where the animal was. "Here," said one and "there" said another. An elderly neighbour who would not eat it out of anybody's hands said, "No no it was nowhere else. I can't disbelieve my eyes . . . . . it was there. . . ." and he pointed his forefinger stirring it emphatically

And before anybody knew what was happening, there was another roar, and as if emerging from nowhere, from the nether regions, to be precise was on its hind legs a mass of yellow spotted with black, standing erect like a human being with its fore-paws stretched—a leopard, a second one that had been hiding. Without any ceremony it dug its nails deep in the old man's left cheek, and with a brief pull, tore a steak baring the jaw bones and teeth. Then another caress on his right cheek, and another steak was torn off, doing the same to the jawbones and teeth. The steaks remained attached to the face hanging by two thin ligaments.

In a moment he began to spout blood from the gaping cheeks, and sank like a knead of flour into the soft carpet of weeds. Seeing him in that state the leopard left him and turned to the others, but like morning dew vanishing with the sun rising, they all had vanished, excepting the old servant of the house who could not run, and two sons of the mauled person, who rushed to carry away their fainted father. The leopard sprang on the servant and sat on his prostrate figure, clamping its jaws round his neck, and purring like a cat playing with a mouse.

"The beast will eat him up," said father in horror, and picking up a long slender strip of bamboo, the nearest and only weapon he could find, prodded the leopard's side with it from the other side of the fence.

With an angry growl the leopard released the neck of the servant, looked fiercely at father lashing the "bhang" plants with its tail. And the next thing anybody knew, the leopard left the servant and with another leap launched itself in air and landed on father's shoulder.

He was over six feet and proportionately broad shouldered, with muscles to match. The weight of

the leopard was enough to topple down a Bengali of normal built, but he was different. He didn't fall. Instead with a mighty jerk of the head, he relieved himself of the shoulder-load, and the leopard was thrown a couple yards from him. Having a breathing time, he looked around for help, but lo and he behold! the crowd of about a hundred men had melted away. Not melted away, but retired to a safe distance to watch the unusual duel.

The leopard jumped again to mount his shoulder. Again a sweep, and thud it fell down. He took a few quick back steps, in a bid to reach the back door of a wing of the house which opened on the garden, and was about 30 yards from the fence. But the beast repeated its feat, and jumped, to be hurled back again. A few more quick steps. Uncle, father's elder brother, a podgy man of forty-eight, at this point fetched a long cylindrical soft core of a plaintain tree, and as the leopard took its next leap to land on father's shoulder, he hit it with the most unorthodox weapon, and it smashed itself on the back of the beast. From father's shoulder, the beast jumped to fall on uncle, and he brought him down like a chopped plaintain tree. It didn't bother him more and again made a heavy landing on father's shoulder.

As usual he shook off the weight, and stepped back, and after some more leaps and shake-offs, he reached the outer wall of the wing, and as the leopard stood again on its hind legs to jump, he had some magic intuition. Before the beast could raise itself from the ground, he caught hold of its two forepaws in two steel vises that his palms made, and he held them in the iron grip then onwards, not to let them go even long after the beast was dead as a log.

The real combat started after the paws were caught. Holding them wide apart he pressed the beast, standing on its hind legs, against the wall, and hysterically uttered, "Help!"

No help was coming. Instead, the whole house, particularly the women, began to wail, because they all felt helpless, and took father for lost. They ought not to have considered themselves actually that helpless, because many things could be done, as it was discovered later. But when all was over. The fact is that they all lost their wits, as happens in emergencies. I forgot to mention one thing. There were no firearms in the house, nor in any house within a square mile. The nearest man with a gun was the sub-divisional officer, but he too was away. It was a holiday and the officer had gone on a hunting excursion to rid a nearby village of a prowling leopard. But there were other weapons which could be conveniently used, only if any power of thinking was left in anybody. Instead my aunt, father's elder sister rushed madly to the battle ground, and putting her arms round his waist, she tugged him, crying wildly: "Leave it, or it will eat you."

Without taking off his grips, he kicked her with a back stroke of the leg and she was thrown several feet away. At this moment his grip was a bit slackened, and bending its neck, the beast bit off a slice of skin from the back of his left palm. Writhing in pain, he quickly drew the paws apart to keep his palms at a safe distance from its mouth. Testing blood, the beast gaped its mouth opening a yawning chasm, and slowly moved it forward as if to swallow his head. He held his head back and pushed the beast against the wall, and began to grind it on the plaster. How long it continued nobody remembers exactly today, but it was long enough, and father was on the point of giving in.

Just then a wood-cutter paid his routine call to the house. Those were the days when the use of coke in kitchens was unknown in those far off places. There were stacks of firewood in every house to provide for the year's fuel. The wood was purchased as cart-loads of log, and wood-cutters were engaged to chop them. They took days and weeks to chop the whole lot, and during the period of work, reported daily in the morning and kept chopping till evening.

The wood-cutter, with his axe hung from the shoulder, sized up the situation quickly. He lost no time, and ran with his axe to the arena.

"Hold your head a little to the other side, Babu, or I might hit you," said he. "Hold the paws for a little longer. Babu it is going to be all over in a minute. Have no fear Babu. God has saved you."

Those words, said father later, were like the voice of God Himself. And the wood-cutter, with his bare sculptured upper part of the body, an amulet hanging from a thread round his neck, was God Himself. With a cool calculation, and unwavering hands, he held his axe in position and neatly made an incision with the sharp blade from the right corner of the mouth right to the ear. Then moving to the other side, he made a similar incision on the other corner of the mouth reaching the ear. The distended lower jaw sagged, touching the breast of the beast.

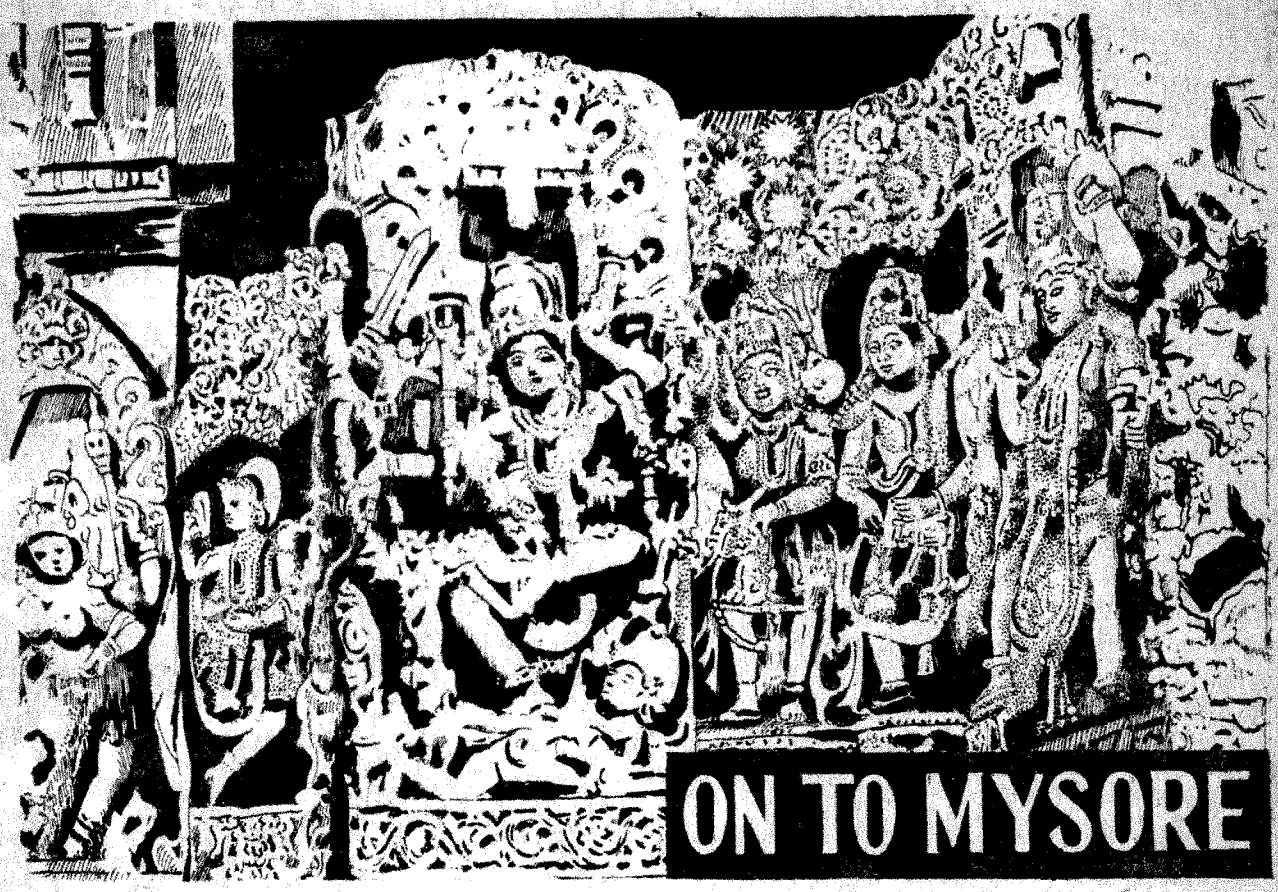
"Now it can't bite you Babu. Have no fear. Its jaws are useless. Hold it a bit longer." With that the wood-cutter raised his axe high, and cautioned father, saying "Mind your head Babu. Have no fear." Then he brought it down on the leopard's head with the full impact of a sledge hammer. The beast was benumbed with the blow, and its head hung to a side. Then quickly the wood-cutter turned round, and rammed on its spine. It broke and the beast folded up.

By that time father too rolled on the ground bathed in blood, but his grip was not loosened, and the paws were still held in a fell grip, although he was fully unconscious. A few more hackings, and the leopard lay dead as a door nail.

What followed is all too familiar to be told in any detail. Wits quickly returned, and in a moment the whole town was assembled in the house. Women rolled in the dust crying and wailing, and beating their brows and there were a dozen neighbours to console each. "Take heart, he will be all right in a week," they said. There were feverish activities running for doctors and first aids.

Someone suddenly remembered. "Ram Khelaon ..... he is lying in the garden!" Everybody forgot about the old servant. He was fetched from the garden unconscious, with two holes bored through his neck, through which blood was still oozing.

The victims were given first aid, and immediately sent to Callutta. That is another long story, but to cut it short, he took two months to recover from the bites, but his left palm dried up, and remained stiff and useless for the rest of the years he lived.



ON TO MYSORE

By J. C. DAS & Mrs. ROMA DAS

"Girt by the Cauvery's holy stream,
By circling walls in triple row,
While deep between, with sullen gleam,
The dreary moat out-spread below."—
Leyden.

MYSORE is considered one of the most beautiful Indian States, and Bangalore, its present capital, is called the Queen of Indian cities. During 17th century, Chhatrapati Shivaji brought Mysore into the limelight, and in 18th century, Mysore experienced the unprecedented domination of Haidar Ali, the famous soldier of fortune, and his son and successor, Tipu Sultan, and till the middle of this century Mysore was being ruled uninterrupted by the Wodeyar Dynasty—the Maharajas. In general, the history of Mysore is the history of the kingdom of Mysore, both in respect of its internal affairs and in regard to its dealings with States, with which it has, during the course of ages, come into contact. It includes not only accounts of its wars, but also of its friendly relations with different States, near and far, and of its commercial and other intercourse with them.

The Mysore State attracted the attention of the English writers, principally with the rise of Haidar Ali. Haidar Ali struck terror in the minds of all and his name created a sensation in England: "I no more trouble my head about who's in or who's out than I do about Hyder Ally or Ally Cawn, than about Ally Croaker." Like many other poets, Leyden was profoundly inspired by the event of Tipu's death to burst into poetry, on the vanity of human wishes:

"In Vishnu's Lotus-feet alone,
Confide! his power shall ne'vr decay.
When tumbles every earthly throne,
And mortal glory fades away."

To quote the prose of Colonel Browning: "A few wretched houses remain where once was a great capital, and the ancient temple of Vishnu looks down, as if in mockery, on the ruins of the Muhammadan usurper." Sir Walter Scott tells us in his novel that Adam Hartley, arriving at Seringapatam, "consumed no time in viewing the temple of the celebrated Vishnoo, or in surveying the splendid gardens called Lallbaug, which were the monument of Haidar's magnificence and now hold his mortal remains." Seringapatam was a beauty-spot. When Adam Hartley went to interview Haidar Ali, who was disguised as a learned priest, he passed through a grove of mango trees, through which an infant moon was twinkling faintly amid the murmur of waters, the sweet song of the nightingale, and the odours of the rose, yellow jasmine, orange and citron flowers and Persian narcissus. Seringapatam also forms the object of a poem by Sir Henry Newbolt in which are the line:

"The sleep that Tipoo Sahib sleeps,
Heeds not the cry of man."

Mysore is proud of her ancient sculpture and

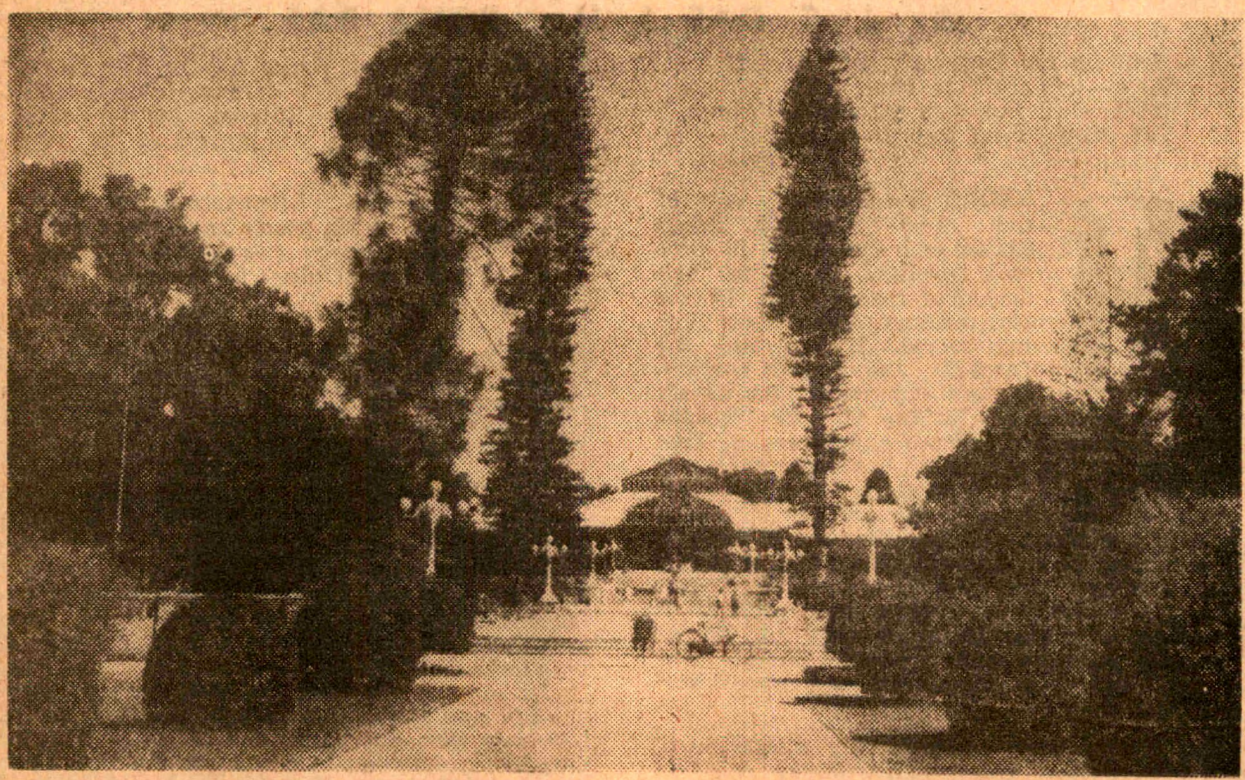
architecture, famous for her natural beauties, and her salubrious climate. Mysore is now one of the most advanced States of the Indian sub-continent.

At what period Mysore (properly Mahish-uru, buffalo town) acquired that name is uncertain. It is so-called with reference to Mahishasura, the buffalo-headed monster whose destruction is the most noted exploit of Chamundi, under which name the consort of Siva, the tutelary goddess of the Mysore Rajas, is worshipped on the hill near the capital.

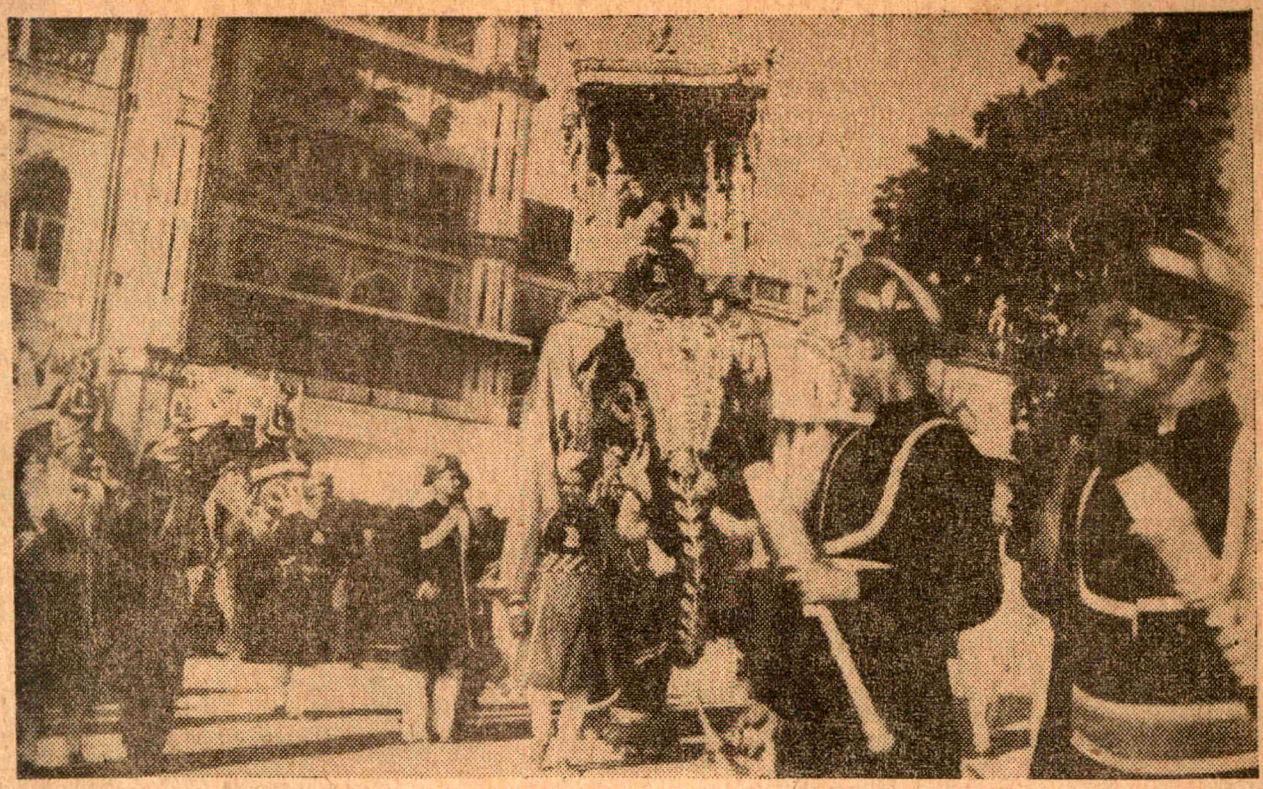
The origin of the ruling family of Mysore is traced to the heroes of a chivalrous exploit, Vijaya and Krishna, two young Kshatriyas of Yadava descent, who, according to traditions, had left Dwaraka in Gujarat, with a view to establishing themselves in the south. On arriving at Hadinad, or Hada-nad (called Hadana by Wilks, but now known as Hadinaru), a few miles south-east of the present city of Mysore, they learned that the chief of the place had wandered away in a state of mental derangement; and that the neighbouring chief of Karugahalli, who was of inferior caste, taking advantage of the defenceless condition of the family, had demanded the only daughter of the House in marriage. To this a consent had been given under compulsion, and arrangements—unwillingly made for the ceremony. The two brothers espoused the cause of the distressed maiden, and having secreted themselves with some followers, fell upon the chief and his retinue while seated at the banquet, and slew them. Marching at once on Karugahalli, they surprised it, and returned in triumph to Hadanad. The girl became the willing bride of Vijaya, who took the title of *Odeyar*, or *Wodeyar*, and assumed the Government of Hadanad and Karugahalli, adopting at the same time the religion of *Odeya*, a Kannada word, meaning, *Lord, Master*.

Inscriptions, however, tell a different tale. These describe the Mysore Rajas as of the lunar race and add that certain Yadava Princess from Dwaraka, the capital of the epic hero Sri Krishna in Kathiawar, came to the Karnataka country, either led by fancy, according to some accounts, or, according to others, in order to visit their family God Narayana on the peak Yadugiri (Melkote) and seeing the beauty of the land, and being pleased with it, took up their abode, it is said, in Mahishapura (Mysore) and became the progenitors of the present Royal family. The story connecting the founders of the Royal House with Hadanaru and making it their halting place seems thus a later invention. It has, therefore, to be dismissed as baseless.

Yadu Raya, or Vijaya, is said to have been eleventh in descent from Yaduvira, of the Atreya-gotra and Asvalayana-Sutra. But of the early period no annals have been preserved until the time of Chamaraja III. He, during his life-time, made a partition of his dominions between his three sons. To Timmaraja, or Appanna, he gave Hemmanhalli, to Krishnaraja he gave Kembala, and to Chamaraja IV, surnamed Bola or Bald (owing, it is said, to a stroke of lightning) he gave Mysore. No male heir surviving to either of the elder brothers, the succession was continued in the junior or Mysore branch. With Krishnaraja I, the direct descent ended. Chamaraja VII, a member of the Hemmanhalli family was next elected, but eventually deposed by the *dalavayi Devaraj*, and the minister *Nanjaraj*. He died as a prisoner at Kabbaldurga in 1734 A.D. Chikka or Immadi Krishnaraja II, of Kenchangod, a younger and distant branch, was put on the throne in 1734 A.D. and died in 1766. His eldest son, Nanjaraja, was directed by Haidar to be installed, but finding him not sufficiently subservient, Haidar turned him out of the palace in 1767 A.D., and took all control into his own hands. Nanjaraja was strangled in 1770, being nominally succeeded by his brother Chama-Raja VIII, who died childless in 1775 A.D. Chama-Raja IX, son of Devaraja Arasu of Arkotar, a member of the Karugahalli family, was then selected at random by Haidar. He died in 1796, and Tipu appointed no successor. But the real



Lal Bagh Glass House, Bangalore.



Famous Dusserah procession at Mysore.

rulers during this period were Haidar Ali Khan (1761-1782), and Tipu Sultan (1782-1799) themselves. On the fall of Seringapatam and death of Tipu, the British Government restored the Hindu Raj and installed on the throne Krishna-Raja III, the son of the last-named Chama-Raja. The British took over the country from him in 1831, but in 1867, a year before his death, Chama-Rajendra X (third son of Krishna Arasu, of the Bettadakote family) whom he adopted succeeded him, being installed on the throne on attaining his majority in 1881. He died at the close of 1894, and his eldest son, Krishna-Raja IV, then a minor, was installed as his successor. And, thus the Wodeyar dynasty continued uninterrupted, and after independence, the then Maharaja, His Highness Shri Jayachamaraja Wodeyar, became the Rajpramukh of Mysore on January 26, 1950.

The present Mysore State, which came into being on 1st November, 1956, consists of 19 districts, roughly covering an area known in our ancient classics as 'Karnataka'. It consists of territories of the former State of Mysore and Coorg, parts of Belgaum district, of Bombay and of Hyderabad and of Coimbatore. The State brings together the Kannada speaking people, previously distributed in five States.

Coorg, which is now a district of Mysore, covers an area of 1586 sq. miles mainly on the Western Ghats. It is rich in scenic beauty and natural resources. Coorg's evergreen forests spread over an area of 517 sq. miles. Coorg's fauna is also magnificent. It is the habitat for tigers and elephants, deer and rabbits. Wild life can be seen in its natural home especially at the Nagerhol game sanctuary exceeding over an area of 111 sq. miles. Coorg is essentially an agricultural country. Coorg's coffee accounts for one-third of India's total production.

Physically, the original Mysore divides itself into two regions—the 'Maidan' or plain country, comprising roughly the districts of Bangalore, Tumkur, Chitaldrug, Kolar, Mandaya and Mysore, and the 'Malnad' or hill country, comprising the districts of Chickmagalur, Hassan and Shimoga. Rainfall is heavy in Malnad tracts, and dense evergreen forests abound in big games forming their characteristic features.

The forests cover an area of 60.91,953 acres. Sandal tree is a State monopoly yielding the largest share of forest revenue. Sandalwood is one of the most valuable productions of the State and, in fact, it holds monopoly in the world market. The Government Sandalwood Distillery is the biggest of its kind in the world, where sandalwood oil is distilled under the most stringent and scientific control.

TOURIST'S PARADISE

From many a point of view, the State is a tourist's paradise, with lovely cities, enriched by shrines and marvels of sculpture. Of all showplaces in Mysore, the Jog Falls take the pride of place. The Jog Falls are at a distance of about 92 miles from Shimoga or 241 miles from Bangalore or Mysore. These are formed by the river Sharavati falling into a mighty chasm about half-a-mile wide and 830 ft. deep. They are four in number, that is, the Raja, the Rani, the Roarer, and the Rocket. With luxuriant vegetation around, it offers picturesque natural scenery. This is one of the world's beauty-spots.

Mysore State possesses many beautiful temples, such as, Chennakesava Temple at Belur, which is 138 miles from Bangalore and is one of the most exquisite specimens of Hoysala architecture. It was constructed in 1117 A.D. by the Hoysala king Vishnuvardhana. It is a single-celled shrine and is noted for its dancing stone figures. About 11 miles from Belur is Halebid, once a flourishing capital of the Hoysala kings. It has the most imposing of monuments, the Hoysaleswara temple dedicated to Lord Shiva. It is a twin-celled shrine with designs of an amazing variety. Nandi Hills, about 37 miles from Bangalore contain some picturesque Hindu

shrines, and is of special appeal to those interested in history as well as Indology.

At the Chamundi Hills, which form an enchanting backdrop to the city of Mysore, there exists the famous Chamundeswari Temple. The huge Bull, on the way upto the Chamundi hill, is carved out of a monolith and is artistically executed with rich ornamentation. The figure, which is 23 ft. long, 10 ft. broad and 11 ft. high, is seated on a terrace facing south. The head is at a height of more than 15 ft. from the ground level. It is said that the bull was caused to be made in 1664 by Dodda Deva Raja Wodeyar of Mysore.

The great annual event of Mysore is the Dasara celebrations held in September-October, which draw lakhs of people from inside and outside the State. The annual Dasara exhibition, which is industrial, educational and cultural in character, forms an important part of the occasion. Twelve miles from Mysore are Krishna Rajasagar and Brindavan gardens with fountains, which are illuminated on week-ends and on special occasions.

The historical Lalbagh at Bangalore, is one of the richest and most beautiful gardens in Mysore State. Apart from the artistically laid-out lawns, flower-beds and fountains, the garden contains a rare and valuable collection of tropical and subtropical plants and fruit trees that attract both horticulturists and sightseers. Besides the lawns and gardens, there is a spacious "Glass-House" situated inside the park. This is an exquisite huge hall artistically built with Crystal glass roofing. The Government Museum at Bangalore, which was established in 1866, is one of the oldest museums in India. Built in red stone, it houses a very rare collection of antiques relating to archaeology, cultural history, numismatics, ethnology, fine arts, industrial art and natural history. The 'Vidhana Soudha' at Bangalore is one of the most impressive buildings built in post-independence India. It is a massive and imposing structure in granite overlooking the Cubbon Park. This four-storeyed ornamental structure, built at a cost of 2½ crores in the Dravidian style with towering columns, captivating frescoes and carvings, is rectangular in shape, and has a total plinth area of over 5,05,000 sq. ft. A short distance from the Fort at Bangalore, by the side of the Venkataramanaswamy temple, is Tipu Sultan's palace. Resembling the 'Dariya Dowlat' at Seringapatam, the palace is a typical specimen of Saracenic architecture. The structure is carefully preserved by the Government as an ancient monument. The Bangalore Palace, built on a spacious site in the style of Windsor Castle, London, with a rich garden and orchard, is situated in the High Grounds to the north of Vidhana-Soudha. Another most important landmark is the Indian Institute of Science (popularly known as the Tata Institute) at Bangalore. This is one of the foremost scientific institutions in the country, and is the priceless gift of the philanthropic industrialist, the late Sir Jamshedji Nusserwanji Tata. Impressively built in granite over an extensive area, the institute has steadily enlarged and developed from year to year and is today the premier institution in the country for post-graduate specialised research and advanced instruction in science and engineering.

GOLD MINES

The Kolar Gold Mines, situated about 60 miles from Bangalore, are an interesting tourist spot. The four mines now under the control of the Government of India have been working continuously for the last 75 years, and three of them have reached depths of over 8000 ft. The deepest working mine on the field, and incidentally in the world, the Champion Reef Gold Mine, has touched 8,950 ft. below field datum. Bijapur, the ancient capital of the famous Adil Shahi kings, possesses many buildings of historical and archeological interest. The chief among them is Gol Gumbaz, the mausoleum of Mohamad Adil Shah.

About 100 miles from Bangalore and 62 miles from Mysore, Sravanabelagola is famous for its Jain Temples and its colossal Gomateswara statue, the longest standing statue in Asia. This greatest monument of the Ganga period proclaims for all time their long sway over Mysore and Chamundaraya's religious faith. The image is 57 ft. high, and was built in 983 A.D. under the orders of Chamundaraya, the Chief Minister of the celebrated Ganga king, Rachamalla. The person whom the statue represents, was according to tradition, the younger of two brothers who fought a duel over the succession to their father's kingdom. He won the fight but generously made over the kingship to his defeated brother. There is a climb of over 500 steps leading to the statue. Once in about 12 years, Mahamastakabhisheka, religious annointing festival of the statue takes place, and draws Jain pilgrims from all over India.

The loftiest among the mountain ranges in the Mysore table-land are the Baba-Budans, the celebrated "Chandradrona" (moon-crator) of the Puranas, a name describing its crescent or horse-shoe form. But the eminence of the range, abounding in charms of woods and water, is not limited to its

(Continued on page 256)

WOMEN in Ancient Art and Craft

By BELA DE

VERY fine picture of India is depicted by the immortal poet Kalidas in his Meghdoot where we get a good idea of the excellence of art and architecture that was the wonder of the world. There are relics of ancient art and one will find them in stone and in caves and in the temples of the North and South India. Compared with other parts of India, Bengal did not cut a sorry figure. Fine arts, music, dancing and painting flourished in Bengal. The period before the advent of the Mahomedan rule in Bengal is generally marked as ancient Bengal. This was a period when Hindu kings ruled over Bengal. The art and craft that prevailed in the then Bengal can be gathered from a few ancient scripts that still exist and engravings, writings and figures that can be still seen on the walls of almost ruined or tottering temples of ancient Bengal and collected from folk tales and folk songs of ancient days that have stood the test of time. Women played no small part in them. And they show the inner virtue and vitality of a particular section of the people or race.

In ancient Bengal as in ancient India the caste system was rigid and a particular art and craft was limited to a particular caste and other caste people had no part to play in it. And so it rose to great heights. In the families where men folk worked on a particular craft, women folk as a rule helped them to make it perfect. This was the general aspect of society of that time when women played a prominent role alongside their male partners in the development of art and craft of ancient Bengal.

Though trite it is true to say that spinning and weaving have been the most prominent art and craft of Bengal since time immemorial. Of course it was not a machine age. There were spinning wheel and handloom for weaving. Women of Bengal were also prominent in this sphere. Very fine textures of cotton and silk were made in Bengal. Women used to spin exquisitely fine thread not only from cotton and silk but also from bark of trees and fibres. The clothes woven from the latter were called by the name of "Dukul". This type of cloth is now extinct but it had a very fine texture, not in any way inferior to the finest cotton or silk textures and this cloth bears some resemblance to the present day linen or such like stuff. A Greek merchant visiting Bengal in the beginning of this era left an account of how fine muslin made in Bengal were on the mart of the world. Bengal's cloths and other fabrics were very much in demand in those days not only in India but also outside. Besides this to a large extent the cloth business was the work of the women of Bengal.

Then comes the art of terracota works which gained prominence in Bengal. The relics of these ancient works can yet been seen in ancient temples of North Bengal and elsewhere. The old earthen utensils, dolls and figures that can still be found in the ruins are admirable for their workmanship and these were the handiworks of women of ancient Bengal. Of course the images of gods and goddesses carved out of stones are now admired by experts for their exquisite beauty and proportion but it is hard to determine how far women had their hand in the execution of these fine sculptural beauties. But it cannot be denied that the standard of culture attained by Bengal in those times reacted even on the women artists and artisans equally effectively. Cottage industry had its place in the society in those days in the sphere of carpentry or smithy. Dolls and toys, small furniture and kitchen articles made of wood were designed and given shape by women.

Besides these articles ordinary household articles like durries, Asans, Sitalpati etc. were usually made by the women. Sitalpati is a fine piece of handiwork and it was so finely executed that it could attract large buyers from far-off regions. The housewives were the embodiment of serenity and utility and they form an unforgettable picture in minds of the men and inspire them even today. Besides these there were "Kanthas" and "Pots" portraying pictures of the tales from the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Bhagbat. The pictures were made of colours of different shades and it was so nicely executed that they appeared to be lively and pleasing. In doing these handiworks the cost was trifle too negligible because the threads were generally drawn from discarded coloured cloths and colours were made from flowers and by women. And this "Sika" which is hung from the ceiling and is used for keeping ordinary household aritcles is a very fine piece of workmanship and this is the exclusive handiwork of the women in all ages. There are various types of "Sikas' which are now commonly called 'Ananda Lahari', 'Phuljhuri', 'Sagarphena' etc. which can please the taste of any fastidious critics of the present day. These ancient

(Continued on page 250)

BUY

MURSHIDABAD SILK

WIDE RANGE OF

COLOUR, DESIGN AND TEXTURE

IT IS CHEAP, DURABLE AND DIGNIFIED

CONTACT :

WEST BENGAL GOVT.

SALES EMPORIA

*

***IN* CALCUTTA :**

7/1, Lindsay Street, Calcutta.
128/1, Bidhan Sarani, Calcutta.
159/1A, Rashbehari Avenue, Calcutta.
18/A, Grand Trunk Road (South), Howrah.

*

***IN* DELHI :**

Bengal Emporium,
70, Theatre Communication Buildings,
Janpath, New Delhi.

*

AT ROURKELLA :

Sales Emporium,
Shop No. 13, Sector No. 2.

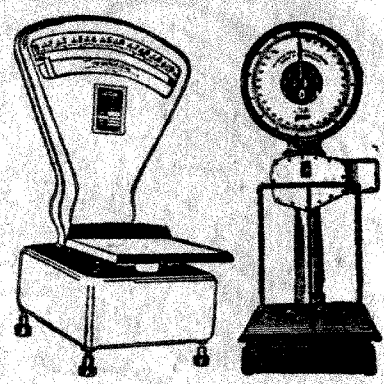
*

Available At All Leading Stores.

W. B. (I & P. R.) Ad. 20183/66

USE

Avenue



Fan Scale Dial Scale

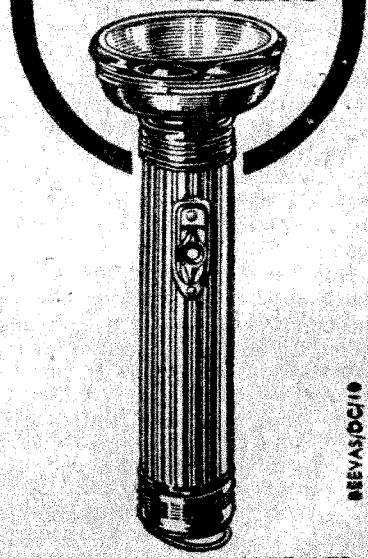
PRECISION
WEIGHING MACHINES

Manufacturers :

N. C. DAS & BROS

10/13, Brindabon Mullick Lane,
HOWRAH : WEST BENGAL
Phone : 67-4547

COMET
sees
right through
DARKNESS

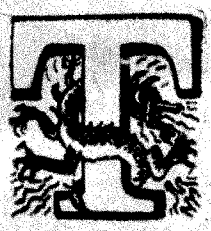


BEEVAS/DC/10

DOZ & CO., PRIVATE LTD.
CALCUTTA-14.

Indian Names for The Regiments of The Bengal Army

By NAKUL CHATTERJEE



THE East India Company first raised its Sepoy units in Bombay, next in Madras and then in Bengal in 1757. Though Bengal's was the latest born, it rose superior to others in rate of growth and in overall size of the Army. Of this army, E. W. Sheppard said, "An army was built up from the people of India themselves, which in the end brought its own country under the sway of its foreign masters". The army which was once famous for its valour and fidelity rose in 1857 in a mutiny which first shook the then Company Administration in India and became the cause of anxiety to the British Crown.

The old Bengal Army was made of different Native Infantry regiments. Every regiment possessed a particular number, a name or designation by which it was known and generally spoken of amongst the sepoys of the Army. The Sepoys knew little about the system of numbering and presumably they did not care for the same. To an Indian soldier the "AKAI" pultan or the "Dahai" pultan (The 1st and the 10th Native Infantry) was not understandable but they were aware of *Gillis-ka-pultan* (1st Native Infantry) or *"Duffel-ka-Pultun"* (10th Native Infantry). The names alluded to different regiments were not meaningless, but every name was associated with a little bit of antiquarian lore which is of much interest. This may be observed that in almost every case the Indian designation of regiment was nothing but a corruption of the name of the officer who initially raised it or of one who was in command for a good number of days. In this connection this may also be remarked that the word *"Pultun"*, the Indian term for a regiment, is a corruption of the French *Peloton* and English *"Palatoon."* How the names of the regiments came into vogue in distorted forms and how the person and place names were mispronounced can be gauged very well from the following examples.

Alexander-ka-pultun. 74th Native Infantry.—So called after Lieutenant-Colonel (afterwards Major General) James Alexander, who was appointed to the command of the corps on its being raised in 1825. He died at Benares on 11th March, 1847.

Baen Baunteer, Barral-ka-pultun. 37th Native Infantry.—Named after Captain (afterwards Major General) Littellus Barrell, who in November, 1798, organised the 3rd Volunteer Battalion, from the right wing of which this corps was formed in June, 1800. The term *baen* was a complete misnomer. General Burrell greatly distinguished himself when in command of the present 2nd Native Infantry during Lord Lake's Campaign; his career was an unusual one, he having originally entered the Company's service as a private soldier. He died in London on the 30th September, 1827.

Baillie-ka-pultun. 20th Native Infantry.—Named after Captain Baillie, the officer who first commanded it, who (as Lieutenant-General Sir Ewen Baillie, Bart.) died at Brussels in August 1820.

Bailun-ka-pultun. 4th Native Infantry.—So called from Captain (afterwards Lieutenant Colonel) Robert Blane, who was appointed to the command of the corps in 1773, and held it for several years with reputation.

Baluntеer Burral-ka-pultun. 39th Native Infantry.—Named, like the 37th Native Infantry, after Captain Littellus Burrell, having been formed from the left wing of the 3rd Volunteer Battalion, commanded by that officer.

Baluntеer, Markum-ka-pultun, 36th Native Infantry.—So called after Captain John Malcolm, who organised and commanded the 1st volunteer Battalion formed for service in Mysore in November, 1798. This battalion became the 1st of the 18th Native Infantry in June, 1800 and, eventually the 36th N. I. Major Malcolm retired from the service in March, 1804.

Baluntеer, Titteelee-ka-pultun. 38th Native Infantry.—Derived its name from Captain (afterwards Colonel) James Tetley, who, in November, 1798, organised the 2nd Volunteer Battalion, from which this corps was formed in June, 1800. Colonel Tetley died at Allahabad on the 11th November, 1820.

Barkur-ka-pultun. 17th Native Infantry.—Named after Colonel Sir Robert Barker, who raised the regiment in 1765. This officer was Commander-

in-chief in Bengal from 1770 to 1773; he resigned the service in 1775.

Bisheshwar-ka-pultun. 58th Native Infantry.—Explanation of this name or its origin could not be traced. Presumably this unit was named after the name of the God "Kasi Bisheshwar" of Benares.

Bole-ka-pultun. 22nd Native Infantry.—So called after Captain Charles Bowles, who raised the corps in 1778 and commanded it until he left the service in November, 1780. Bradshaw-ka-pultun. 34th Native Infantry.—Derived its name from Major (afterwards General) Samuel Bradshaw, who was posted to the corps on its formation in November, 1798, and commanded it for several years. General Bradshaw died in England on the 28th November, 1839. This regiment was disbanded for mutiny in 1844.

Broon-ka-pultun. 31st Native Infantry.—Named after Major (afterwards Lieutenant General Sir George Sackville) Brown, who was appointed to the regiment in November, 1798, and remained with it until 1801. He commanded the late 7th Native Infantry with great distinction during Lord Lake's campaigns. Died at Brussels in December, 1827.

Burdwan-ka-pultun.—2nd Native Infantry. This regiment was raised in the Burdwan district in 1785; hence the name.

Burra Crawfurd-ka-pultun.—7th Native Infantry.—Derived the designation from Captain James Crawford, senior, who died in command of it while proceeding on the celebrated expedition to the West of India.

Cartur-ka-pultun. 60th Native Infantry.—So named after Major Henry, who was appointed to the corps on its being raised in 1815. He died on the 3rd June, 1819.

CALCUTTA MILITIA

Castor-ka-pultun. 53rd Native Infantry.—The regiment derived this designation from Colonel (afterwards Lieutenant General) Henry De Castro, who was posted to it in May, 1805, and was Colonel of the corps for many years. He died in England on the 18th January, 1828. The Calcutta Native Militia was also used to be known as above.

Chota-crawford-ka-pultun. 23rd Native Infantry.—So named after the officer who raised it in 1778, Captain James Crawford, *junior*. This officer rose to the rank of Major, and died at Madras in August, 1787.

Chota, ya Naya Burdwan-ka-pultun. 8th Native Infantry.—This regiment, like the 2nd Grenadiers, was named after the province in which it was raised, the designation *Chota* or *Naya* being added to show that it was junior to the other.

Craum-ka-pultun. 47th Native Infantry.—Named after Captain Philip Crump, of the 2nd Battalion 9th Native Infantry, (now the 1st Native Infantry) who raised the "Levy" from which this corps was formed in 1804. Captain Crump died on board the ship *Union* on the 30th October, 1806, while on his way to England. This is the regiment that was engaged in the Barrackpore Mutiny in 1824. Its place in the line was taken by the 47th then 69th N.I. which on being numbered the 47th Native Infantry, took at the same time the name of *Craum-ka-pultun*, borne by the old 47th Native Infantry.

Cristeen-ka-pultun, 50th Native Infantry.—Derived its name from Captain Charles Christie of the 2nd Native Infantry, who in August, 1804, raised the "Levy" from which the corps was subsequently formed, and retained command until his death, which took place at Saintree, near Mathura on the 30th April, 1805.

Cullenjun-ka-pultun. 92th Native Infantry.—This is a corruption of the name of Major (afterwards Major-General) Daniel Coningham, who was appointed to the regiment on its formation in November, 1797, and served with it until November, 1798. This officer commanded the wing of the late 15th Native Infantry which so gallantly defended Shekoabad during the Mahratta war of 1803. He died in Europe on the 22nd June, 1816.

Dabie-ka-pultun. 24th Native Infantry.—Named after Captain William Davis, who raised the corps in 1779. This officer died at Chandernagore in July, 1780.

Doobye-ka-pultun . 41st Native Infantry.—Derived its name from Major (afterwards Lieutenant Colonel) Simpson Dubois, who was posted to the corps on its formation in July, 1803, and served with it for the remaining of his career in the service. Colonel Dubois was one of the passengers in the ship *Glory*, which, with every soul on board, was lost in the Indian Ocean during the great storm of 20th November, 1808.

Doo-ka-pultun. 15th Native Infantry.—Derived its name from Captain (afterwards Lieutenant Colonel) Alexander Dow, who raised the corps in 1764. Colonel Dow died at Bhaugulpore on the 31st July, 1779.

Duberee-ka-pultun.—51st Native Infantry.—So called from Lieutenant Colonel Philip D'Auvergne, who was appointed to the command of the corps in April, 1805, and served with it for several years. He died on the 31st March, 1818.

DEPORTED TO ENGLAND

Duffel-ka-pultun. 10th Native Infantry.—This corps was named after Captain Vernon Duffield, who obtained command of it in 1765. Previous to his time it was called *Teerbenies-ka-pultun*, after Captain John Trevanion. Captain Duffield was one of the officers who were concerned in the *batta* mutiny of 1766, and he was accordingly removed from the service and deported to England. He afterwards returned to India, in disguise, but was found out at Patna in 1775, and again banished as an "Interloper."

Escotten-ka-pultun. 14th Native Infantry.—So called after Captain James Scotland, who raised the regiment in 1764, and commanded it until he resigned the service in 1766.

Gaurul-ka-pultun. 13th Native Infantry.—A corruption of the name of Captain (afterwards Brigadier-General) Thomas Goddard, by whom the regiment was raised in 1764. This is the officer who acquired so great a reputation for his campaigns against the Marhattas in Western India in 1780-81.

NATIVE SOLDIERS IN SCARLET

Gullis-ka-pultun. 1st Native Infantry. So called from Captain Primrose Galliez, who was appointed to the command of the corps in November, 1763. Previous to his time it was called the *Lall pultun* or "Red regiment", being the first body of native soldiers in scarlet.

Captain Galliez rose to the rank of colonel in the Bengal army, and retired on the 11th November, 1776; he died at a very advanced age in the early part of 19th century, having been severely burnt by falling into the fire when in a fit.

Grand-ka-pultun. 5th Native Infantry.—Derived its name from Captain (afterwards Colonel) Hugh Grant, who commanded it for many years. He resigned the service in September, 1774.

Gowen-ka-pultun. 6th Native Infantry.—So called from captain Gowan, who was appointed to

the command in 1767. He resigned the service in February, 1778.

Guthrie-ka-pultun. 32nd Native Infantry. So called after Major John Guthrie, who was appointed to the regiment on its formation in November, 1798, and was reposted to it on his promotion to Lieutenant-Colonel in April, 1800. Colonel, Guthrie fell in the very first action in which the Corps (then the 1st Battalion 16th N.I.) was engaged, having been mortally wounded in the assault of the fort of *Tuttiah*, on the 18th October, 1803.

Hamilteen-ka-pultun. 40th Native Infantry. This was the 2nd Battalion of the old Marine Regiment, raised in 1802 by Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Hamilton, after whom it was named. This officer died at Amboyna on the 7th September, 1802, of a wound received in a duel with Dr. Bitty of the Madras Army.

Hilliard-ka-pultun, 33rd Native Infantry. Derived its name from Lieutenant Colonel John Hilliard, who was appointed to the corps on its formation in November, 1798, and served with it until his death which occurred at Chunar, in August, 1801.

Hindree-ka-pultun. 52nd Native Infantry. Named after Captain Richard Henry, who was appointed to the regiment in January, 1805, he was for some time in command of it. He subsequently attained the rank of Major, and died in Bundelkund on the 29th December, 1807.

RAISED DURING MOHURRUM

Hosainee-ka-pultun, 16th Native Infantry. This name was derived from the circumstances of the regiment having been raised during the Mahomedan festival of the Mohurrum, in 1765.

Hote-ka-pultun, 12th Native Infantry. A corruption of the name of Captain (afterwards Colonel) John White, by whom the corps was raised in 1763. Colonel White died at Chunar on the 6th October, 1794.

Hurriut-ka-pultun. 64th Native Infantry. Named after Lieutenant-Colonel (afterwards Major-General) John Staples Harrilt, who was posted to the corps on its formation in 1823. He died at Paris on the 13th February, 1839.

Jansin-ka-pultun. 42nd Native Infantry. Named after Lieutenant Jeremiah Martin Jonson, who raised the greater portion of the men of which the corps was originally formed in 1803. He subsequently attained the rank of Colonel in the Army, and died at Melun, near Paris, on the 10th January, 1833.

A PLACE NAME

Jellasur - ka - pultun. 9th Native Infantry. So called from having been stationed for many years, as a sort of local regiment, at Jellasore. This is after the name of the place.

Kyne-ka-Doheena-pultun and Kyne-ka-baen-pultun. 43rd and 44th Native Infantry. Both these corps, which were originally the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the old 22nd Native Infantry, were named after Colonel Francis Kyan, who commanded them both at different times during Lord Lake's campaigns; and greatly distinguished himself at Deig and Bhurtpore. He died in England on the 18th August, 1814.

Lahtur - ka - pultun. 59th Native Infantry. Derived from Major (afterwards General) Robert James Latter, who was posted to the regiment on its being raised in 1815, and commanded it for four or five years. He died in England on the 25th February, 1855.

Macdoon-ka-pultun. 30th Native Infantry. So called after Colonel John Macdonald, who was appointed to the regiment in September, 1798, on its formation. He distinguished himself at the battles of Delhi and Laswaree. Died at Calcutta on the 30th May, 1824, being then a Lieutenant General in the Army, and a K.C.B.

Mapert - ka - pultun. 54th Native Infantry. Derived the name from Lieutenant Colonel (afterwards Colonel) Richard Mabert, who was appointed to the command of the regiment in January, 1805. He died at Mazagon, Bombay, on the 2nd September, 1818.

Martdeel-ka-pultun. 27th Native Infantry. Named after Major (the late Lieutenant-General

Sir Gabriel) Martindell, who was appointed to the corps in November, 1798, and served with it many years. He did good service in Bundelkund in 1809, and afterwards during the Goorkha war of 1814-15. Sir Gabriel died at Buxar on the 2nd January, 1831.

Moira-ka-pultun. 57th Native Infantry. Named after Lord Moira (afterwards the Marquis of Hastings) in commemoration of His Lordship (who was then Governor-General of India) having presented the regiment with its first set of colors in 1815, and ordered the corps to be dressed and

equipped exactly like his own regiment in the Royal Service—the 27th Inniskillings.

Murreeroo-ka-daheena-pultun and Murreeroo-ka-baen-pultun. 45th and 46th Native Infantry. These corps were originally the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the old 23rd Native Infantry, and their Indian designation is simply a corruption of the name of Captain John Munro, who was appointed to the 23rd Regiment on its formation in 1803, and afterwards served with both battalions of it. He subsequently attained the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel, and retired from the service in January, 1815.

Murriam-ka-pultun. 25th Native Infantry. This designation is simply a corruption of English word "Marine", this being the old Marine Battalion raised in 1795 for service on board the Company's cruisers, and for the garrisoning of Company's various settlements on the Eastern shores of the Bay of Bengal. It ceased to be a Marine Corps in 1825, but the Indian name continued to cling to it.

Mutees - ka - pultun. 48th Native Infantry. This name is derived from Lieutenant W. J. Matthews, of the 9th Native Infantry, who raised the "Levy" from which this regiment was formed in 1804. He retired from the service in the rank of Major on the 31st October, 1821.

Neelwur-ka-pultun. 21st Native Infantry. This is a corruption of the name of Captain (afterwards Major) Thomas Naylor, who was appointed to the command of the regiment on its being raised, in 1776, for the service of the Nabob of Oude. Major Naylor died on the 20th June, 1782.

Noke-ka-pultun. 35th Native Infantry. So called after Lieutenant Colonel (afterwards Colonel) James Noke, who was posted to the regiment in January, 1799, and continued in command for several years. He died at Cawnpore in November, 1805.

Poel-ka-pultun. 26th Native Infantry. So named from Colonel Peregrine Powell, who was appointed to the command in 1799, and held it until October, 1804. This officer commanded the British force in Bundelkund during the Maharatta War of 1803-4. He died at Weymouth on the 7th May, 1835, being then a Lieutenant-General in the army.

Raje-ka-pultun. 18th Native Infantry. This was the senior of the corps raised in 1776 for the service of the Nabob Vizier of Oude, and derived its designation from that circumstance.

Rayle-ka-pultun. 49th Native Infantry. So called from Captain Henry, W. Royle, of the 10th Native Infantry, who raised the "Levy" from which the corps was formed in 1804, and though he never really belonged to the regiment, he was actually in command of it until May, 1805. In April, 1805, at the head of a detachment of which this corps formed part, Captain Royle totally defeated a strong corps of Mahrattas at *Ahmednagar*, near Gwalior. He died at Futtyghur on the 29th October.

Runseet-ka-pultun. 11th Native Infantry. This is a corruption of the name of Captain (afterwards Colonel) Gilbert Ironside, who raised the regiment in 1763. Colonel Ironside was one of the most distinguished Indian officers of the period in which he lived.

Soolteen-ka - pultun. 3rd Native Infantry. This is a corruption of the name of Captain Archibald Swinton, who obtained command of the corps in 1762, and held it until his retirement from the service in January, 1766.

Stupper-ka-pultun. 28th Native Infantry. Derived its name from Major (afterwards Lieutenant General) Hugh Stafford, who was appointed to the regiment on its formation in November, 1797, and served with it until January, 1799. He died at Fort William, 13th January, 1819.

Uchterlony-ka-daheena-pultun and Uchterlony-ka-baen pultun. 55th and 56th Native Infantry. These corps were originally the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the old 28th Native Infantry and derived their name from the celebrated Major General Sir David Ochterlony, G.C.B., who was appointed Colonel of the regiment on its formation early in 1814. He died at Meerut on the 14th July, 1825. It is worth mentioning that in the native army the officer above mentioned was known, not as *Ochterlony*, but as *"Lony Aktar."* This regiment was also known as *Lambroon-ka-pultun*, from Lieutenant-Colonel Charles W. Lamborne, who was appointed to the command of it on its being raised in 1815, and died at Bareilly on the 2nd March, 1818.

Ung-ka-pultun. 19th Native Infantry. So named after Captain George Young, its first Commandant. This officer died at Chunar on the 30th November, 1787.

Women in ancient art and craft

Continued from page 245)

things have come down to the present age from a very remote past.

Besides these, there is the earthen wares that had been done by the women folk in distant past. The lamp stand was a finely executed piece of work in those times. Earthen dolls and toys and various utensils were the work of women. Then come the "Courie" work. This has been of a fine piece of art and craft of Bengal from down the centuries.

In this machine age we have been machine minded and led to adopt machine made articles for daily use whether they be for luxury or ordinary purposes. But if we turn our thoughts to the days of old when people lived a simple but decent and peaceful life we can see that the unnecessary luxuries can be easily eschewed, specially in the thousands of villages of our land. To do this we should revive the small cottage industries which were in the hands of the women folk. They served the dual purpose of plain living and easy livelihood for poor struggling and toiling village people, both male and female of the present age. And the high standards attained by the women of old Bengal can live for ever.

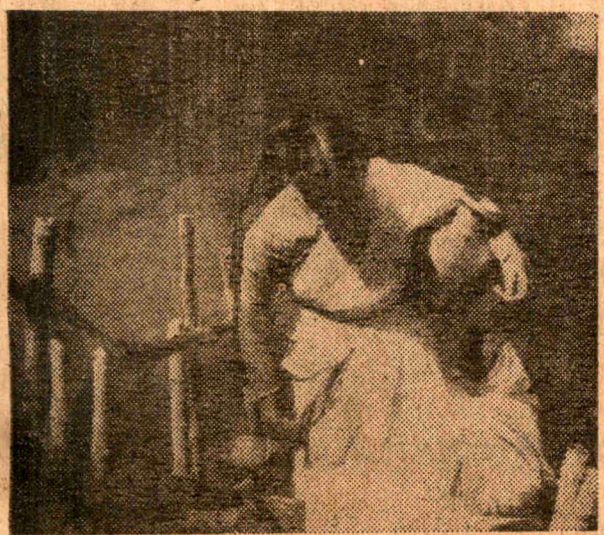
CHANGING THE FACE OF RURAL INDIA

by MANKUMAR SEN

WHENEVER a visitor to India approached Mahatma Gandhi for his advice on how a foreigner could or should plan his tour, Gandhiji's invariable counsel would be "Go to India's villages, India lives in her villages."

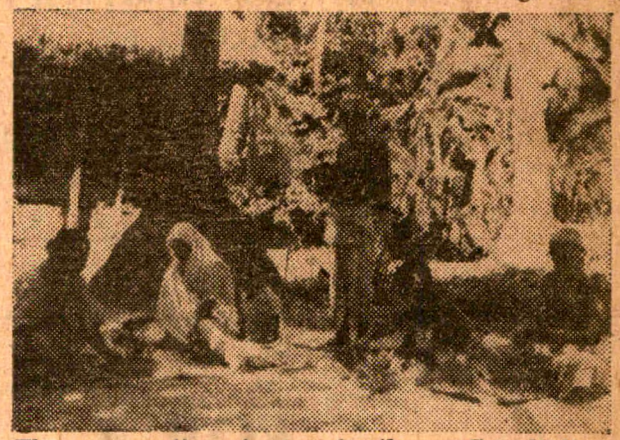
The spectacle that the countryside of India provides is indeed majestic, fascinating, in spite of the harrowing tales of distress that are still heard in numerous villages. Natural beauty and human dignity, serenity and simplicity have combined for ages to make rural India a veritable paradise on earth. Yes, you do see and hear what only an ideal society can offer : the boundless blue sky and the bewitching horizons, the swinging harvest,—laden fields, the fairy tales and folk-songs being sung by the tilling peasants, the boatmen soft-pedalling his vehicle to the river through the transparent streams of the canal loaded with new rain-water, and above all, the smiling, most hospitable and warming "Namasker" (salute with folded hands) by the villager welcoming a newcomer : all these are touches of divinity that the indwelling spirit of man seeks to achieve as the fulfilment of life.

And you 'witness' this spirit only in the villages where people live in a community, grow in understanding and fraternity, and have the good fortune to forego many of the material possessions that are said to measure the progress of modern industrial civilization. It has not been said in vain—"God made the country and man made the town".



The village maiden with the water-full pitcher slowly steps up.

In the wake of planning, talks of the development of India have naturally become voluminous. No talk will assume, however, any real importance if it belittles or ignores the most significant fact that India has about 5,58,000 scattered village settlements with nearly 78 per cent of our population. A mighty tradition of Godliness, goodness, simplicity, runs through their veins even as die-hard prejudices corrode their life. Only a blistering attack of education,—of the right type of education relevant to everyday life which Gandhiji characterized as "Basic Education,"—could sustain this immortal tradition without blockading the progress of planned economy. Such education would, again, provide the local leadership which is so essential for building a National Plan from the grassroots, for ensuring that the benefits of planned development would percolate to the poorest huts.



Three generations in one family : Grandfather, father & son : all of them are expert in making nets.

Absence of this rural bias has inevitably restricted, if not defeated, some of the primary purposes of the Plan. The extent of disparity between the urban and rural sectors for example, has widened. While the average annual income (excluding tax) per household belonging to the lowest 10 per cent in the rural areas is Rs. 85/ only, that for the urban areas stands at about Rs. 245/-. This is a disquieting trend that the Planning Commission, it may be noted, has wisely tried to thwart by again emphasizing agriculture in the Fourth Plan as was done in the First. The Commission, would, nevertheless, have to bewail their lot should they fail to introduce dynamism in land-relations. It is appreciable that the Commission has taken serious note of the Gramdan Movement sponsored by Acharya Vinoba Bhave so far as the ushering in of a new era of land-relation and village management is concerned.

FOR YOUR REQUIREMENTS

OF

CABLE & WIRE ROPE MACHINERY

SPARES & ACCESSORIES

OF ALL SORTS

PLEASE CONTACT :

MESSRS BALILIAS ENGINEERING CO.

137, BIPLOBI RASH BEHARI BOSE ROAD,
CALCUTTA-1.

PHONE : OFFICE - 22-6667.
WORKS-66-4285.

GRAM: BALLENGKO

World Famous

ASTROLOGER & PALMIST

JYOTISH-SAMRAT PANDIT RAMESH CHANDRA BHATTACHARYA JYOTISHARNAB M.R.A.S (London) of International fame, President of the world renowned **All-India Astrological and Astronomical Society** Panditji's wonderful predictions, Palm and Horoscope reading and Tantrik rites are unrivalled in India. He has own unique fame not only in India but throughout the world, viz. **England, America, Africa, Australia, China, Japan, Malayasia, Singapore, Java** etc. Despaired persons are advised to test the powers of Panditji.

WONDERFUL TALISMANS

DHANADA KAVACHA :—For vast wealth, good luck, health and all round prosperity, honour and fame in life. Rs. 7-62, Special Rs 39-69.

BAGALAMUKHI KAVACHA :—To overcome enemies it is unique. Gets promotion in service and in winning civil or criminal suits and for pleasing higher officials it is unparalleled. Rs. 9-12, Special Rs 34-12.

MOHINI KAVACHA :— Enable arch foes to become friends and friends more friendly Rs. 11.50, Special 34-12

SARASWATI KAVACHA :—Success in examination, retentive powers and sharp memory Rs 9-56, Special Rs. 38-56.

DETAILED CATALOGUE WITH TESTIMONIALS FREE

H.O. : 50-2 (A.B.) Dharamtala Street, "Jyotish-Samrat Bhaban" Calcutta-13. Phone : 24—4065, Hours : 5 to 7 P.M. **Branch : 105 Grey St., Calcutta-5.** Hours : 9 to 11 A.M. Phone 55-3685.

FOR A COMFORTABLE JOURNEY

Avail Puja Special Trains which run on time—exact to the schedule.

Attend railway station ahead of time to avoid disappointment of missing trains and risk of boarding running trains.

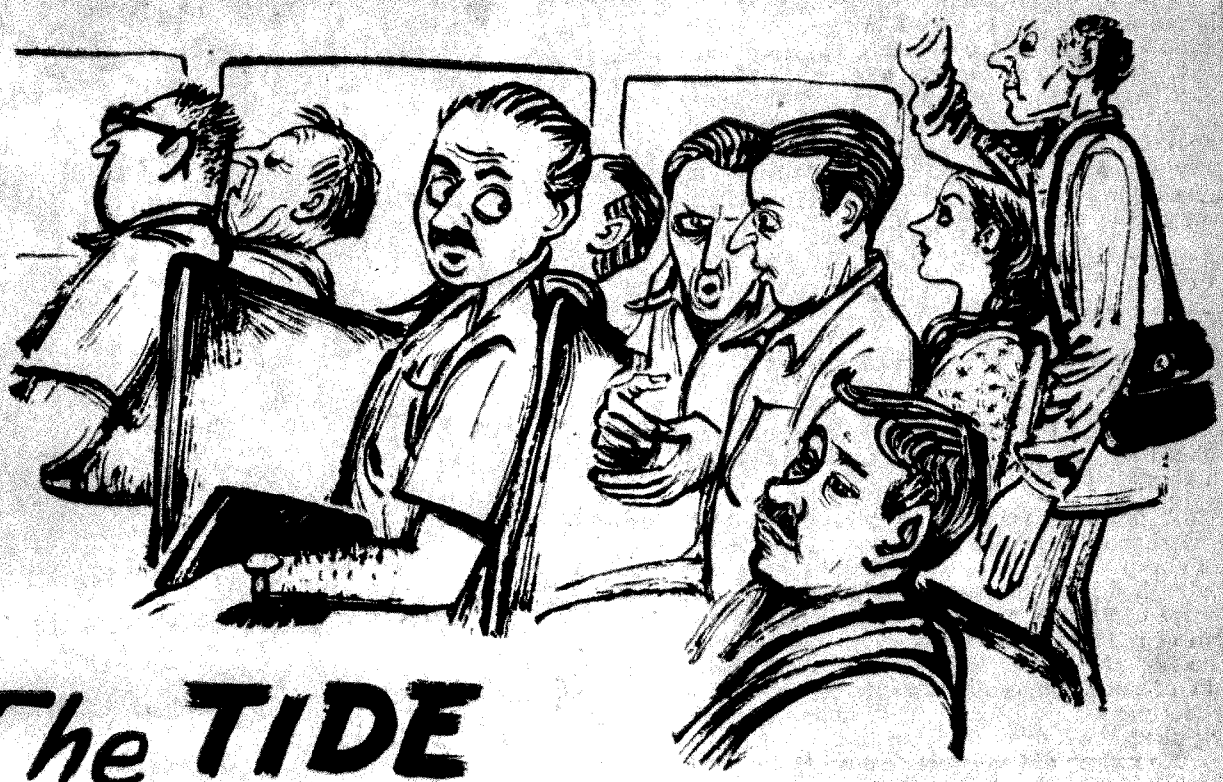
Buy tickets from the nearest City Booking Office and avoid rush.

Co-operate with your fellow traveller for mutual comfort.

While buying tickets, stand in a queue and tender exact fare you will get prompt service. Keep tickets ready for exhibition.

Travel with less luggage. Book your heavy luggages in the Luggage-Van.

Puja Greetings | EASTERN RAILWAY



The TIDE

By DESH CHITRAKAR

MORE often than not an emotional turmoil is automatically set in you, when a particular phrase or a group of phrases strikes your ears. And Bankey Lal found himself in a similar situation that day. The moment he boarded the bus, someone infused such a touchy phrase into the crowded atmosphere prevailing in the public vehicle, that it sparked off a storm in his emotional universe.

"O, dear ! there is no charm in embracing service as a mode of earning one's bread. No, there is absolutely no scope of saving in it. My advice is, start doing a business, if you want to save money. Yes, business, my dear..... !"

These words had been addressed by a light-minded young man, not far from him, to his companion sitting by his side.

Bankey Lal felt as if someone had pricked a sore spot on his nervous system, where it hurt him most. "Really, the lives of salaried people are pitiable," he said to himself. "They work hard like a machine from morning till evening, but with no obvious improvement in their lot. It matters not, if one, be he a high-ranking officer in Government service or working as a petty clerk somewhere else, is always grumbling about one's unsound financial condition."

Unaware of the jerks and jolts of the moving vehicle and that of the hubbub of passengers boarding and unboarding at every odd place on the way, Bankey Lal's thoughts started x-raying his own pitiable condition. The moment he gets his pay on the first day of every month, he feels the soothing touch of the hard-earned money, no doubt. But, soon his petty earnings get dwindled on account of numerous household expenses at such a speed that he is even not able to realise as to when he got his pay and when it disappeared once for all. Throughout the month thereafter, every single expense, big or small, has to be subjected to cuts of strictest economy.

With the crowding of these thoughts in his brains, he was automatically reminded of his personal difficulties. For long he had been postponing his wife's demand for a new sari on the force of assurances that he would get her one on the next *Diwali*. But he knew fully well that many a *Diwali* had slipped by, but he had not been able to oblige Manorama with the object of her longing.

Why Manorama alone ? Not long ago, he found himself in a tight corner, when his eldest son was to be admitted to a college for higher studies. Blessed be Shanti Lal, his bosom friend, who came to his rescue at the right moment by lending him the required amount, and thus saved him from that unbecoming situation. Otherwise, he shuddered at the thought, who knows how many people had he to beg for the financial assistance.

The very thought of Shanti Lal re-enlivened in him the tinge of those words that had stung his ears a little while earlier : "My advice is, start doing business, if you want to save money. Yes, business, my dear....."

He remembered that hardly a few years ago Shanti Lal started trading in timber, financed only by his father. And Shanti Lal was now a man of

lakhs. But economically where did he himself stand, even after a lapse of so many years of hard work ? A shudder of disgust ran through his whole being.

(II)

Just at that moment, as the driver suddenly slowed down the vehicle in the course of engaging a sharp turn, he felt the impact of something falling on his right foot. It was a purse that had been spilled out of the hip pocket of a fellow-passenger.

For a few moments nothing happened to attract any one's attention to the fallen object. Mentally fully occupied in his thoughts as every one was, none of the passengers, nor even the owner of the purse, realised what had happened.

Now, the knowledge that a purse lay quite close to one of his feet put Bankey Lal in a strange situation. Should he pick that up and pocket away the object of his find, or pass it on to its owner, he argued with himself. Not able to decide one way or the other, his conscience was in a balance.

All of a sudden, an idea struck him. Who knows under the force of what impulse and unnoticed by any one, he quietly placed his right foot on the purse.

A few minutes more and his brain had given final shape to his line of action. Purposely, he let his cheap plastic brief-case, that he always carried under his arm, drop on the purse. And in the course of recovering the brief-case during the fraction of next minute he picked up the purse as well. The feat was performed so dexterously that not an iota of suspicion could take shape in any of the fellow passengers' mind. That done, he immediately pulled the bell to stop the bus.

No sooner did the vehicle stop at the next stand than Bankey Lal got down.

For a few moments he kept standing at the bus stand, gazing unblinkingly at the speeding vehicle, till it disappeared behind a cloud of dust at the next turning.

Bankey heaved a sigh of relief. Apparently, the immediate danger was over.

Getting aside on the footpath, his shaking hands opened the purse. To his surprise, it contained fifteen currency notes, of ten rupees each. Immediately, he closed the purse and deposited it in his brief-case. His eyes brightened. Instinctively, an image of a new sari for his wife flashed across his brains.

Should he pick that up and pocket away the object of his find. . . .

I suppose this bag belongs to you, Sir,

But soon he felt his conscience being weighed down by a sort of heaviness. That brought him to the point of considering the advisability of taking a cup of tea. Surely, he thought, a gulp of the warm stimulent would refresh his whole being. He would then go home, after calm had descended on his emotional universe.

(III)

The huskiness of the wintry evening had saturated itself to a dense cover of darkness, when Bankey Lal emerged out of the tea-shop.

He hastened to the bus stop. He should not delay his departure home any longer, he thought.

Hardly had he waited for a few minutes at the bus stand, when he was startled by the screeching halt of a motorcycle, just close to where he stood.

"Aey....Bankey ! what are you doing here ?" It was the deep-set voice of his friend, Shanti Lal.

"Simply waiting for the bus to go home, my dear," replied Bankey Lal.

"Then, jump on the motorbike, man ! I'll drop you at your residence."

Sending his right arm around his friend's waist and holding his plastic brief-case, tight under his left, Bankey perched himself on the rear seat of motorbike.

Soon after a brief exchange of pleasantries with his friend, Bankey was as if automatically, drawn to a world of happy thoughts of his own. How elated Manorama would be, when she comes to know all about this, he wondered. But how would he convince her about the probability of sudden acquisition of so big an amount, and that too at the fag end of the month !

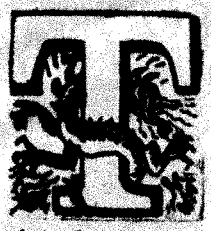
No, it was not difficult, Bankey argued with himself. He would claim that bounty to be the arrears of his pay-increase granted by the Pay Commission a few months ago. But, he cautioned himself, he must not forget to buy sweets for the children from the shop that stood just outside his house.

So engrossed Bankey Lal was in his wishful thinking that he did not know when the motorcycle

(Continued on page 256)

GRAVEYARD OF TRIBENI

By BENOY MUKHERJEE



THE rumour goes—"The axe of Ghazi always moves but never falls'. Who was this Ghazi ? He was Jhafar Ghazi Khan, warrior saint of Islam, who came to Saptagram in the medieval period of thirteenth century.

The axe is 'L' shaped iron plate fixed on the wall of the grave yard of Jhafar Ghazi Khan, located on the bank of river Bhagirathi at Tribeni in the district of Hooghly. In this grave yard there slept an eternal sleep Jhafar Ghazi Khan, the warrior saint along with all the members of his family under the canopy of blue sky, which is now enveloped with a mango grove.

This site along with its reserved solitariness and solemnity, the murmurring water flow of the Bhagirathi still reverberates in the ears of the visitors, the many tales of the antiquity, and all its reminiscences passionately apprise of a closed chapter of the history of Bengal.

The whole of Radh and Saptagram Pargana went under subjugation of the Muslim rulers not immediately after the conquest of Nadia by Mohammad Baktiar. The Hindu kings of the different territories were able to maintain their independent status till the end of fourteenth century. 'Saptagram was still unsubdued and the district of Nadia was strewn with semi independent Hindu Rajas' (D. U. History of Bengal Vol. 2 P. 43).

These Hindu Kings were neither united nor had they offered concerted military resistance against Muslim onslaughts. Had there been any concerted resistance the result would have been reversed.

Saptagram Pargana was ruled by several Hindu kings. Even the king of Orissa-Mukundadeb was able to capture Tribeni and its area probably on the medieval period of thirteen century, who constructed some temples at Tribeni.

This area remained under the possession of the successors of the Orissa king till with the advent of Jhafar Ghazi at Tribeni. The importance of Tribeni and Saptagram was not insignificant even in the remote past. Saptagram was a big port on the bank of river 'Saraswati which economically catred the vast interior portion of Saptagram and Samatat (Midnapur). It had also a navigable link with the sea coast. Tribeni was also, famous for Hindu Pilgrims as it was located on the confluence of the Ganga Jamuna and Saraswati. "It lays near the confluence of the Ganga and the Jamuna where the Hindus went on pilgrimage as was situated on the sea coast" (J. N. Sircar).

It is natural that the foreign invaders would automatically be allured and encouraged to master over this important location. So to own this strategical site Sultan Firoze Saha ruler of Delhi (1301-1322) launched a military operation headed by Jhafar Ghazi Khan, who came from Mundagaon of Konwar Pargana under Muksudabad Chakla.

It is easily traceable from the 'Khurshinama' the chronological pedigree of Jhafar Ghazi Khan as referred by the eminent historian D. Money—that the conquest of Saptagram though happened to be easy and the king Man, successor of the Orissa King, who could not resist this Muslim onslaught, was compelled to embrace Islam and had to offer his daughter to get her married with Ulugkhan, son of Jhafar Ghazi Khan; but on other occasions he (Ghazi) had to witness a serious set back at the hands of Bhudeb a Hindu king of Mahanand, who was familiar for his valour and courage. He defeated and chopped off the head of Jhafar Ghazi in the battlefield and subsequently, his corpse was carried to Tribeni and burried in this grave yard.

His son Ulugkhan also failed to enjoy any advantageous position for the Muslim in this battle. After his death the governorship of Saptagram was offered to another person Sahabudwin Jafar Ghazi Khan, who built Madrasa and one mosque in 713 Hizri which can be traced out from the epigraphy.

This grave yard is sequestrated in two zones. On the eastern side there lay the graves of Jhafar Ghazi Khan his son and daughter-in-Law ; and on the seraglio there lay the graves of Sahaludwin Jhafar Ghazi Khan etc. It has no overhead roof, and only provides with surrounding walls.

Beside this grave yard there lies a mosque, which is now under the grab of destruction. From its structure and from other materials, it can easily be surmised that this mosque was built out of the ruins of Hindu temple.

"There are also near the northern and eastern entrances images of some of the Hindu gods such as Narasingha Vairab, Rama, Luchmi etc. Most of them are now defaced. It is clear that the building is not now in its original state and that formerly it must have been Hindu temples" (D. Money).

In view of above, it can be assumed that there were some temples built by the Orissa King and other Hindu kings in this locality which were totally destroyed due to Muslim onslaught. The existing mosque of this grave yard was also originally a Hindu temple and subsequently remodelled as mosque. The inscriptions of images of Hindu deities such as Ganesh, Luchmi on the stones within the wall now set up in topsyturvey position are still noticeable.

This axe is a token of reminisence of Jhafar Ghazi Khan who used this axe as weapon, and by this device was able to incur confidence of the incredulous and indoctrinated them into pro-Islamic thoughts.

Though Jhafar Ghazi instrumented himself as a defender of Islam and made his earnest endeavour towards indoctrination of pro-Islamic thoughts, but his manoeuvre in assimilating of the non-Islamic thoughts, and actions was certainly praiseworthy. Like a rituous Hindu he was considerably encouraged to offer his homage to the river Ganga and with deep pleasure and veneration he sang the song a 'sloke' in regard to the Ganga—which as follows—

"Oh Ganga, the daughter of great sage
Flow with thy eternal ripple.
Thou art the lover of righteous people.
But thy greatness lies there
When thou bless the sinner
The humble poet accords his homage."

Though Tribeni had many episodes of social erosion and political upheavals in the remote past, but the assimilation of different culture and temperment worked side by side, where the principle of tolerance and co-existance were practically demonstrated. Tribeni is located on the confluence of three rivers and also stands proudly on the confluence of several culture and religion.

THE TIDE

(Continued from page 254)

had stopped in front of his abode. It was the hoarse voice of Shanti Lal's that shook him out of his reverie. "Aey....! now, won't you get down, my boy? I'm getting late..."

With a jerk Bankey Lal jumped down from the motorcycle. And off went Shanti Lal, leaving a trail of his 'adieu' in the air.

Just at the same moment, Bankey Lal was stunned to the core of his heart. He felt as if the earth underneath his feet was giving way and he was sinking down into deep gorges. The brief-case had simply slipped away from under his arm, though he felt the intensity of pressure of his arm was still there! "Oh, God!" he gave out a sigh of utter consternation.

(IV)

Bankey Lal could not get a wink of sleep throughout that night. The unkindliness of God pinched him repeatedly. Was it not a pity that God bestowed joy on him but for a few minutes only? Better it would have been rather not to have shown him the glimpse of that momentary happiness. One does not mind if happiness eludes him perpetually, but how unbearable is the pinch if it comes to him and forsakes him even before he is able to feel the very soothing impact of it!

Next morning, Bankey Lal was getting ready for his office, when he heard a soft knock at his door. Opening the door, he found a young man stood before him. Clad in grease-smeared clothes, the visitor looked like a cycle-mechanic.

A ray of hope surged in Bankey Lal's heart, as he saw his own brief-case stuck under the stranger's arm.

The stranger bowed and greeted him. "I suppose, this bag belongs to you, Sir," said he, presenting the brief-case. "It bears the same name as is displayed on the name-plate outside your house. You may better verify your possessions. I assure you in the name of God, rather I swear by my children, I've not opened it all....."

Bankey Lal was greatly moved. "There is no need of swearing like that, my good fellow," said he. "Had you anything base on your conscience you would have not come rushing to me, first thing in the morning, simply to hand over this brief-case to me. I don't know how to thank you. Won't you come in, please.....?"

"No, thanks, Sir. I should be getting late to my work," replied the stranger, meekly.

"Is't so.....? Really, I've no words to thank you with. I wish, I could repay you for this act of kindness."

"No, it is not necessary, Sir. It's one's duty, a moral obligation."

Once again the stranger bowed courtesy before he departed.

The behaviour and the character of that mechanic provided Bankey's shaken conscience the food to ponder over. Basically how different are human beings from one another, he reflected. Obviously, the fellow's financial condition did not look any better than his own. But what a character to possess! how enviable!!

Hurriedly Bankey Lal opened the plastic brief-case. With the same swiftness he fished out the purse and lost no time to open it. This time, not the crisp currency notes contained in the purse, but it was the address of its owner that his gaze was looking for.

That done, he closed the purse, with the currency notes carefully tucked in.

Bankey Lal had returned the purse to its owner before setting his foot in his office.

ON TO MYSORE

(Continued from page 244)

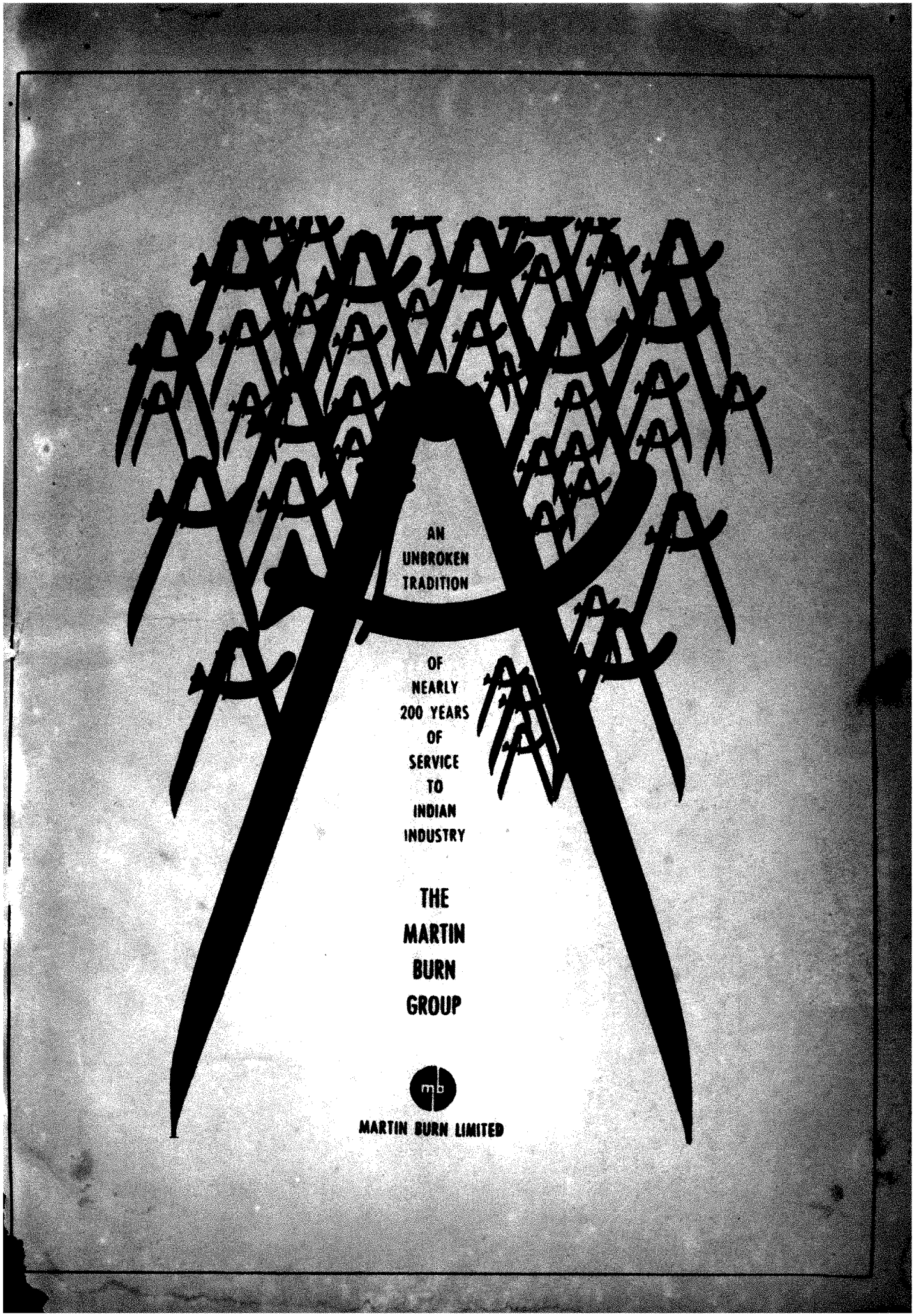
physical height, which at certain points is over 6,000 ft. above sea-level. It has gathered an elevation equally high in the legends. The range, picturesque and hoary in age, is rich with the flavour of epics, the fragrance of history and more than all, spiritual glory. For here on one of its ridges was founded Sringagiri, or Sringeri, a spiritual throne by Sri Sankaracharyya.

In religion the fame of the range is unique, because it symbolises the religious co-existence of the Muslims and the Hindus. They venerate, in equal measure, a sacred spot, four miles from Chickmagalur, on the southern slope of the range as the tomb of Baba Budan, a Muslim saint and as of Dattatreya Peetha.

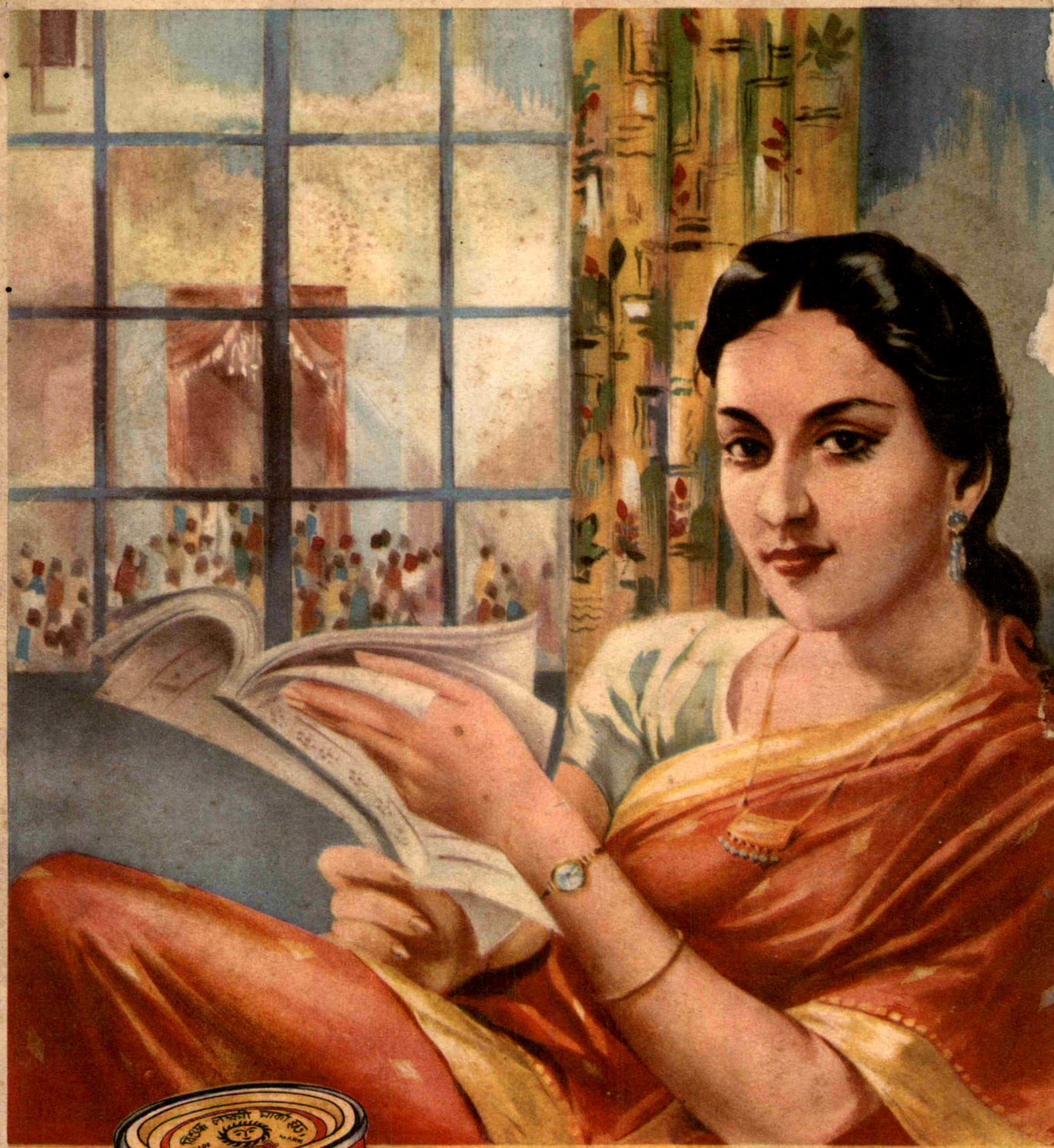
In modern times the big reputation of the mountain range is associated with a new staple introduced by Baba Budan, the pilgrim from Mecca, who is reported to have brought a few coffee berries in the seventeenth century. In the words of B. Lewis Rice, famed compiler of the Mysore Gazetteer, "The Baba Budan mountain was the cradle of the coffee plantation of Southern India." And tucked away in this wild highland district, on the slopes of the hill range, is a sylvan spot, Kemmangundi. 40 miles from Chickmagalur, Kemmangundi, though less known, is the hill resort for all seasons in Mysore. Officially known as the Krishnarajendra Hill Station, after its founder, the late Maharaja Sri Krishnaraj Wodeyar, this enchanting place is situated on the scrap of a hill, 4,750 ft. above sea-level. Holding out a fascinating spectacle for the people from the plains—a spectacle of dense ever-green forests, rich coffee plantations and colourful landscape—Kemmangundi is an embodiment of Nature's unalloyed charms. The hill station proper is on an elevated spot of the slopes and amidst its woodland setting, in perfect solitude, nestle neatly-built bungalows, away from the madding crowds. A wit described Kemmangundi as "Mother Nature's Treasure House." This is a double distilled word picture of the unsurpassed loveliness of this heaven of holiday-makers. For here gurgle sparkling streams, meandering through undulating terrain, perennial springs of mineral water, while not too far away are cascading waterfalls. From top of the hill a vista of nature's bounty opens up, with the extensive valleys thick with luxuriant greenery against a backdrop of blue mountain peaks that merge with the skies. As the sun rises one can see the blue waters of the Bhadra Reservoir and the towering chimneys of the Mysore Iron and Steel Ltd. at Bhadravati, about 30 miles away. Nightfall creates a fairyland out of the valleys down below as electric lights twinkle like little stars. A variety of birds and beasts inhabit the nearby forests and it is not uncommon to come across herds of bison and tiger. The artist, the historian, the poet, and the mystic alike can draw inspiration from the common fount of peace and repose on the unsullied heights of Kemmangundi, for: "Nature is man's teacher. She unfolds her treasures to his search, unseals his eye, illumines his mind, and purifies his heart; an influence breathes from the sights and sounds of her existence." (Street).

EDITOR — TUSHAR KANTI GHOSH

Printed and published by TULSHI KANTI DE BISWAS on behalf of the Amrita Bazar Patrika, Private Ltd., at the PATRIKA PRESS, 14 Ananda Chatterjee Lane, Calcutta-3.


AN
UNBROKEN
TRADITION
OF
NEARLY
200 YEARS
OF
SERVICE
TO
INDIAN
INDUSTRY
THE
MARTIN
BURN
GROUP
mb
MARTIN BURN LIMITED

Regd.



She is Beautiful !

HEALTH IS THE SOURCE OF HER BEAUTY

IT MAKES HER PUJA DAYS
BRIGHTER & HAPPIER

LAKHMIGHEE

builds up beautiful hea

LG-1966(P)

Photo Offset by N. K.